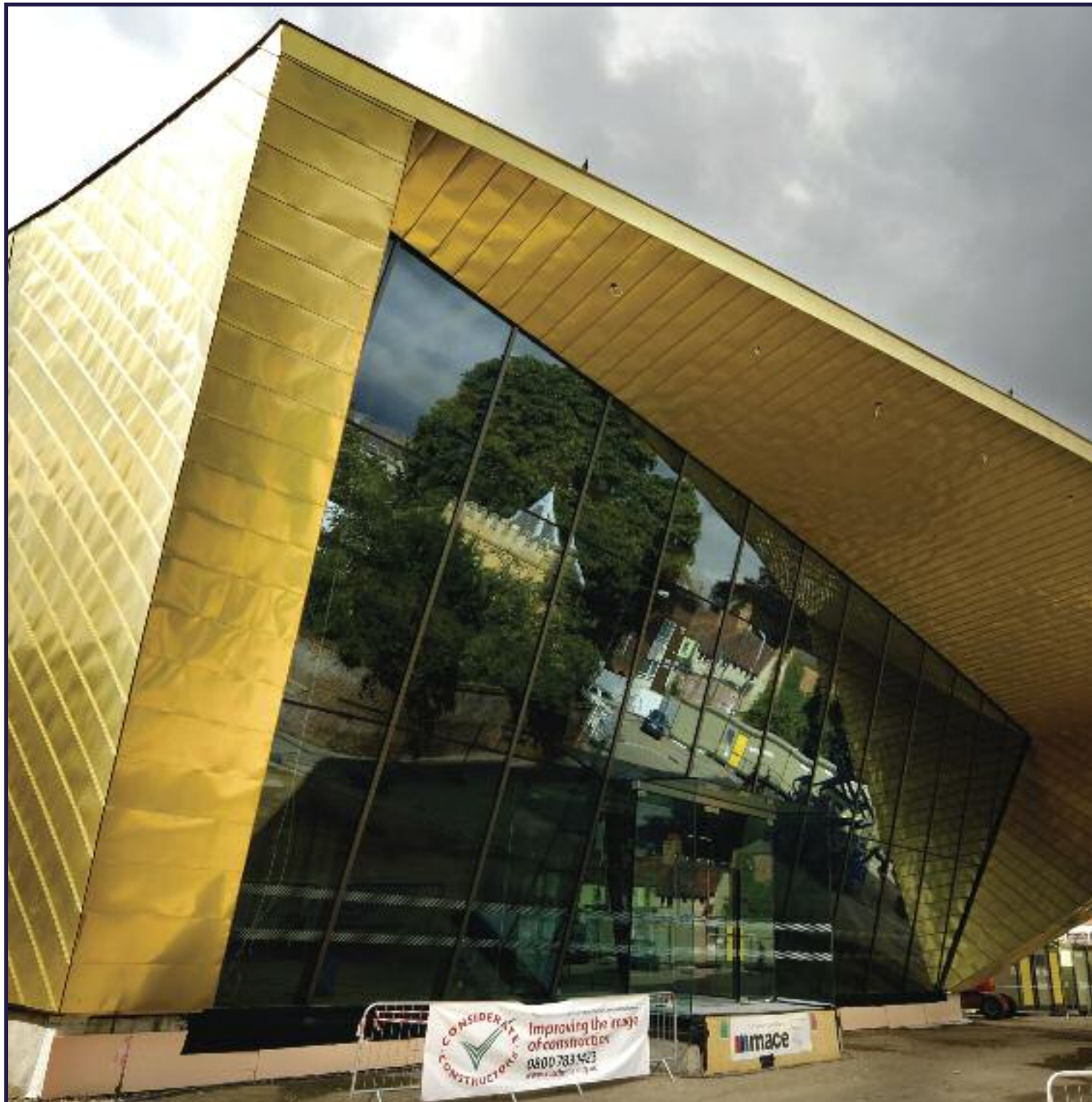


# INVESTMENT NOW

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*Firstsite Art Gallery, Colchester, designed by award winning Rafael Viñoly*

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## A new approach

**NEIL RAMI, Head of Business Birmingham, outlines the city's new approach to inward investment and its plans to make Birmingham the most attractive city in Europe in which to do business.**

Foreign direct investment is hugely important to the UK economy, particularly at this time of economic uncertainty. This year Birmingham unveiled a new approach to attracting FDI with an ambitious global investment strategy that aims to create 7,000 new jobs by 2015 and ensure that Birmingham becomes the most attractive city in Europe to do business.

The strategy builds on insight gained from research conducted earlier this year by global location specialist IBM-PLI and will be delivered under the banner of "Business Birmingham", a dedicated sales and marketing function led by newly appointed Investment Director for the city, Wouter Schuitemaker, previously of Think London, the capital's inward investment agency, and a team of highly-skilled investment specialists.

The new investment strategy has been developed alongside Birmingham's recently announced 20-year "Big City Plan", which provides investors with an outline of the city's changing landscape – ensuring that the city's future business growth is closely aligned to its development. This is the first time the city has officially linked the two strategies.

In the last year we have noticed an upturn in foreign investment in Birmingham with companies like Deutsche Bank, Hines and Santander continuing to invest here. Building on these endorsements of the city's proposition Business Birmingham has already drawn enquiries and scoping visits from representatives across all major continents, including a delegation of over 100 Indian businesses.

Over the next year Birmingham will



be building on its proposition with major investments in its connectivity to the capital, providing another crucial link to international markets. For example, Chiltern Railways is spending £250m on the 'Chiltern Mainline', which will see journey times between the two cities reduced by 20 per cent. A further £750m is being invested in the redevelopment of the New Street Gateway will also transform the UK's busiest train station while the Midland Metro extension which will improve connections within the city centre projects. It would be difficult to find another regional UK city taking such radical steps to maximise its transport infrastructure – and this is before longer term proposals for the UK's second high speed rail route, which will further improve Birmingham's links to London, are considered.

We have ambitious and exciting plans for Birmingham – our talent, connectivity, infrastructure, scale, innovative business community and energy are big draws for investors and we intend to make sure they know all about them.

## BEDFORDSHIRE

### New road link the right

Bedford Borough Council has welcomed the opening of the newly duelled A421 linking the M1 west of Bedford with the vibrant market town.

Bedford, with a trading history dating back over 800 years, already hosts some top names when it comes to industry and commerce and who have recognised the benefits of being in the area. 3M, Unilever, Fujifilm and Autoglass all have significant offices here. Asda, Sainsbury's and Argos all operate major distribution sites close to the road while Wells and Young Brewing Company, the UK's largest private brewing company, have been based in the town for over 100 years.

In a world where everywhere claims to be central, Bedford's location actually means something. The new road will provide quick and easy access to both the M1 and A1 with eight miles of new dual two and three lane carriageways, cutting congestion, reducing journey times and improving safety on the route.

With its central location and easy road and rail access, the Bedford area is a no-brainer for companies. Half of the UK

population can be reached in less than two hours from sites that cost around half the price of those in North London (according to the government's Valuation Office Agency).

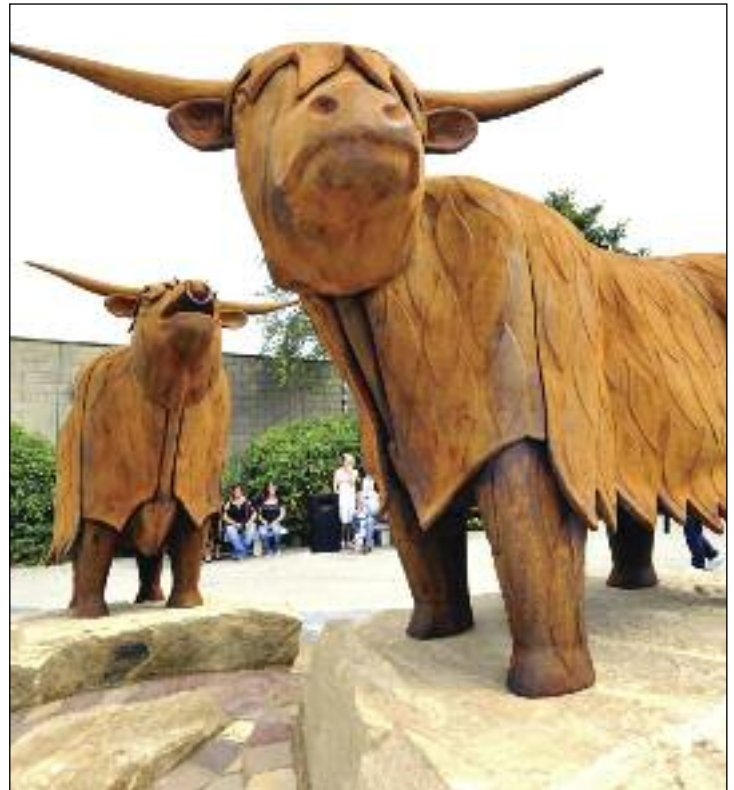
Dave King, Sainsbury's Logistics Director says: "One of our key decisions for basing our new Sainsbury's Tu clothing depot in Bedford was because the improved link road would enable us to achieve our transport operational and environment performance targets, whilst providing our stores and customers with a delivery service that they now demand."

"Another important factor was that the improved road would also benefit our colleagues travelling to and from work."

### Castle Quay restaurant open

The first of three alfresco restaurant units at the prestigious Castle Quay development has now opened. The area, which is a contemporary development in the heart of Bedford's new cultural quarter sits in an exciting riverside leisure destination.

## Investing in Falkirk's future



DESPITE the economic climate, 2010 has seen continued growth and investment in the Falkirk area, which is now into its eighth year of the My Future's in Falkirk initiative. The project was set up in 2002 as a partnership between Falkirk Council, Scottish Enterprise and BP. Investment plans have been maintained throughout 2010, and My Future's in Falkirk's commitment to developing opportunities for businesses, residents, visitors and investors is stronger than ever.

The initiative's core aims are to transform the sense of place, sustainability and quality of environment across Falkirk, creating new business opportunities and enhancing the experience for those living and working in, or visiting the area. The town and its surrounding areas are showing real signs of success, which is reflected both in the physical and economic landscape and its recent accolade as Scottish winner of the Enterprising Britain awards. Plans are now underway to exploit the strategic importance of Grangemouth's plant and chemicals complex to attract further investment to the area.

There are several regeneration projects that have received investment in 2010. Stenhousemuir saw completion of its new town centre, including a new 40,000sq.ft. Asda food store, an 8,000sq.ft. library, a new medical centre and over 20,000sq.ft. of retail space including high street shops, banks and food outlets. The final redevelopment stage involved gateway signage and commissioning a public art piece, The Heart of Stenhousemuir, funded through the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund. Overall, the regeneration of Stenhousemuir has attracted £18m investment, and delivered significant environmental, community and retail improvements to the area.

Falkirk town centre was awarded £1m of the Town Centre Regeneration Fund, along with a Heritage Lottery Fund

grant. Dynamic plans to revitalise the town centre, including an environmental project on the historic Falkirk Old and St Modan's Parish Church, are underway, to enhance the historic churchyard adjoining the prime retail core. This investment will help to enhance and maintain Falkirk's visitor and retail experience; Falkirk is currently placed seventh in CACI's Scottish retail rankings.

Bo'ness has as its centrepiece, the Hippodrome cinema, Scotland's first purpose built cinema dating back to 1912. It re-opened to great acclaim in April 2009 at a cost of £2.1 million, following extensive restoration as part of the HLF's Bo'ness Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a wider £5 million project which aims to repair heritage buildings and rejuvenate derelict properties in Bo'ness town centre. With this restoration and public realm improvement, local businesses have been reporting positive effects through increased numbers of customers in the area.

Denny, located 7.5 miles outside of Falkirk town centre is currently the focus of an exciting £15m town centre regeneration project, designed to address current challenges faced by the town. The proposed initiatives, moving into 2011, include a 20,000sq.ft. food store, 26,000sq.ft. of retail provision, new town square and improved parking. Despite the economic downturn Falkirk Council, along with developer Henry Boot, agreed a way forward and is firmly committed to Denny being the next major area of investment.

Development has also been progressing outside of the town centres. A water-side development on a 58-acre site at Tamfourhill, next to the iconic Falkirk Wheel, is aiming to build on the success of the Millennium Link. The £24m proposal includes 525 houses and apartments, a hotel, 50-berth marina plus leisure and retail space. Outline planning consent has been lodged by Falkirk Council and British Waterways.

# Take advantage of the benefits

THE local authority district of South Holland in the South of Lincolnshire seems to have weathered the recession better than many other districts, due in no small part to its core industries of Agriculture, Horticulture and Food manufacturing. Situated in the hinterlands of the Wash, it is a sparsely populated (circa 83,000) district comprising of five main towns and a number of villages and hamlets. Much of the area is at or just above sea level, and its fertile grade 1 silt land has been artificially drained since Roman times.

Research from the University of Lincoln has shown that some 20% of the nation's food will touch South Holland at some point in its life, and the many food manufacturing and logistics companies, along with other allied sectors, that are located in the district, particularly in and around Spalding, reflect this statistic. These companies include global players such as Bakkavor, Kerry Foods, Premier Foods, Gist and Fowler Welch.

## Infrastructure

A new £80million road linking Spalding with Peterborough was opened in late 2010, giving direct access to the A1M, thus opening up routes to the South and the A14 into the Midlands.

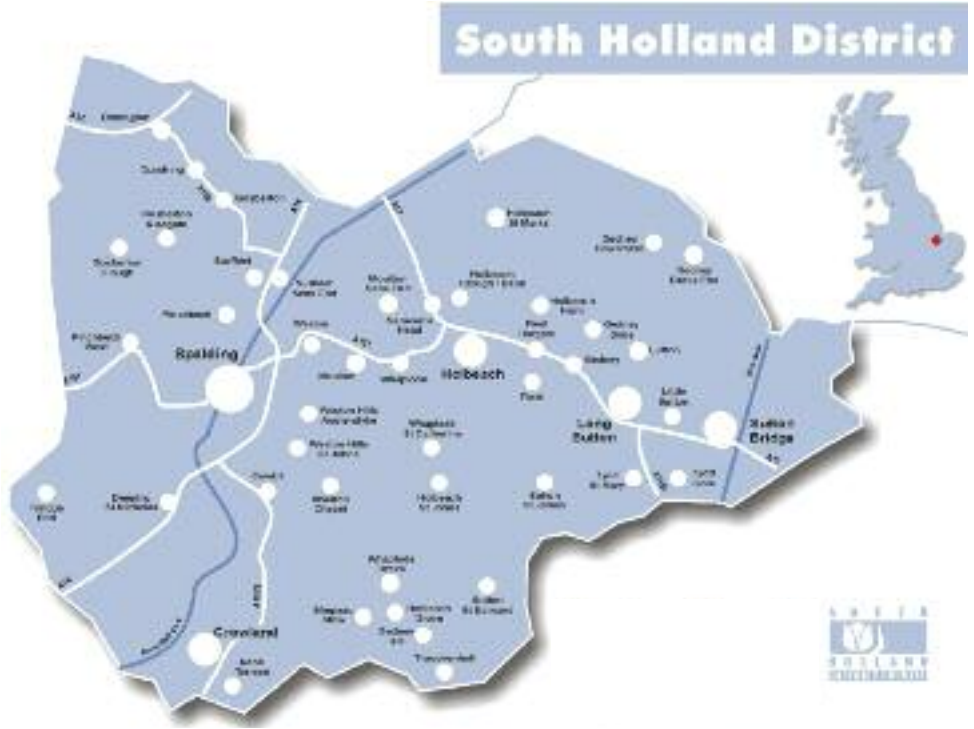
In the last year six new workspace units have been built at Crowland, ten minutes from Peterborough, at a cost of £1.1million, and are already fully occupied with relocating and expanding businesses. Also nearing completion is the flagship Red Lion Quarter, on schedule to open in early April 2011, which is a £6.5million three storey mixed use building in the centre of Spalding. Designed to celebrate and promote the district's food heritage, it will offer retail, education and managed office space, as well as a silver service restaurant backed by Jason Atherton, a Michelin star chef.

Work is also about to start on construction of the district's third gas fired power station which will bring 600 jobs into the district during its three year construction phase.

## Assets

The University of Lincoln's Holbeach Campus is the National Centre for Food Manufacturing Excellence and attracts students from across the world to make use of its unique facilities.

South Holland has allocated employment land available, much of it adjacent to the A16, A17 or A52



giving easy access to routes both North and South and on into the Midlands via the A14. The East Coast ports of Sutton Bridge and Boston are also nearby.

Potential has also been identified in South Holland for the creation of a Road Rail Hub for both in and out movement of fresh and chilled produce, with the opportunity to half the journey time for fresh produce sourced from Southern Europe. A preferred site has already been identified to coincide with the £235 million upgrade of the railway line that runs from Peterborough to Doncaster via Spalding and Lincoln, due to start this year for completion by 2014.

These plans could also include a direct service to London.

The district has extremely good schools and a low crime rate making it a desirable place to live.

All this makes South Holland the ideal place in

which to invest and to take advantage of the many benefits the district can offer you and your workforce.

For further information please contact:

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# Mentoring for like minded professionals

MANCHESTER is fast establishing itself as Britain's political hub, and with The Midland Hotel cited as the city's premier conference venue, the hotel's General Manager has been at the helm of some of Manchester's most high profile conferences.



General Manager of The Midland, Mike Magrane, recently appeared at The Hospitality Show to offer a free mentoring service for like minded professionals seeking advice on the many issues surrounding the hospitality industry in 2011. The Hospitality Show is the UK's largest food service and hospitality show and this year attracted over 12,000 visitors.

With over 19 years experience in the industry, Mike was invited by The



Hospitality Show to mentor businesses and discuss the factors that have made The Midland Hotel so successful.

The mentoring sessions were a new addition to the show, allowing visitors unprecedented one-to-one access to a handful of industry experts. The fully subscribed sessions were hailed as an overwhelming success.

The Midland Hotel has a strong repu-

tation in developing businesses and staff through its ability to listen and respond to the market. In the face of the current economic climate, expert advice is more valued than ever and Mike was keen to get involved and share his expertise and advice with visitors to the show.

After successfully hosting last year's Labour Party Conference, preparations are already in place at The Midland Hotel

for the Conservative Party Conference in the city later this year. The economic impact from such a huge growth in the industry has seen an influx in visitors to the city and The Midland Hotel has seen expectations from delegates rise dramatically.

Discussing his role as a mentor, Mike said: "It is really important to mentor local businesses and young entrepreneurs as they are the future for the industry. At The Midland Hotel we are committed to training our staff from our own experience in the business.

"There was a very positive response on the day and I've since had eight further direct contacts seeking further advice and guidance. The most consistent topic was how companies can raise their own brand awareness during an economic recession, and the obvious effects of the downturn were brought up many times throughout the session.

"There are shoots of growth however, but many areas still seem to be struggling with concerns over the VAT increase and future National Insurance contribution increases. The international market is growing though and the forecasts for the end of 2011 give hope. I hope people left feeling like there was still an opportunity to turn things around and used my advice to go on to great things!"

## University celebrates Topping Out milestone for student halls

THE University of Bedfordshire helped celebrate a special milestone recently when it took part in a Topping Out ceremony for its new £40m student halls in Luton.

The event marked the completion of the roof of Fitzroy Court in Vicarage Street which is scheduled to be ready for occupation at the start of the new academic year.

The student halls project is a partnership between the University and global student accommodation experts Campus Living Villages. Construction company Kier Marriott is building the facility.

University Vice Chancellor Professor Les Ebdon CBE and Campus

Living Funds Management Director Steve Burdon tightened a large bolt with a silver spanner to mark the occasion watched by Kier Marriott Managing Director John Henke. University chaplain the Rev Andrew Goodman performed a short blessing in front of some 30 guests then John Henke presented each partner with a glass plaque.

Professor Ebdon said: "I am delighted to receive this gift on behalf of the University. Fitzroy Court is an exciting project and one which will further enhance the student experience which is at the top of all our agendas.

"I am grateful to everyone who has



played their part in making this partnership work so successfully and I look forward to welcoming students to this fantastic new state-of-the-art building with ensuite facilities."

The halls development is part of the

University's £140m investment in its campuses. Last October it opened its new £34m Campus Centre in Luton. A new £15m postgraduate and continuing professional development centre is planned for 2013.

## New University joins influential global telecommunications union

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE New University has been invited to become a member of the Academia Sector of the influential International Telecommunication Union (ITU), joining members from Europe, Africa and the Far East. Professor Ruth Farwell, Vice Chancellor of Bucks New University, received the membership certificate from Dr Hamadoun Toure, Secretary-General of the ITU, at Missenden Abbey Conference Centre, Buckinghamshire in January. Dr Toure was guest of honour at a welcome reception and dinner hosted by the United Kingdom Telecommunications Academy (UKTA) to mark the launch of a second course it is running with Bucks New University, a Master in Laws in Information and Communications Technology Law (LLM). The dinner also marked the start of the second cohort of students on the Master's in Communication Management (MCM). Both programmes are aimed at people currently working in the telecommunications and information technology industries. The MCM and LLM courses will

run side by side, enabling delegates from the two courses to network with each other.

The blended learning courses are run between Bucks New University and the UKTA and have already attracted students from the UK, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia. The Missenden Abbey event included more than 20 African students who will be participating on the courses, as well as guests including His Excellency Ernest Rwamucyo, High Commissioner of Rwanda. Bucks is the first UK university to become a member of the ITU Academia programme, joining members including: the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology in Rwanda; Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications; The Open University of Tanzania; Waseda University in Tokyo; and other universities in Algeria, China, Denmark, India and Tunisia. ITU is looking to eventually create a global network of around 100 universities to share expertise, knowledge, and research.



Prof Ruth Farwell, Vice Chancellor of Bucks New University, pictured with Dr Hamadoun Toure, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), at Missenden Abbey Conference Centre.

## Bangladeshi student wins best paper at international trade conference

A BUCKS New University graduate from Bangladesh has presented an award-winning article about relationships in the banking sector in his native country to the International Trade & Academic Research Conference at Wembley Plaza Hotel.

Kazi Omar Siddiqi, 26, from Comilla, Barura, Bangladesh, said it was 'an extremely proud moment' to stand in front of significant industry figures and leading international academics at the annual conference event organised by the Academy of Business and Retail Management.

He presented his article, called 'Interrelationships between service quality attributes, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the retail banking sector in Bangladesh', completed as part of his MSc in International Business at Bucks, and it was awarded best paper at

the conference.

Kazi's work looked at what best attracted customer loyalty for banks in Bangladesh and how this related to service quality attributes and customer satisfaction. He said: "Gaining a sense of empathy and trust between the bank and the customer was the most important element in developing loyalty.

"In Bangladesh, no study had yet investigated this relationship and my study, carried out in Bangladesh over a number of months, was designed to fill this gap. I am very pleased it has been recognised at the conference and that my findings are considered important."

Kazi, who lives in Uxbridge, Middlesex, said he hoped to carry out further research in Bangladesh on the subject, as well as enrolling on a PhD in International Business with Bucks New University.



Kazi Siddiqi with the best paper certificate from the International Trade & Academic Research Conference.

**Our business  
thinking has  
moved on.**

**That's why  
thinking  
businesses  
are moving in.**

# British PV industry is playing catch-up with the Germans

THE German Photovoltaic (PV) industry is the largest and most developed in the world because of investment and a forward thinking Government according to mO3 Power, the UK's biggest developer of solar power.

"We are playing catch-up with the Germans and our Government needs to provide incentives now if we are not going to fall further behind them," said Ken Moss, CEO of mO3.

"More than 50% of global photovoltaic production technology originates from German machine and installation producers," said Mr Moss. "The German PV industry provides tens of thousands of jobs to their economy and its time Britain seriously developed its solar potential."

"The British Government is already two years behind in their plans for renewables and need the private investment to unshackle the sector so that Britain can elevate itself from 25th out of 27 in the EU renewable-energy-production table," said Mr Moss.

Germany has a commitment to providing power from 100% renewable sources by 2020 and Photovoltaics are being developed to guarantee competitive, affordable, safe/secure and clean power.

"The Department of Energy and Climate Change seems to regard solar developers as speculators looking to make a fast buck," said Mr Moss. "What they are overlooking are the independent power producers, like ourselves, who are looking to develop large numbers of sites to generate power over the longer term. To do this, substantial investment is required. We need to follow the lead set by the Germans or we shall miss out on developing this technology."

mO3 Power plans to generate a Gigawatt from renewable power from solar parks in the UK and is prepared to invest £2.3 billion. It proposes to site its parks on industrial land, brown field sites and grade 3 and 4 farm land all discreetly hidden from public view by screening or natural hedgerows.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

### Tenth anniversary

e-space business centres are celebrating their tenth anniversary in 2011 with record occupancy levels over the last six months and more and more firms moving on to bigger premises from the centres.

"At e-space business centres," says Kathy Brumpton, centre manager, "we pride ourselves on creating a community within the centres. From helping someone with a spark of an idea through our private sector led, mentoring and advice service, to the many small start-up firms that rely on us to provide things such as IT infrastructure, reception and postal services, e-space brings businesses together to share ideas, develop and grow."

The open nature of the centres has even helped resident companies generate new business ideas.

"In some of the more traditional business centres people can just walk past each other in the corridor without even acknowledging each other," "At e-space they stop and talk. This has led to a lot of

our companies working together on projects. I think this is why we are so popular – surveys have shown that 100 per cent of tenants would recommend other businesses to come and set up at e-space, which is pretty impressive.

"Even the leases are designed to reduce risk for start ups requiring just one months notice. The key for us is to continue to provide the solid foundations for these businesses to thrive," continues Kathy. "Our watchwords are flexibility, service and quality."

"For us it is getting these little things right to help others succeed. e-space is about helping businesses to grow – We are now in our tenth year and have seen over 25 companies grow and move on from the centres in Ely and Littleport. We hope our next ten years will see more of our firms leave us to go on to bigger things because I know we have done our job and given them the chance to grow."



# IN focus ESSEX

## Town centre revamp to go ahead

BASILDON town centre is set to undergo one of the biggest redevelopments in the country, after 'Basildon Regeneration (Barratt Homes Wilson Bowden Developments) Ltd (BWB)' were approved as the Council's development partner for the 20-year project valued at £1 billion.

BWB will now be required to prepare a master plan that will outline the detailed plans for the town centre and the timings of the various work.

BWB have outlined exciting plans for the long-term project, based on the Council's 2006 vision, including:

- 52,000 square metres of new retail and leisure space
- Up to 54,000 square metres of new offices
- 1,900 new homes (in addition to the 700 already with planning permission or built)
- Major extension to the Towngate Theatre from 546 to 1200 seats
- A hotel
- Scope for a new college

- Improvements to squares in the town centre
- Improvements to Gloucester Park including a city park and a 'Green Link' Boulevard from the town centre to the park
- Improvements to transport facilities.

Clr. Stephen Horgan, deputy leader of the Council, says: "This is great news for Basildon, Essex and the whole region.

This will be one of the biggest town centre redevelopment in the whole country and perhaps the last of its kind for some time."

The Basildon Sporting Village is due to open in April 2011 and will be the best public sports facility in Essex. It will offer resident's from Basildon and across the county a 50 metre swimming pool able to split into two 25m pools, teaching pool, regional gymnastics centre, eight court sports hall, fitness suite, crèche and café, climbing wall, floodlit five a side football pitches and a new athletics grandstand for 750 spectators.



## Colchester: rich history, bright future

BRITAIN'S oldest recorded town is showing it has an exciting future in prospect as Colchester is proving its resilience in a challenging economic climate with progress on a number of exciting investment projects.

Small and start up businesses in the Colchester region now have access to a brand new purpose built incubation centre to the north of the town. The project, which aims to enable job creation and boost to the town's economy, was delivered both on time and on budget by Colchester Borough Council with funding from a variety of sources including the East of England Development Agency.

The prestigious 14,000 sq. ft. North Colchester Business Centre will house 27 offices, a staffed reception area, training and meeting rooms in landscaped surroundings on the Colchester Business Park. With easy access to the A12 and major road networks, the centre has already proved popular, with many of the offices pre-let. The tenants will be provided with full ICT connectivity and optional free business support from Colbea, the project partner's well established business advisors.

In the town centre, the innovative new

contemporary art gallery is due to open in September 2011. Designed by award-winning architect Rafael Viñoly, the landmark firstsite building will add to Colchester's rich tourism offering. The building will contain purpose-built learning studios, a 200 seat auditorium with full conference facilities and a range of meeting rooms for hire together with a restaurant.

The building has provided a catalyst for regeneration in the St Botolphs area of town, with three new hotels and a Creative Business Centre planned in this quarter. The development of the centre will help boost Colchester's thriving creative sector with new job opportunities and investment. The centre would provide space and facilities to nurture start up businesses. It will also provide networking and training/mentoring opportunities for smaller firms which may have previously worked from home and can benefit from this environment.

The significant investment in these three projects and others which form part of Colchester's vision to create a better town centre, help to show that Colchester has a bright future to complement its rich history.

# Business support

FOLLOWING on from the last issue of Investment Now, in which the University of Essex had an article, we can report that the Business Hub at the Southend Campus continues to be a focus for business support in the Southend area, where the modern professional facilities provide an ideal setting for business interaction. Over the past year funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund has been used to support the Southend Economic Participation Programme enabling almost £100k of business support to be provided to Southend businesses up to April 2011, by offering workshops and creative iLab sessions to suit the changing needs of local businesses.

The programme has proved so popular that the University is looking at innovative ways to continue to provide low cost business support to businesses after the current programme has finished. However any new programme will not be restricted to Southend businesses, but will be available to any Essex business. The aim will be to be reactive to ever changing needs of business in an uncertain economic climate, rather than offering a fixed list of workshops over a set period.

Another exciting news story is that Architects ADP have won the contract to design the new £26.9 million library and academic development planned for Elmer Square in Southend. The project is a joint venture by Southend-on-Sea

Borough Council, the University and South Essex College.

It will incorporate an integrated academic and community library and digital gallery, a learning and teaching environment for the University, and modern teaching space for the College. The new development could be in operation by late 2013.

Registrar Dr Tony Rich commented: "With nearly 1,000 students now based at the Southend Campus, the development of Elmer Square is vital to provide us with additional high quality teaching and learning space, as well as providing our students and researchers with a purpose-built library with access to a wide range of resources. We're delighted with the appointment of ADP as architects as they have a strong track record in designing libraries and other university buildings."

The University of Essex has also been chosen by the Engineering Development Trust to host several of their events in the award winning Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall at the Colchester Campus. The Trust is an independent registered charity running schemes to inspire and motivate young people to consider a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The University will be supporting workshops with input from academic departments and Widening Participation activities. Inspirational speakers will be invited to present at the workshops from such organisations as BP, Shell and BT.

## Milestone development

LONDON Southend Airport welcomes new daily passenger services to Galway and Waterford with Aer Arann.

Stobart Air (owner of London Southend Airport and a division of Stobart Group) Managing Director, Alastair Welch, said: "This is a significant milestone in London Southend Airport's development – the first new daily passenger service since Stobart Group took ownership two years ago. It also marks the completion of phase one of our transformation of the airport, heralding exciting and busy times ahead."

He added: "2011 is a very big year for London Southend, with a new airport railway station now complete and gearing up to be fully operational in the coming weeks, a new control tower also now ready, construction of a new passenger terminal underway and work on the runway extension and new airport hotel due



The new railway station at London Southend Airport.

to start later this year. This is the year London Southend Airport goes on the international air travel map as a fast, friendly and hassle-free new gateway to London. With the new railway station soon to be fully operational, we will be about 50 minutes by train from Liverpool Street, right in the heart of the City of London."

## Royal Jet boosted its presence in UK

ROYAL Jet – the international luxury executive flight services company based in Abu Dhabi – continues to boost its presence in the UK and European markets through its dedicated sales office at London Stansted Airport.

Situated at a facility owned by Abu Dhabi Aviation (ADA) Group – the UAE's leading aviation service provider – the combination of Royal Jet, Maximus Air Cargo – the UAE's largest dedicated cargo aircraft operator – and Abu Dhabi Aviation – the largest Middle East commercial helicopter and fixed wing aircraft operator – offers customers total aviation

solutions platform through a selection of wide-ranging products and services in a one-stop-shop environment that also enhances the Group's presence in the region.

Royal Jet has appointed Desiree Martis as Sales Manager – Europe, Russia and Central Asia to be based in the UK office. Martis' rich 24-year experience is expected to further boost the private jet operator's growth targets as it has been spreading its wings through GSA appointments in India and Oman. The UK office became operational in May 2010.

## IN focus HANTS

### Southampton Airport scoops Top UK Airport Award

SOUTHAMPTON Airport has scooped the 'Top UK Airport Award' at the 2011 Wanderlust Readers' Travel Awards held at the Destinations Travel Show in London. The annual awards saw 2,000 well-travelled readers score their favourite travel providers and destinations based on their travel experiences between December 2009 and November 2010. Wanderlust readers checked into 632 airports last year and travelled on 265 different airlines during the year.

The providers and destinations were given an average score (converted to a percentage), meaning the results are based on satisfaction rather than the

number of votes. Readers scored Southampton Airport with a high 84% satisfaction level overall, overtaking last year's winner, London City Airport.

Dave Lees, Managing Director of Southampton Airport, commented: "The Southampton Airport team is absolutely delighted to have won this prestigious award. To be voted as the Top UK Airport by this group of experienced and regular world-wide travellers is a real achievement. The award is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our 1,200 staff who pride themselves on helping our two million passengers to breeze through the airport with ease."

### New routes and more choice from Southampton Airport

Southampton Airport has even more to offer the regions travellers in 2011, with around 50 destinations across Europe on approximately 900 weekly flights. This year there are four new routes, a new operator and increased services for both leisure and business travellers in the south.

Flybe has launched three new summer routes to Beziers, Pau and Clermont-Ferrand in regional France. The announcement takes the total destinations from Southampton to France up to 14, making the airport the UK's number one gateway to France. Flights are on sale from £39.99 one way

including taxes and charges.

Thomas Cook is a new operator to Southampton Airport this year, launching two holiday routes this summer. Holidays to Majorca will operate on Saturday's between May and October, and holidays to Menorca will operate on Sundays – another new route for Southampton Airport. Both have excellent morning departure times from Southampton meaning holidays start that bit sooner.

Due to popular demand, Thomson and First Choice have increased their aircraft size this summer, meaning even more seats are now available to Majorca.



## A win win situation

SETSquared is a collaboration between the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Southampton and Surrey which aims to accelerate the growth of innovation and technology businesses and stimulate economic growth in the region's economy, and their Southampton centre has recently moved to the Southampton Science Park.

"SETSquared are exactly the sort of organisation we are particularly keen to welcome to the Park," said Peter Birkett, CEO of Southampton Science Park. "Start-up technology businesses need specialist support to grow, and SETSquared's links with universities, and their ability to identify, develop and spin out applied research with commercial applications are benefits which should be available to any business which plans to make their mark on the technology sector."

They offer particularly valuable support to early-stage technology companies, equipping them to develop their ideas into viable trading businesses. Benefits range from practical assistance from experienced entrepreneurs, to help with achieving funding or access to international markets. The opportunity to be situated in close proximity to other

businesses at a similar stage in their development also enables companies to grow as part of a commercial community.

SETSquared offers new start-ups a unique opportunity to tap into the expertise which otherwise comes at a cost that cannot be justified by a fledgling organisation. Partnership Investment Centre Director David Bream sees really positive benefits to SETSquared's move to the Science Park: "We wanted to be somewhere that was identified with exceptional high growth technology businesses, and you just need to look around the park to see that that's exactly what's happening here. We were previously based on campus at Southampton University, which allowed us to develop really strong links with university departments, initiatives and programs. The move to the Science Park now puts us in a great position to share these benefits with businesses and to offer a first class corporate environment to help these businesses grow. With help from the Science Park and local businesses such as Paris Smith, we have helped a number of first rate high growth businesses secure commercial office space on the park, so its a win win situation for everyone."

## ABP Southampton handles record six cruise ships in one day

THE Port of Southampton has once again proven itself to be the UK's top cruise port, cementing its position at the forefront of the European cruise industry, by handling a record six cruise vessels in one day.

ABP Southampton welcomed Fred Olsen's Balmoral and Black Watch; P&O's Arcadia; Cunard's Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria; and Saga Cruises' Saga Ruby in the early hours of Tuesday, 5 January. The vessels brought 18,000 passengers through the port and boosted the local economy by an estimated £9m.

During a visit by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Mike Penning MP, to the port in December, ABP Southampton unveiled its plans for a new fifth cruise terminal.

The cruise industry has seen remarkable growth over the last ten years,



driven by the increase in demand for cruise holidays starting and ending in the UK. As a direct result of this increase, ABP has, in recent years, invested over £41m in its cruise facilities, which has enabled the port to provide world class facilities which can cater for all sizes of cruise ships. The new terminal will be designed to accommodate the largest cruise vessels afloat and will be the result of a further £30m investment by ABP.

## Key step in the development of a norovirus treatment

WITH the number of norovirus infection cases rising across the country, scientists from the University of Southampton have successfully crystallised a key norovirus enzyme, which could help in the development of a norovirus treatment.

Noroviruses are recognised worldwide as the most important cause of epidemic nonbacterial gastroenteritis (stomach bugs) and pose a significant public health burden, with an estimated one million cases per year in the UK. In the past, noroviruses have also been called 'winter vomiting viruses'.

By crystallising the key protease enzyme, the research team from the University has been able to design an inhibitor that interacts with the enzyme from the 'Southampton' norovirus. The inhibitor works by preventing the enzyme in the norovirus from working, stopping the spread of infection.

The virus is called the Southampton virus because this particular virus was first found in an outbreak that came from a family in Southampton. Traditionally, individual noroviruses are named after the place from which the virus was first found, so for example the very first norovirus is known as Norwalk virus because it discovered in Norwalk in Ohio, America.

University of Southampton virologist Professor Ian Clarke says:

"Noroviruses place a huge burden on the NHS. This is an important step forward in the rational design of new drugs to treat norovirus infections. Now we know the drug works in the test tube, the next step is to see whether we can modify and deliver it to the site where the virus grows."

The research team hopes to translate their laboratory findings into an antiviral treatment for norovirus infection.

The work was performed by research student Rob Hussey in collaboration with University Professor Shoolingin-Jordan, the norovirus research group at Southampton General Hospital and Professor Jon Cooper at University College London. The project was part funded by the University of Southampton, the Hope Charity and the Wellcome Trust.

### How well do we care for people in the final months of their lives?

Researchers from the University of Southampton are investigating how effectively elderly patients are cared for as they move between home, hospital, care homes and hospices in the final year of their life.

They are inviting recently bereaved families to take part in a study, aimed at understanding the experiences of patients moving through the health and social care system.

The team, in collaboration with the universities of Liverpool, Oxford, Manchester, Lancaster and Nottingham, hope to speak to the family and friends of people aged 75 and over who have died in the last year with breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or the after-effects of stroke.

Previous research in the US has found that many transfers between places of care do not improve the control of pain or quality of life. This new study, supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) will help understand the experiences of those in the UK and whether health and social services could be improved to enhance the level of care for older adults.

Julia Addington-Hall, professor of end of life care at the University of Southampton, comments: "People can experience frequent transfers between places of care in their final year of life, so it is essential that we have data that shows us whether the movement of patients across many services has a positive or negative outcome on their quality of life."

"Our studies have so far highlighted that patients find it difficult to negotiate their way through health and social care services when they are unwell. Patients have told us about problems ranging from communication with health professionals, to practical issues such as transportation to hospitals, and inappropriate equipment being delivered to their homes.

"We are keen to talk to families and carers of those who have been bereaved so that we can understand how health care was organised in the crucial weeks and months before their relative died."

## A creative first for Portsmouth and the UK



FILM industry moguls could soon be heading for Portsmouth to hire creative talent, thanks to an event launched in the city recently which is the first of its kind in the UK. Screen Time saw fledgling filmmakers, budding broadcasters and aspiring app developers join forces to discuss opportunities for working together and developing new products.

The event, the first since the launch of the Government's new strategy 'Creative England', which replaced the UK Film Council, was organised to champion, develop and inspire the creative, media and technology industries in Portsmouth and encourage them to succeed through working together.

It attracted over 60 businesses including filmmakers, animators, games, software and web developers, e-publishers and digital content providers and was attended by high profile organisations such as TIGA, the UK trade body for the games industry and Screen South, the film and media development agency for South East England.

It was organised by the Creative Industries Business Advisory Service (Cibas) in conjunction with the University of Portsmouth.

Steve Fisher, Business Advisor at Cibas, said: "We have a thriving digital,

interactive and broadcast media sector in the region which is also home to a diverse range of artists, designers, performers and writers. Creative businesses who are working in the high-growth media and technology sector are vital to our economy and we aim to help them all make the most of the opportunities on offer."

Independent film maker, Kye Wilson who attended the event said "We need to find ways to grow the sector and make it more sustainable. Today was an ideal opportunity to talk about new business models and ways to commercialise our creativity - it's opened my eyes to some interesting new opportunities".

Mark Baker, Head of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services at the University said: "The University is proud to support Cibas as they continue to provide innovative and effective business support that provides the creative industries with the skills to solve real-world problems and grow the local economy; creating new jobs for Portsmouth."

Cibas is an independent service run in conjunction with the University of Portsmouth which aims to provide free advice to creative business and grow their share of the local economy.



# Improving the offer

The latest British Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey suggests that Sussex business confidence is up, and this appears to be reflected in the commercial development cycle as interest in bringing forward new space sharpens. Locate East Sussex is working with landowners/developers on several new schemes that it is hoped will ultimately create new space for incoming businesses.

Occupier interest also seems to be getting stronger. As you'll read elsewhere in this survey, the Saga Group has bought a building in Hastings' new business district with the gain of up to 800 new jobs – a cracking success for the Sea Space team. Take-up of new or good quality space elsewhere seems to be strong, with Phase One of the new Chaucer Business Park in Polegate being virtually sold or let barely 12 months after construction. Even more encouraging, 30% of the second phase, due to complete in April 2011, has already been let or sold off-plan. This pattern extends to micro or start-up companies in Newhaven, with the Basepoint managed Enterprise Centre reporting 100% occupancy and a healthy waiting list.

Penny Shearer, Economic Development Manager in Eastbourne, reports economic indicators are positive in East Sussex's largest town: "Town centre voids are currently below the national average, and although this is a seaside location dependent on the service sector for its employment, general business opinion is positive, and unemployment is on the decline with increased numbers of graduates in the labour pool".

In order to better present vacant space to potential occupiers, Locate East Sussex has carried out a root and branch upgrade to its website: [www.locateeast.sussex.org](http://www.locateeast.sussex.org). The new site features a commercial property search bar on each page allowing quick access to a revamped searchable database with a much improved results pages. Companies can see a wide range of new and second-hand buildings of all types throughout the county in one place.

Users of the system will see that in Bexhill-on-Sea, Rother District Council



*The Elva Business Centre.*

has recently opened the doors to the Elva Business Centre. Named after the sporting car marque from the 1950's, which was designed and built only a few hundred yards away, this is a 24,326 sq.ft. brand new development of light industrial and office business space in three blocks which will accommodate start-up and expanding businesses looking for short term leases, on an "easy-in, easy-out" lease basis.

Green and sustainable features of this project include Photovoltaic roof panels, Ground Source Heat Pumps and an energy-saving, environmentally friendly Road Energy system capable of heating and cooling buildings by taking advantage of the superior absorption

capacity of asphalt.

Motor Racing legend John Surtees formally opened the Centre, which is already proving highly popular, with over half of the space let within six months. It is just part of an extensive regeneration programme led by Rother District Council, which includes also its £5m 'Next Wave' seafront refurbishment and a £2m refurbishment of Bexhill Museum.

## In the pipeline:

A development of new move-on office space in Drove Road Newhaven as part of a mixed-use scheme is nearing practical completion; across the road from the Chaucer Business Park (above), in Polegate, development has com-

menced on a mixed-use scheme which will deliver some 70,000 sq.ft. of offices;

A little further down the line, a major business park site at prestigious Sovereign Harbour development in Eastbourne is available for buying or letting.

Hamish Monro, Chairman of Locate East Sussex comments: "I'm pleased with the way the East Sussex economy is moving towards sustainable growth. The new developments in the pipeline will add yet more to the attractiveness of the County as a first-rate location for business".

For more information telephone Mike Cogswell, Locate East Sussex 01424 205510.

## New news for 1066 Country

HAVING just passed what is said to be the most depressing day of the year, January could well be described as a gloomy month for most. That's if you don't happen to be one of these fortunate award winners who are grinning from ear and spreading a great deal of much appreciated sunshine on the tourism and culinary scene here in 1066 Country.

Five star Saltcote Place in Rye was delighted to hear of their third place in the top ten B&Bs in the world, as voted by Trip Advisor subscribers this month. Rye and District boasts one of the highest densities of Visit Britain five star gold award guest houses in the country and Paul and Alan of Saltcote Place are happy to be riding high among them.

This award brings some fabulous attention to Rye, whose quality restaurants and inns, antique shops and tea

rooms, make it the perfect place for a short break. Rye is lucky to have in the surrounding area the wonderful Rye Nature Reserve, attractions such as Bodiam Castle and Great Dixter House and Gardens and the lovely hilltop town of Winchelsea, not to mention nearby Camber Sands.

Hot on the heels of this news, The Curlew at Bodiam was delighted to announce that they have joined 142 top UK and Ireland restaurants after earning its first Michelin Star in the 2011 Guide.

The Curlew is located in a structurally restored Grade II listed timber framed 17th Century Coaching Inn. The Curlew owners, Mark and Sara Colley's vision was to deliver a national standard restaurant on the doorstep of a local community passionate about food and dining; a restaurant that bridged the gap between

gastro pub and fine dining, a modern, British Bistro.

After receiving the news, Mark and Sara Colley enthused: "The Curlew's Michelin star has come as a very, very welcome surprise. The star represents the hard work of so many people, most notably our very talented Head Chef, Neil McCue, a raft of incredible local suppliers and a staff team committed to good service."

Head Chef Neil McCue added: "This star is all about sourcing excellent ingredients and letting them speak for themselves and trusting produce. It's about not hiding anything or piling more and more on the plate, it's for stripping ingredients right back to their core."

And the good news doesn't stop there! Just after hearing about these exciting developments we learned that

Nobles Restaurant in the historic town of Battle has been awarded two knives and forks in the 2011 Michelin Guide, the only restaurant in town to have been Michelin accredited this year.

Nobles won their first knife and fork after being open for just 18 months and now after just three years the guide has recognised the efforts of husband and wife team, Paul and Debbie Noble, with this prestigious award for their consistency, care and attention to the whole dining experience.

Head chef Paul Noble said of his restaurant's achievement in this guide "We are very pleased to have this long standing highly recognised guide acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all our team and also to highlight in their text that we are very proud of our local and seasonal produce and suppliers".

# Saga's new operation opens for business

SAGA'S new insurance operation in Hastings, East Sussex, officially opened for business in January.

In December, Saga purchased a new, six-storey building - One Priory Square - which stands in the centre of Hastings' new Priory Quarter business district, created as part of the economic development programme for Hastings.

The new offices will eventually accommodate 800 people. Recruitment started in October last year and the company's first 45 newly recruited and trained employees are in place to take sales and customer services calls.

At the opening, Roger Ramsden, chief executive, Saga Insurance commented: "Saga's commercial success is built upon providing the over 50s with great products, supported by outstanding service from well-trained staff. We are confident that we will quickly grow to be the town's largest private sector employer and in doing so provide a range of jobs and careers for those who want to be part of the Saga success story. We are very excited to be opening our new offices in Hastings and are proud of our part in the town's renaissance."

To mark Saga's opening for business, local economic development agency Sea Space—developer of the Priory Quarter business district—held a reception to introduce Saga's management team to business, education and political leaders in the Hastings area.

Sea Space has completed the first four business units at its South Queensway Enviro21 Park and two of these units have just been let – to a technology firm called Poppypac.

Sea Space has also completed the Sussex Exchange sustainable conference venue/restaurant on the South Queensway Park.

Against the background of these successes, achieved in spite of the tough national economic climate, Sea Space is now planning the next phases of development for both Hastings' Priory Quarter business district and South Queensway Enviro21 Park – and beyond.

In terms of its future given the changes sweeping the public sector, Sea



Space plans to continue its development programme, working closely with its partners in East Sussex as the 'action team' within a new Local Enterprise Partnership.

## Former MP opens law practice

Michael Foster—the former MP for Hastings and Rye in East Sussex—has opened a new legal practice in Lacuna Place, the high-calibre contemporary office building in Hastings' Priory Quarter business district.

A reception event for the business community to mark the opening of the new practice, Michael Foster Solicitor, was held in December. Lord Charles Falconer attended and made a speech as chief guest, along with Hastings Mayor Kim Forward. Falconer—himself a practising lawyer—served in Tony Blair's Cabinet as Lord Chancellor. He has a particular interest in Hastings as he was the Regeneration Minister who awarded the initial government funding to enable economic development company Sea Space to start creating Priory Quarter.

Michael Foster Solicitor will specialise in mediation services and employment law, for companies and employees alike. Foster is well-qualified to advise on such issues, having been Equalities Minister in the last Government and helped to steer the Equalities Bill through Parliament.

Michael Foster comments: "It's exciting to return to the sharp end of the law and I'm greatly looking forward to

providing employment advice and mediation services. My recent experience as Equalities Minister has given me particular expertise in equality and discrimination matters.

Foster continues: "Hastings is such a different place to run a business these days. Our new offices in Priory Quarter are a great base from which to serve local people and companies."

The Lacuna Place offices are in the heart of the Priory Quarter business district in Hastings town centre, two minutes' walk from the rail station, University Centre and new Sussex Coast College. Other companies within the building include Bibby Financial Services, Heringtons Solicitors and, on the ground floor, a Tesco store. There are still offices available to let in Lacuna Place: one 8,186 sq. ft. floor plus three smaller office suites from 775 to 2,600 sq. ft.

Lacuna Place stands next to One Priory Square, the new six-storey office building purchased by Saga to expand its insurance business. Opposite One Priory Square, Sea Space is developing a second set of premises for University Centre Hastings, enabling it to double its student capacity.

## Providing much needed jobs

Hastings Borough Council is leading an East Sussex partnership, which has provided much needed jobs for unemployed people. A total of 354 jobs across East Sussex for unemployed peo-

ple were created as part of the partnership, which so far has given 280 East Sussex residents the opportunity to gain a Future Jobs Fund job.

The jobs are aimed at young people and those living in areas of high unemployment who have been claiming out of work benefits for 6-12 months

Future Jobs Fund employees are doing a variety of jobs of benefit to the community including: Grounds Maintenance, Catering, Administration, IT support, Delivery driving, Adult and Child Care, Arts and Creative.

Future Jobs Fund employees receive one to one support and guidance throughout their six month employment and have access to free accredited training.

The Seaview Project is one of the community organisations which has benefited from the financial contribution made by the Department of work and pensions which makes up the jobs fund. Mike Cornish, Chief Executive, said: "The Seaview Project has provided work placements for a number of Future Jobs Fund workers over the past year and has benefited from the range of skills and enthusiasm these people have brought to the jobs they are doing. We have had kitchen workers, activity workers, arts workers, housing workers and maintenance workers. Without the invaluable input from these staff Seaview would not have been able to provide all of the services we have to the vulnerable people we work with. The FJF staff have benefited from the real work experience we have been able to provide and it is really pleasing that one of the people Future Job Fund kitchen assistants is now working with us on a permanent basis as the Seaview Project Cook. The feedback we have had from other Future Jobs Fund Staff is that working at Seaview has provided invaluable experience which helps in their search for permanent employment."

Sarah Trott, who is employed at Hastings Borough Council through the scheme, said "Getting this job has been a great opportunity for me to gain vital skills and experience and also gain accredited qualification, which I will need for my future career."

# Shopping centres in 'market' towns

IN THESE challenging economic times, how do you make a small or 'market' town shopping centres successful? The management of the Orchards, a 150,000 sq. ft. unit in Haywards Heath, is pursuing an imaginative strategy.

Across the country, investors, councils and communities in 'market' or small towns fret about the future of their town centres. Councils want these to be vibrant, meeting local needs as well as economically strong while retailers and property investors seek demanding returns. The community itself want good local shopping, value for money and a lively but pleasant space.

But satisfying all three is a real juggling act. In small town centres, the percentage of the local population who shop locally is low – figures between 30-40% are common. So retailers complain local people don't shop enough locally while communities retort that they have to go 'out of town' (or on the internet) because the local shopping mix is too limited.

So what's the best approach to re-

visiting our market town centres remembering that residents of market towns don't want Bluewater replicas saturating their piece of England. And what part should the small shopping mall play?

## MARKET SHARE BATTLES

Haywards Heath in West Sussex is typical of a small 'market town' trying to map its future. The Orchards is a pension fund owned development which opened in 1982 – located in the centre of town and housing a blend of top high street names and independents. But, with research showing that its market share of shoppers within its core catchment area is only 21.8%, the problem had to be faced.

## SHORT TERM SENSE – LONG TERM SUCCESS

Ian Goodridge, who manages the Orchards, is very clear about the future. He believes passionately that shopping centres like his should be 'owned' by the people of the community: "We're not a separate entity; we need to work together

with the local and district councils on a common approach. Otherwise revitalising the town centre becomes an impossible task with disparate plans fragmenting the effort." He says a shopping centre is only as good as the whole town and that means taking a holistic approach to the shopping mix, the local infrastructure, right down to the signage and the street scene.

## THE VILLAGE GREEN

The business model of larger shopping destinations, which combine shopping with leisure facilities such as multi screen cinemas and various sports amenities to increase dwell time and appeal, is not feasible in a small town. However, smaller centres can tap into the needs of the community and the local surroundings

The Orchards has been successful in promoting a 'village green' atmosphere which complements the local surroundings of the town. As Ian explains: "In summer visitors here can relax in a

deckchair on the artificial turf and watch many forms of entertainment, including Morris dancers, arts and crafts displays, punch and judy, salsa dancing – even a Bunching Bronco teach-in!"

The local appeal of the centre has also increased by on-stage audience participation – including a series of karaoke competitions which culminated in a large stage performance in the local park on a jointly promoted and well attended Town Day.

Ian is adamant that, with ever escalating fuel charges, the convenience of local shopping is poised to make a return. He insists that: "If smaller centres can identify a point of difference, offering a unique and entertaining shopping experience which connects with the character of the town they serve, they can offer a viable alternative to the larger malls."

Partnership, promotion and persistence are the order of the day for this small centre with big ambition for itself and its home. Success will hopefully breed success.



© VisitWiltshire/Bryn Jones

## Wiltshire continues to attract major investment

Wiltshire's excellence as a business location has once again been highlighted with Greggs' planned investment in a new factory and distribution centre in Amesbury.

Plans are already in place to build on a five-and-a-half acre distribution site at Solstice Park, as part of the company's expansion which will see the creation of up to 250 shops in the south west over the next few years.

Wiltshire offers excellent links to London, Swindon, Bristol, Cardiff, Bath and Southampton, a highly-skilled workforce (55.3% of the population is qualified NVQ 3 or above) and world-class scientific research and development centres (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Health Protection Agency and QinetiQ). Wiltshire attracts a wide range of industries, from IT and engineering to biotechnology and food and drink

The new Greggs factory will be part

of a thriving business community in Wiltshire, which includes organisations such as Dyson Appliances, Real World Studios, DTR VMS, Dolby Europe and Danone.

The Invest in Wiltshire team, which is made up of representatives from Wiltshire Council, JobCentrePlus, Business Link and the Local Economic Partnerships for North, Mid and South Wiltshire, worked with Wiltshire College to support Greggs with the expansion plans.

The team offers assistance with property searches, recruitment and training, networking opportunities, research and data information (including finance support when available) and by assembling a tailored investment support team for major investors.

Wiltshire Council's cabinet member with responsibility for economic development, John Brady, welcomed the news that Greggs would be investing in the county, creating approximately 300 jobs. He added: "This really shows partnership working for the good of the county at its best. Investment like this is most welcome especially at a time when the whole country is facing challenges due to the current economic climate."

The company's investment in Amesbury means it will be in good position to benefit from the Salisbury Vision, one of the three major regeneration programmes in Wiltshire, which also includes the Chippenham Vision and Transforming Trowbridge.

The programmes will improve the

quality of life for residents, experience for visitors and economic environment for businesses, creating excellent places to live, work and visit. Projects include town/city centre regeneration, transport improvements, workspace development, and leisure and facilities tourism.

Greggs' future employees will join local residents, workers and visitors in benefiting from planned improvements across Wiltshire. These include the new visitor centre at Stonehenge, new retail centres such as the Shires Gateway in Trowbridge and the new Maltings retail-led development in Salisbury. With almost three quarters of the county designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Wiltshire offers a wide choice of beautiful places to visit.

## Bridgwater – a vision for the future

Bridgwater has a huge amount going for it:

- a prime strategic location, midway between Exeter and Bristol, with excellent road and rail links;
- a strong trading and manufacturing tradition, backed by one of the most business-friendly local authorities in the region, in Sedgemoor District Council;
- in Bridgwater College, one of the highest-achieving FE colleges in the

country, which has just opened a state of the art Energy Skills Centre to provide the skilled workers that Bridgwater's booming energy sector will need;

- the £10 billion investment in a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, which will bring millions of pounds into the local economy and generate thousands of new jobs, both directly and in the supply chain;
- beautiful countryside and coastline

all around;

- great community spirit, epitomised by its world-famous Carnival, which stands for the sort of town Bridgwater is: vibrant, colourful, sometimes unconventional but always resourceful.

### Bridgwater is forging ahead.

With major developments like North-East Bridgwater, the new schools programme and the Energy Skills Centre

already under way, and others – including Northgate, the BAE systems site at Puriton, the Meads Eco-Park and the Bridgwater Gateway (near Junction 24) – in the pipeline, the town's economy is probably growing faster than that of any other part of the region.

But Bridgwater is just as interested in the quality of development as in the quantity of it. The Council has an Economic Master plan, which focuses on enabling Private sector investment, consistent with local Policy objectives. The aspiration is to centre economic growth and restructuring in ways which help tackle poor image, deprivation and skill levels. Sedgemoor District Council see Bridgwater as the 'heart' of a new low carbon cluster stimulating enterprise and prosperity. That is why a public-private partnership, led by Sedgemoor DC, has put together a 'vision' for the future of the town, built around a thriving town centre, a transformed river frontage and attracting new, high-skill, jobs.

You can find out more about Bridgwater on [www.bridgwaterchallenge.co.uk](http://www.bridgwaterchallenge.co.uk) and we will shortly be launching a new website and brand [www.investbridgwater.org](http://www.investbridgwater.org) specifically to attract new investment.

## Swindon business leaders discuss transport priorities

THE second meeting of GWE Business West's Initiative in Swindon regular Transport and Connectivity Committee took place recently. A number of senior business leaders attended including Halcrow, Alder King, RPS Planning and Transport and DPDS.

Swindon Borough Council's Director of Planning and Transport, Dave Potter, attended the meeting to continue discussions about the Council's plans for the future of transport in Swindon and give an update on the Local Transport Plan 3.

One of the key issues to arise during the meeting was the review of local bus

provisions. The Council is trying to affect a modal shift and encourage people to use public transport. However, the businesses noted that in order for this to be best achieved the bus routes may need to be realigned to service key employee commuter routes.

Business leaders also expressed their support for the Council's proposals for the adoption of intelligent transport systems to improve the transport flow in the town.

Frustration was voiced due to the expense of railway tickets from Swindon to London Paddington which operates

one of the most expensive routes in Europe. Further to this, disappointment was also raised due to the hold put on the electrification of the mainline route from London.

Ian Larrard, Director of Initiative in Swindon, GWE Business West said: "Businesses in Swindon are keen to express their views to the Council to help assist with the transport requirements of the town. The Initiative in Swindon will continue to bring business together to discuss the important issues for the local area, and ensure that the business voice is heard."

# Balance of power shifts to local communities

THE Decentralisation and Localism Bill announced in Parliament on 13th December represents one of the most significant pieces of legislation for local government for some time. It shifts the balance of power away from the centre to local authorities and local communities. It includes new powers for communities to play a greater role in local service delivery and provision, and brings in proposals for directly-elected mayors in all our major cities.

The key measures included in the Bill are as follows:

- Power of general competence providing local authorities with greater legal powers

- A community right to build and a community right to challenge
- Ability for local people to trigger a referendum on any local issue
- Measures to introduce elected mayors in key cities
- Scrapping of housing targets and Regional Spatial Strategies
- Changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy
- Introduction of neighbourhood plans and community ability to propose development without planning permission
- Abolition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission
- Changes to the way business rates are managed.

## Building of 44,000 new houses scrapped

A Business Response to the Localism Bill – from Tessa Coombes, Director of Policy and Strategy at GWE Business West

THE confirmation in the Bill that the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) will be abolished comes as no surprise but will have significant implications for the growth and development of the Bristol City Region. In the West of England, plans to build 44,000 houses have already been removed from local planning documents as a result of this change. That amounts to one third of the new homes proposed in the RSS in this area. Already, the Bristol City Region (2) has one of the highest house price to salary differentials outside of London – it takes nine times the average salary to buy the average priced house in this area. Unless we provide more housing – and more affordable housing – in the West of England this will only get worse.

Business concerns continue around the ability to plan for and deliver new homes and jobs in and around Bristol. The lack of any strategic spatial planning is a serious obstruction to this and we can only see the situation getting worse.

### Elected Mayor for the region?

The proposal for directly elected mayors in all the major cities is welcomed, and one that business generally would support as it brings with it a new leadership role to promote the city. However, the fact that the mayor would only represent the Bristol council area means the proposals are seriously flawed. How will that work with a Local Enterprise Partnership that works across the City Region? And how will it help the four local authorities to work together? In addition, the Bill provides no clarity on the powers or responsibilities that would be vested in these mayors. Unless they have significantly different and new powers, what difference will it make? Why not have a directly elected mayor for the whole of the City Region?

### Changes to Planning

The abolition of the recently established Infrastructure Planning Commission came as a big disappointment to business, with the potential for reintroducing delay into nationally significant major infrastructure schemes by referring the final planning permission decision to a Minister. At a local level the creation of Neighbourhood Plans pushes planning power to local people below that of Local

Authorities; generally a move that is welcomed but with a few caveats. The major concern from business is that this provision places planning power in the hands of the agitated few. This will foster a damaging NIMBY culture, putting at risk much needed development at a time when the Government is clearly emphasising the need for private sector jobs growth and business growth. Local opposition to new housing and employment developments is long established in the West of England; this new level of planning could significantly hinder growth going forward.

On a more positive note the absence of third party rights of appeal should be applauded, removing the risk of unlimited planning appeals and continual delay to proposed schemes. Small business automatic business rate relief was also included in the bill which is a real positive from a business point of view.

### Vote on business rates

On proposed changes to the way business rates are managed, the Government's plan to give businesses a vote whenever a supplement is levied on business rates, is exactly what we and other Chambers of Commerce have campaigned for. We cannot have higher local business taxation in any area unless the local business community gives its backing – for example, to pay for a critical local transport project.

Overall, whilst there is a lot to be optimistic about from a business point of view in relation to this new world of localism, the whole conceptual change will take time to settle down and for certainty to return. What business needs at this time is certainty particularly given the harsh economic conditions. We welcome a reduction in red tape and central government involvement, and can see some of the benefits in local control. However, the complexity of the planning system, now overlain with fundamental changes, simply means that it will take time for certainty to return as the Bill progresses through Parliament. The role for the business community over the next 12 months will be to concentrate on job creation, economic growth and strategic development, supporting the local authorities in their role and helping to build a strong Local Enterprise Partnership.

Undoubtedly the biggest test for the localism agenda and the Bill itself is whether or not it helps or hinders the growth and prosperity of our local economy going forward.

# Somerset has the energy for success in 2011

2010 has been a difficult year across the country, both within the private and public sectors, and Somerset has been no exception. But many experts are predicting that things will pick up over the course of 2011, particularly towards the end of the year, and there are a number of exciting business opportunities within Somerset that we strongly believe will help to propel the county out of the worst of the recession.

Despite the difficult economic climate, Somerset has seen some exciting developments in the renewable and low carbon energy markets in recent times, with the potential for growth as the country recovers from the recession offering an exceptional opportunity for investors. The renewable energy industry in particular is still in its infancy in the UK but is set for significant growth over the coming years, as traditional energy sources become less readily available and ever more costly.

Somerset is perfectly positioned in the 'Golden Triangle' of ideal solar conditions below the M4 corridor, meaning it is a perfect location for harnessing solar energy. Projects such as a recently approved ground mounted PV array, which will be one of the very first of its type in the country, ensure that Somerset maintains its position as a green industry pioneer.

Well-known sites such as the Royal Bath & West Showground and iconic attractions like the Glastonbury Festival are planning significant investments in photovoltaic installations too. The planned regeneration of the Royal Bath & West Showground is set to include the UK's first photovoltaic renewable energy centre, including a visitor and learning centre. This will generate around twice the power consumed by the project when completed, saving 2,360 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

Meanwhile, Glastonbury Festival owner Michael Eavis has recently had the UK's largest private solar electricity-generating system installed on the roof of Worthy Farm. The 200kWp system is made up of over 1,100 solar photovoltaic panels and will generate enough power for 80% of the farm's electricity demand, exporting excess to the grid and saving more than 2,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

A recent survey commissioned by Regen SW highlighted the fact that green energy jobs are likely to be instrumental in bringing the South West out of the current economic downturn. The survey of over 200 businesses showed that over the last two years, despite the recession, the number of people employed in the renewable energy sector grew to over 5,000 – a 78% increase. That's not something many parts of the country can lay claim to in this economic climate!

Somerset has plenty to offer companies working in the green sector, being one of the UK's leading environmentally-aware, low carbon counties. It was the UK's first Transition Local Authority, ensuring that measures to save energy and cut global warming are at the forefront of forward planning. Somerset County Council has also been proactive in the development of wind power initiatives and other renewable projects, including landmark schemes to promote the use of bioethanol.

Investment Now speaks to **Rupert Cox**, Chief Executive of inward investment organisation Into Somerset, about Somerset's potential for business growth and investment in the coming year.



In the low carbon energy sector, the decision over planning permission for the proposed Hinkley Point C power station should be determined by the end of 2011. In the likely event that planning permission is approved, this will become a catalyst for economic development throughout the county. EDF Energy's plans to build a third-generation nuclear power station at Hinkley Point on the Somerset coast would see £10 billion of investment generated between now and 2018.

Assuming the project does go ahead, the development is expected to provide 20,000 jobs during the construction phase, with 5,000 people working on the site during the peak construction period and many more in the supply chain off site. In its initial stages, this would involve a huge range of industries, from design and construction companies to professional services, catering suppliers and much more, providing numerous opportunities for inward investors of all sizes and across a broad range of disciplines.

Sustainable construction companies, renewable energy specialists, nuclear experts, waste disposal companies, water technology firms and biomass plants are all thriving in Somerset. It is a natural home for businesses working with renewable and low carbon energy, which means there is an established network of professional expertise on tap and a robust supply chain in place.

The proposed Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) between Somerset and Devon would guarantee a focus on exploiting the potential of the region's low-carbon energy generation sector, with off- and on-shore wind opportunities, solar farm projects and energy-from waste schemes being explored and developed, boosting the LEP zone's green economy potential.

Of course, there are numerous investment opportunities outside the energy and environmental technology sectors as well. Aerospace and advanced engineering, food and drink, and creative industries are just some of the many thriving industries in this surprisingly dynamic area of the country.

To find out more about the many varied opportunities that Somerset can offer, or for advice and guidance on setting up a business in Somerset or relocating to the county, Into Somerset is here to help. We provide a bespoke service to help inward investors understand the opportunities available, offering support to ensure that the process of setting up or moving a business to Somerset is as smooth as possible. For more information, call us on 0845 1222 066 or visit [www.intosomerset.co.uk](http://www.intosomerset.co.uk).

# Heart of Cornwall Development takes off!

REGENERATION activity in the Camborne, Pool and Redruth area of Cornwall is now coming to fruition with the completion of some high quality construction projects, and the success of local training and skills development work.

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of CPR Regeneration, the urban regeneration company for the area said: "It has been a great year for regeneration activity in Camborne, Pool and Redruth. Local people and investors can now see the Pool Innovation Centre up and running and activity underway at Trevenson Park South. These exciting projects, along with other development ready sites, mean that the Heart of Cornwall area is well-placed to move forward in 2011."

## Trevenson Park South Underway

As part of Cornwall Council's work to clear the way for major office and housing developments at Trevenson Park South, in Pool, contractor CORMAC has been undertaking the demolition of redundant buildings to enable the construction of a new access road and boulevard between Dudnace Lane and Trevenson Road. The new boulevard will also open up a key vista to Robinson's Shaft at the core of the Heartlands project from the north via a wide pedestrian friendly street.

Trevenson Park South is the site of one of the first housing schemes in the country to be delivered under the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) new Public Land Initiative. Under the scheme the HCA is providing its own land for development, removing part of the upfront costs and risk for private developers who will be appointed to deliver a high quality residential development.

Costing £4.3m, the new Trevenson Park South access road and boulevard are part of a larger package of schemes in the Camborne Pool and Redruth area valued at more than £9m, and benefiting from a contribution of some £5m of funds from the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) Convergence Programme.



The Government's Growth Point programme has committed investment and the HCA has provided land for elements of the scheme including the development of the access road and the Cornwall Council-led Heartlands park site which is being transformed into a space for leisure and community facilities.

## Pool Innovation Centre Proves Immediate Success

The Pool Innovation Centre, which opened its doors last summer is already home to 20 companies, and with several others in the pipeline, it is approaching an occupancy level of 50 per cent - a figure that had not been expected until the third year of operation.

Recent statistics have also revealed that 4,000 members of Cornwall's business sector have interacted with centre in the weeks since its opening in July 2010.

The University of Plymouth is managing the centre - the first of its kind in the county - on behalf of Cornwall Council. Backed by £9m of ERDF Convergence investment, and almost £3m from the South West RDA, the centres offers business incubation and networking benefits to businesses.

Bernard Curren, director of the PIC, and part of the university's research and innovation directorate, said: "The response from the business community has been fantastic. We have delivered over 500 individual events, partnered with many organisations and our clients have already reported a number of success stories to us."

The three-storey centre has space for 49 offices of varying sizes, seven shared meeting rooms and a conference facility. Its fibre optic broadband infrastructure has attracted several digital and creative businesses, as well as professional services, arts and media companies.

The news comes only shortly after plans for a second Cornish innovation centre, on the Tremough Campus in Penryn, were announced.

## Local Companies Find Success Through Training Opportunities

CPR Regeneration has been running a European Convergence funded project to engage the local workforce in training opportunities relevant to their company and aimed at boosting competitiveness. This shows how ready local business is to grow and take advantage of the developments which are now taking place.

The project has been tremendously successful with:

- Over 140 local companies supported (ranging in size from self employed individuals to large companies employing several hundred people)
- Over 1000 local employees supported
- Nearly 2000 individual places on training courses supported
- Over 130 learners have started on an NVQ qualification at either level 2 or 3
- Nearly 200 learners have started on a 'Skills for Life' (literacy or numeracy) training course.

## Marketing of Development Ready Sites Continues

CPR Regeneration has been working with a number of commercial agents to market sites in the area which are ready for development.

The sites include approximately 24 acres at Phase II of Tolvaddon Energy Park; two acres on Cardrew Industrial Estate; 0.6 acres on Treleigh Industrial Estate and; the former Plumbase building on Chapel Street East in Redruth.

Bill Radmore, Investment Director at CPR Regeneration said, 'It is great to see these sites coming to market. Work is now complete on improving the access and capacity of the Pool/Tolvaddon A30 interchange to provide unrivalled trunk road access to sites at Tolvaddon. This together with the £12 million Pool Innovation Centre means the area is now set to extend its importance as a prime commercial location within Cornwall, the Heart of Cornwall is already home to some 2,600 businesses, making this an ideal opportunity for private sector investors to develop these sites.'

More information on all the sites available can be found at [www.cprregeneration.co.uk](http://www.cprregeneration.co.uk). Developers or Investors interested in exploring opportunities to invest or relocate in the area should contact Nigel Tipple or Bill Radmore at CPR Regeneration on 01209 722099 for further information.

CPR Regeneration aims to create a new sustainable community in Camborne, Pool and Redruth where the economic, social and environmental needs of the community are met, both now and for future generations.

## West Somerset Council enables investment in skills and careers

EFFORTS by West Somerset Council to improve skills and career opportunities in the area have paid off with an announcement confirming a £1.6 million investment into local training and education.

The council has been working tirelessly to secure long-term benefits for West Somerset through negotiations with EDF Energy, which wishes to build two new nuclear reactors within the district at Hinkley Point.

News of the investment was announced by EDF Energy chief Vincent de Rivas at the launch of the Energy Skills Centre at Bridgwater College on Monday, January 24. The government's Energy Minister, Chris Huhne, was present along with leaders and top personnel from local government and other organisations.

Cllr Tim Taylor, Leader of West Somerset Council, said: "The council has striven to ensure that West Somerset gets long-term benefits in a number of key areas as the district will have to host the development and the reactors for generations to come, should the government give the

development the go-ahead.

"We are delighted that this element, which will give young people and people who are out of work significant opportunities well into the future, has been successful.

"We congratulate our partners at the West Somerset Community College, which will benefit from the investment and look forward to seeing its capacity grow. We also welcome new initiatives that will help nurture local talent and skills for the economic benefit of our communities.

"However, skills and education are only one element that we are championing. We want to continue to work with EDF Energy to ensure that people in the parish of Stogursey are adequately compensated for living with the development, to ensure that tourism is protected and that local businesses are part of the Hinkley supply chain, along with other key elements that will make a very real difference to local people if the reactors are built in our district."



# Development Agency has ambitious plans

In 2010, Torbay Development Agency achieved significant progress towards its ambitious plans for improving the economic prosperity of the Bay through investment and regeneration, and 2011 presents exciting challenges to help realise these goals.

Notable achievements in 2010 were:

- Setting up the private sector lead board with the drive and expertise to bring about the physical and economic regeneration, to benefit the whole community - both businesses and residents.

- Launching the search for the Local Asset Backed Venture (LABV) partner to secure a multi-million pound private sector investment to act as a catalyst for regeneration. Council's assets and developer interest creates a win/win situation for the benefit of Torbay. The successful bidder will be announced later this month.

- Major projects complete or nearing completion: Paignton Library, Brixham Fish Quay and Cockington Court. Extensive improvements to the public realm on programme for Victoria Parade; Developer proposals progressing to restore Princess Gardens and Oldway Mansion to their rightful place on the English Riviera as treasured heritage sites.

- Externally funded business support programme and successful innovations centres to help businesses start up, develop and grow. The TDA secured £2m of external funding from ERDF and SWRDA to deliver the business support programme.

- Targeted investment development programme to harness success of thriving sectors and attract related industries and suppliers to create critical mass and increased profile in international markets.

- Helping Torbay Council and Devon County Council's campaign to make the case for government backing for the South Devon Link Road against stiff competition from other UK bids.

John Richards, Chairman of Torbay Development Agency, said: "The only way we are going to close the gap is by improving the Bay's economy through economic development. This means progressing the Economic Strategy and our plans to improve the physical infrastructure of the Bay, which act as a catalyst for regeneration that benefits the whole of the community, both businesses and residents."

"Torbay Development Agency has made significant progress this year towards its ambitious plans for the regeneration of the New English Riviera: We have established an economic development company to drive forward the Economic Strategy, which addresses these very real concerns about deprivation in the Bay and identifies tangible measures to reverse the decline;

"We have appointed a private sector led board with the vision and expertise to deliver these ambitious plans;

"We have successfully attracted major bidders for our Local Asset Backed Venture company and are on target for announcing a preferred bidder very soon - which will bring a multi-million pound investment package from the private sector to Torbay;

"We are working with our partners in the public and private sector to do things better and smarter with a focus on attract-

ing new companies and investment from outside of the Bay, and providing valuable support for existing Torbay businesses to survive and grow through our enterprise programmes and successful innovations centres.

"We are working with successful businesses in key sectors to meet their development needs and help to generate growth and supply chains. We have set up an Electronics Forum in partnership with world leaders and successful UK companies in this sector that are operating in the Bay - to raise the profile of this thriving industry and sustain its future growth in Torbay.

"The pressure is on to secure government backing for the much needed South Devon Link Road which is a critical factor to the success of our future economy, and we have made progress recently in bringing together business leaders to lobby decision makers on the compelling case for the new road link.

"And we continue to work tirelessly with partner agencies on future opportunities presented by the Local Economic Partnership proposals and external funding bids to raise the profile of Torbay on a regional, national and international stage. 2011 will prove to be an eventful year for Torbay, I am looking forward to helping this unique area reposition itself as a leading destination to live, work, visit and invest in."

## Businesses benefiting from South West Micro Loan fund

TORBAY is benefiting from a £2 million South West Micro Loan fund, launched by Torbay Development Agency in July, to deliver loans of up to £5,000 for small businesses and start-ups.

The Micro Loan fund is one of the business support measures introduced by Torbay Development Agency to develop an enterprise culture, focussing on disadvantaged areas.

Fund managers South West Investment Group (Services) Limited (SWIG) were selected to coordinate the fund in Bristol, Plymouth and Torbay.

SWIG works with partners to enable access to finance for those in the local community who, despite having good proposals, might be excluded from mainstream finance.

In total over 90 enquiries have been received, 27 of which have come from Torbay. The four loans that have been processed so far are all from Torbay businesses.

## Cockington management awarded contract

TORBAY Council has awarded the contract for managing Cockington Court to South West Innovation Centres, part of the economic development company, Torbay Development Agency (TDA) following a formal sealed tender process.

Tenders were submitted and the winning bidder was selected based on the criteria set by the European Regional

Development Fund and the Council's procurement team in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2009.

A Torbay Council procurement spokesperson said: "We are pleased to announce that the TDA has won the opportunity to operate the facilities within the Grade II\* listed Court and the new craft workshops designed specifically for creative businesses. Cockington is one of Torbay's finest attractions and holds a special place in the hearts of many residents and visitors.

"The aspiration for creating a centre of excellence for the creative industry in Torbay needed to be entrusted to an organisation with the vision and expertise to grow this business sector, whilst managing the needs of the existing tenants and the quality requirements of such a unique, historic venue."

Steve Parrock, TDA Chief Executive said: "I am pleased that the TDA's expertise in this area has been recognised and that the team also won the contract in

open competition. Our achievements in running Innovation Centres elsewhere in Devon, which help new businesses succeed and grow, has been recognised nationally and I am very proud of their achievements."

The TDA's South West Innovation Centre business won runner up in the UK Business Incubation Championship Awards 2009. Adrian Sheen, Manager of the Innovation Centres said: "South West Innovation Centres are delighted to have won the operator bid for Cockington. The TDA is a 'not for profit' company and any surpluses from the contract will therefore be reinvested in the Court. Our bid has been strengthened by collaborative partnership with the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Dartington Hall Trust, Creative Torbay, South Devon College and the English Riviera Tourism Company to establish Cockington as a premier craft centre. This in turn will help maintain Cockington Court as a leading visitor attraction".

## Regeneration project completed

CIVIL engineering specialists Britannia have completed an historic regeneration project at Gloucester Docks on behalf of the South West RDA.

The £2.7million project has been designed to breathe new life into the area around the City's Victoria Dock including Back Badge Square and Albion Square, the area most recently housing a public car park. Following twelve months of specialist craftsmanship, the new public realm area now comprises a natural granite square and events area, enhanced with three pieces of specially commissioned public art, tree planting, and viewing lecterns at vantage points around the site. Granite benches have been modelled into a 100m retaining wall where the natural landscape slopes down to the docks.

The 6,500 sq. m. of Scottish and Chinese granite was sourced from the Fife Glenrock Stone Company.

This high specification project, which is part of the wider regeneration of Gloucester Docks, required detailed management from Britannia, to ensure public access was retained throughout the 52 week contract. Due to the social importance of the site, a local historian was consulted throughout the project. During the excavation work, hidden culverts and an old flour mill were uncovered, which have now been recorded accordingly.

Three pieces of public art have been commissioned for the new square: a floorscape from artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi, which uses a series of curved timbers flush with the slate paving to represent boats entering the docks; a 23m high steel candle sculpture created by Wolfgang Buttress, which is surrounded at the base by words from renowned war poet and composer Ivor Gurney; and reflecting the square's industrial past, an original five ton hand operated crane, refurbished by Britannia, operated by Midland Railway in



Gloucester Docks circa 1850.

Britannia contracts manager Robert Rees says, "We have been able to complete this specialist project using all of our own labour, including craftsmen skilled in the installation of granite. The restoration of this key area is an important contribution not only to the City's heritage, but is a landmark development for the overall regeneration of the Gloucester Docks."

Dafydd Warburton, project leader, LDA Design said: "It is a great pleasure to see our designs for this exciting regeneration become a reality. Britannia's skill has ensured a high quality public realm regeneration scheme, which will enhance the historic dockland for future communities and visitors to enjoy."

Back Badge Square takes its name from Gloucester's military history, in honour of the badge worn by soldiers who fought with the Gloucestershire Regiment. The regiment used to parade in the square, which is situated in front of the Gloucestershire Museum.

# Work starts at £400m Locking Parklands

ST. MODWEN has started on the first phase of works at Locking Parklands – a project redeveloping the former RAF Locking site near Weston-super-Mare into a £400m business and residential community.

These works will pave the way for the construction of 100 new homes by mid 2013. It marks a major milestone for St. Modwen and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), who have worked together for more than two years to prepare the site for development.

Forty of these will be private homes, 30 will be affordable and a further 30 will be available to buy under the Homes and Communities Agency's HomeBuy Direct scheme. Homes will be marketed from July this year. St. Modwen will also be working with West at Work to offer opportunities for local apprenticeships at the development.

This phase of development will also deliver a 6,000 sq. ft. of office building split into three units and provide serviced plots for the future development of a 14,000 sq. ft. office building and a 30,000 sq. ft. Innovation Centre. The regeneration of the 200 acre site, when complete, is set to create up to 2,000 new jobs in 450,000 sq. ft. of high quality business space, and provide up to 1,500 new homes as well as community and retail facilities. The development is a long-term project that is expected to take up to 20 years to complete.

RAF Locking, renamed Locking Parklands, was acquired by the South West RDA in 2002 following the closure of RAF Locking as a training base in 1998, with the HCA taking ownership of the site early this year. St. Modwen was chosen as the HCA's preferred developer for the site in October 2008.

Nick Alexander, senior residential land manager for St. Modwen, the UK's leading regeneration specialist, said: "The start of work on site is a testament to the hard work from all partners over the past two years to progress this important scheme. It is especially good news in the current climate that funding has been secured to transform Locking Parklands into a high quality business and residential community to be developed over the next 20 years."

The HCA has invested around £6m in this first phase of development, taking the total level of its investment in Locking Parklands to more than £12.2m since 2002.

HCA Head of area David Warburton added: "It's great news that work is underway at Locking Parklands following the investment that has been made in this major development and the work that has been put in to get to this stage."

"This is a hugely significant project for Weston super-Mare and the surrounding areas, because it delivers new and homes, training and job opportunities - which are all in high demand."

"The hard work starts now, certainly, but I would like to congratulate the partners for getting to this key stage of the project."

## Joint bid

A joint bid to secure £3.85m of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) support has been submitted by developers to help accelerate the delivery of two multi-million pound strategic employment sites within the East Devon and Exeter Growth Point



Indicative CGI image of the Viridor building at Firepool.

area, which will provide new land and job opportunities to help further commercial development and growth in the region.

St. Modwen, Devon County Council's joint venture partner on the £210m Skypark scheme and Eagle One, the developer for Exeter Science Park have announced that a joint application has been made to the Government's £1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund, as part of the Round One bidding process.

If secured, the funding will provide capital investment to help speed up development at both schemes over the next 12 months and in turn, generate at least 750 private sector jobs in the next 5-10 years. In the meantime, it will create more than 100 construction jobs which will help rebalance the economic impact of public sector posts losses anticipated in the Exeter area. A successful application could also signify the first step in establishing a local revolving infrastructure fund for the Growth Point area.

At Skypark, St. Modwen is seeking £1.1 million to fund a programme of infrastructure and utility works to include the delivery of new service roads and the installation of high voltage cables. This will help pave the way for the development of a sustainable Business Park at the 110 acre site to the north of Exeter International Airport which will accommodate more than 1.4 million sq. ft. of office, industrial and manufacturing space

when complete. Over the next 20 years, Skypark will help create more than 7,500 jobs locally.

At Exeter Science Park, Eagle One has requested a total of £2.75m to help bring forward the development of the £2.4m Science Park Centre including 40,000 sq. ft. of employment space and a £350,000 Public Square. Driven forward by a partnership made up of the University of Exeter, Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council, South West RDA and the Met Office, the Science Park will encourage innovation, become an engine for wealth creation and help drive forward the development of science and knowledge based business in the Exeter area.

Both employment schemes are recognised as being vital ingredients of the strategic development programme to the east of Junction 29 of the main M5 and integral to the Growth Point's delivering sustainable growth and development for and Exeter and the wider sub-region. Skypark and Exeter Science Park are also in close proximity to the Cranbrook new community, where it is anticipated that the development of the first phase of 1120 homes will start on site in the spring of this year.

The Government is expected to announce the successful applications of the Regional Growth Fund Round One bidding process in April 2011.

## UWE creates work opportunities

THE University of the West of England is launching a new round of Graduate Internships during 2011 following the success of the previous scheme.

The new programme is open to any business that can offer a quality project or work experience opportunity that will enhance the employment prospects for 2010 UWE graduates by helping them to develop skills, knowledge and confidence.

Maggie Westgarth, UWE Careers, said: "UWE will pay employers a subsidy of £1000, making this an effective and low risk opportunity for employers to build lasting foundations and relationships not just with UWE and its current alumni but for future generations as well. We ran a similar scheme last year and testimonials from the businesses that took part have been overwhelmingly positive and many graduates have ended up securing full time work."

"This scheme will be of huge benefit to currently unemployed 2010 graduates or those who are in work that is not helping them to gather the skills, knowledge and

confidence needed to move on in their career. We are encouraging graduates to approach employers speculatively, which will improve their confidence and skills for progression throughout their career."

UWE has invested in the future of its alumni and allocated significant funding to assist 2010 UWE graduates in finding paid internships. The scheme offers graduates a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable work experience and earn at least £250 per week over an eight week period.

### Feedback from employers

Evil Genius Ltd: The scheme is an excellent opportunity for both interns and businesses to establish contacts in both directions. From my perspective it's great to get help on a project I've invested a huge amount of time in over a number of years.

Solsoft Technology: Having taken on both of our interns, we're obviously extremely grateful to UWE for backing such a great scheme.

Asylumcare & Housing Support Ltd: The internship made a huge difference to our organisation. With the help of the

## Firepool scheme

St. Modwen, the UK's leading regeneration specialist and Taunton Deane Borough Council's development partner for the £270m Firepool scheme in Taunton, completed a pre-letting to leading UK recycling, renewable energy and waste management company, Viridor.

The deal will see Viridor relocating its current head office operations and more than 100 members of staff from Station Approach in Taunton to a new, bespoke 21,950 sq. ft. Headquarter office building at the 17-acre mixed-use scheme, which is set to become the new commercial heart of the town.

St. Modwen expects to start construction during the second quarter of 2011 to complete the works ready for occupancy by Viridor in summer 2012. The building will achieve BREEAM Excellent Standards, an established way of measuring the environmental impact of new buildings, reflecting Firepool's strong sustainability credentials.

Firepool is the first phase of Project Taunton, a 123 acre regeneration scheme and one of the largest town centre regeneration projects currently under development in the South West. Firepool will be redeveloped on a phased basis and on completion, it will provide around 500,000 sq. ft. of office space, up to 4,000 new jobs and more than 400 apartments and town houses fully supported by retail and leisure facilities including cafes, bars and a hotel.

The deal marks another important milestone for Firepool since St. Modwen secured outline planning approval from Taunton Deane County Borough Council to progress the first phase of development at the site in September 2010.

The scheme is one of 14 regeneration projects currently being developed by St. Modwen in the South West. The company, which operates its regional head quarters from Avonmouth, currently manages 800 acres across the region on which it will build over seven million square feet of commercial space and develop around 3,600 homes.

internship we have done a business plan, website, and created support services for our tenants. We have also tried different graduates with reasonable costs, as a result of this we are very likely to take two new graduates as permanent staff. The UWE team were very supportive through the process. Thank UWE for supporting the organisation into the next stage!

### Feedback from interns

Robin Smith (Intern at eStress): The internship scheme has been invaluable to me for getting some more experience that is relevant to my degree.

Khubaib Asadullah (Intern at Refrigeration Developments and Testing Ltd): I would like to thank UWE Graduate Internship Program. I gained real insight into the practical world of work during my internship. It also increased my confidence.

Stefanie Georgadidis (Intern at Andrew Kenyon Architects): The internship has opened new doors and provided me with some valuable experience to add to my CV.

# Finding and fighting Radon, the invisible threat

RADON is a chemical element with symbol Rn and atomic number 86. It is a radioactive, colourless, odourless, tasteless gas, occurring naturally as the decay product of uranium. It is one of the densest substances that remains a gas under normal conditions and is considered to be a health hazard due to its radioactivity.

If you know anything about radon, it's probably that it is associated with outcrops of granite and that it can accumulate in buildings, especially in confined areas such as attics and basements.

According to David Lenden, whose company Rpmatters had recently moved to Plymouth's Tamar Science Park, it is surprising how few people do know this, and even more surprising how few of those are prepared to do anything about it. Even a cursory glance of the British Geological Survey/Health Protection Agency map reveals that incidences of high concentrations of radon, at levels that require action, are by far and away most prevalent in the peninsula south west. A large survey (over 93,000 properties) was carried out in the south west, says David, with over 23000 at borderline or above action levels but only about 5000 undertook measures to drive down the levels.

There is a clear link between breathing high concentrations of radon and incidence of lung cancer. Thus, radon is considered a significant contaminant that affects indoor air quality worldwide. According to the Health Protection Agency, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer, after cigarette smoking, causing 1,100 lung cancer deaths per year in the UK; in the United States this is as high as 21,000.

It is also quite easy, and not expensive, to do something about this invisible threat. Working with two other companies, Airtech and Landauer, David's company Rpmatters can monitor both residential and occupational exposure to radon in a process that, for accuracy, takes a little over three months. The detectors, small black discs containing plastic very similar to that used in modern spectacles, cost only £35 for two – one each for upper and lower floors of a residential property.

"Once the results come back from Landauer, and if the level of radon indicates that action needs to be taken, then working with Airtech we can specify and install a suitable ventilation system. The most important thing is to get the correct system for the type and construction of the property, so a free site inspection is included for those locations identified as needing action. The systems can either extract radon through a flue system, or, in borderline cases, may be a positive pressure system which forces the radon safely and in small concentrations out through natural gaps in the property. Both systems run quietly and cost pence per day to run, and the cost for installation is from £100, with a full extract installation at around £1,500" says David.

Of the move to Tamar Science Park David says: "Tamar Science Park provides an excellent base in the south west for my work. There is a synergy with other science and research based organisations on the site, good links to the rest of the region and very reasonable terms. I have been astonished at the level of help and business support that the Park provides. There is scope to expand as well, without having to make a huge move. I was also impressed that the management of the park is ahead of most landlords in having an understanding of radon and the need to actively monitor."

## Disability assessment company opens centre

Contact Associates Ltd provides Assistive Technology assessments and support for disabled students who wish to access grants under the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) scheme.

The company started with the meeting of two like minds in 2005, and has grown into a nationwide organisation with assessment centres in Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Reading and Belfast, with a head office in Taunton. It has now opened its seventh centre in Plymouth, based on Tamar Science Park.

Assessments are carried out so that the particular needs of a disabled student in Higher Education can be



David Lenden, Managing Director of Rpmatters, with two gammadata long term radon detectors.

identified; matching what types of equipment, support and training are needed to best assist the student with their particular course. The findings from this process are sometimes called an Assessment of Need, which then determine the level of funding which can be obtained with a DSA grant. DSA grants help meet the extra costs students can face as a direct result of disability or ongoing health condition. They are determined wholly by the type of extra help needed and not by means testing, and don't have to be paid back.

Co-Directors Una Lynch and Emma Shelton have a wealth of experience between them in the provision of disability support and funding. They met whilst designing and writing training programmes for a disability consultancy business based in the South West.

Emma Shelton founded and managed the disability service and assessment centre at Exeter University from 2000 to 2005, and has 15 years of experience as a teacher, lecturer and senior manager in disability and learning support. She was awarded the inaugural Times Higher Education prize for outstanding support for disabled students in HE in 2005, and has driven through development in national policy as a member of the Disabled Students Allowance Quality Assurance Group.

Una Lynch has over 13 years experience as a teacher and lecturer, and coordinated the Literacy and Numeracy Support team at Somerset College for 10 years. She is currently Chair of Somerset PATOSS (the professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties), had been involved with the Writing Purposefully in Art and Design initiative, and as a specialist in dyslexia produces diagnostic reports and has published articles relating to assistive software for BECTA (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency).

She says: "It's vitally important that disabled stu-

dents and employees should have access to appropriate support and assistive software, and in turn that they should not have to travel too far to take part in an Assessment of Needs in order to maximise their potential. Our new assessment centre at Tamar Science Park is ideally placed to serve Plymouth and the peninsular South West, and the business support and facilities at the park are excellent for us."

Contact Associates Ltd also provides assessments and coaching support for disabled employees whose employers are seeking assistance through the Access to Work Scheme. They have recently been chosen to help deliver BECTA's Home Access Assistive Technology programme, evaluating the needs of up to 12,000 low-income families with children with disabilities or Special Educational Needs.

The company currently employs 150 disability specialists, and has approximately 2,000 active case files. It is widely regarded as the market leader in independent assessment service providers for the DSA, and will open at least two more fully equipped and accredited Assistive Technology Centres in 2011.

## Growing company finds perfect match

The latest addition to Tamar Science Park's constantly expanding portfolio of organisations, CRSIInc, chose the Derriford site as the logical progression in a growth curve that saw it beginning, literally, in a spare room.

Whether you represent a business or are an individual looking for an open course, Charlie Rowlands-Stewart, the enthusiastic head of CRSIInc, is certain that his company can analyse your needs and supply just what you are looking for by way of training and staff or personal development.

Charlie is an ex police officer and enthusiastic, knowledgeable and driven enough to have built CRSIInc from small beginnings into a company that is accredited through City and Guilds, NCFE, EDI and Edexcel to deliver a comprehensive portfolio of supportive and development programmes. CRSIInc also holds the ISO 9001 quality assurance award.

There are several core themes to the training that CRSIInc provides, which include conflict management, dealing with violence or aggression, security which includes counter terrorism and event management including spectator safety. There are also a range of what are referred to as 'soft skills' which include stress and time management, desk management and how to conduct appraisals and disciplinary procedures.

The common theme is that they are all areas that benefit personal as well as professional development, and the training courses are developed with people in mind.

CRSIInc has worked with many big clients in the West Country and further afield, including Theatre Royal Plymouth and Plymouth Pavilions, Plymouth City Council, Drakes Circus, Plymouth Albion, the Glastonbury Festival and Leicester City Council. For the latter, Charlie arranged CCTV training for 16 operators, underlining the broad spread of training on offer from CRSIInc, and he points out that because of this the training solutions that his company offers are rarely "off the shelf" but more often bespoke packages based on careful research of and partnership with the organisations with which CRSIInc works.

Charlie is pleased with the move to Tamar Science Park as CRSIInc is now enjoying business support services that are part of the overall business support package at the Derriford site, particularly access to training rooms and conference facilities which would be a burden on space and budget in other locations. He also feels that his company can bring something to the Park.

He says: "I'm sure that CRSIInc can identify training needs amongst the 80 companies and circa 700 people employed on the site. As a matter of fact, we have already worked with third year medical students from the Peninsula Medical School to provide personal safety training which, although it may be a sad reflection of our times, is absolutely vital for those who will go on to work in accident and emergency departments. I'd be keen to extend this sort of training to everyone that needed it at Tamar Science Park."

# Partnerships are key to improving regional economies

THE European UNICREDS project, led by Cornwall Council, has taken a further step forward with a successful key conference looking at how different models of higher education can benefit regional economic development.

Delegates attended the first UNICREDS event of 2011 recently, which took place in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, from places including Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Scotland and Cornwall. Participants from

Cornwall and the Combined Universities of Cornwall were able to promote the success of their innovative Higher Education partnership and learn from the experiences of other regions.

UNICREDS is a €2million project majority funded by the EU in addition to co-financing from each of the 15 European partners. All the regions involved with UNICREDS share similar characteristics relative to the rest of their countries, such as distance from major

cities, population demographics, and reliance on declining traditional industries. UNICREDS partners share real life experiences and knowledge of how the challenges of an underperforming economy can be overcome and how deprived or peripheral regions can be transformed into centres of excellence in research and innovation. The project includes partners at different stages of the journey towards solving these problems.

Representing Cornwall, and one of the key-note speakers for the event, was Nicolas Wallet, Project Manager for UNICREDS. He said: "One of the key challenges facing universities today is coming to terms with their changing role in society. Universities, as major creators of scientific and technical knowledge, must be more deeply involved in the region they operate and develop a sense of awareness about, and responsibility for, contributing with real and novel solutions to real, local problems.

"By talking to local companies, a university can develop courses that give students the skills that are needed on the job – creating employable graduates and providing industry with the competence to move forward and to grow, generating additional jobs in the longer term. The leadership of public authority is also needed, and could incentivise universities to make regional development an attractive part of their central business, such as widening access to higher education or engaging with SMEs.

"UNICREDS is challenging the supremacy of the traditional university model and looking into the potential benefits that higher and further education partnerships can offer - where several different providers work in partnership, pooling resources to reach new types of student and to develop collaborative research centres. Swedish examples prove that such partnerships are successful in gathering the critical mass of funds to go forward with research and innovation that ultimately benefits a region's economic development."

The overall aim of UNICREDS is to understand the role universities play in economic development alongside the traditional role of education and degree supply. It examines the 'triple helix' approach to partnerships between universities, business and the public sector, and explores current and new ways of collaborating with a view to aiding knowledge

transfer and building understanding of how universities can influence the economic development of underperforming regions. UNICREDS is ultimately looking to develop a transferable model for future education and regional development programmes that can be adopted by the European Commission.

Talking about the importance for Cornwall of this UNICREDS conference, Carolyn Rule, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration at Cornwall Council, said: "Working in partnership is key to the economic development of our regions and this is well demonstrated by the Combined Universities in Cornwall partnership. The Council is pleased to have facilitated this event which has given Cornwall the opportunity to develop partnership potential to ensure maximum economic benefit for the County."

Nigel Hewitt, Combined Universities in Cornwall Coordinator, who attended on behalf of the CUC partnership, said: "In the first months of the project we have reviewed the sorts of underlying analyses that communities in regions might need to make in order to determine whether development of higher education can play a part in achieving the community's goals for the region's sustainability. The conference in Sofia has taken a look at the opportunities for partnerships in regions and how such possibilities might shape the choice of model of higher education, that will be the most effective and efficient for the region's needs. We are also beginning the process of looking at how we can convert the potential benefits that HE delivery offer regions into reality. This is where actual case studies such as Combined Universities in Cornwall can exemplify successful knowledge transfer processes for others to share."

The findings from the Sofia conference and the related research are expected to be delivered in June this year when a comprehensive report will be delivered to the UNICREDS team as part of the conference being held in Scotland, along with best practice findings and policy recommendations. These will be added to the findings from the other five conferences taking place over the three year lifespan of the project.

UNICREDS is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund along with each of the 15 partners and made possible by the INTERREG IVC programme.



Aerial view of Temple Quay Central, Bristol.

## Investor secured for next phase of Temple Quay

A PRIME waterfront plot at the Temple Quay Central development in Bristol has been sold to an investor for £5 million.

Acting on behalf of Administrator Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Alder King and Lambert Smith Hampton sold Two Glass Wharf to Salmon Harvester Properties Ltd (SHP). Two Glass Wharf is waterfront development plot, which has been constructed to ground floor slab level. It is located next to the prestigious One Glass Wharf office building, which is occupied by Burges Salmon.

SHP is a joint venture company with Salmon Developments PLC and National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Co Ltd. The company plans to build a 140,000 sq ft office scheme on the Two Glass Wharf site, which on completion could be worth £40 million.

John Benson, partner at Alder King commented: "Temple Quay Central is a flagship regeneration scheme in the centre of Bristol. This deal offers the opportunity for SHP to build prime city centre office premises which will target a number of prelet enquiries which are currently unsatisfied.

"Salmon Harvester is now monitoring the Bristol office market before it makes a decision regarding when to begin construction of the new office scheme."

Darren Sheward, director at Lambert Smith Hampton, commented: "This transaction demonstrates confidence in the Bristol office market at a time when many regional centres are witnessing over supply issues and falling rents. When a well respected and funded developer such as Salmon Harvester moves into a location, it's a vote of confidence

for the city and underlines the stature of the development as a prime business location."

Temple Quay Central is a £160 million regeneration scheme located next to Temple Meads Railway Station in central Bristol. It comprises One Glass Wharf, a 215,000 sq. ft. five storey waterfront office building; 1 Linear Park, a 52,000 sq. ft. office building and the Eye, a 13 storey tower which has planning permission for residential use. The scheme also offers a range of development sites with planning permission for a variety of uses. Alder King Property Consultants and Lambert Smith Hampton are joint marketing agents on the site.

Hoddell Stotesbury Morgan advised the purchaser, SHP.

## Gloucester Speedy Hire premises sold for £1.27 million

THE freehold interest in the Speedy Hire Premises in Goodridge Avenue, Gloucester has been sold to a private investor for £1.27 million. The deal reflects a net initial yield of 7.25 per cent.

Extending to 18,729 sq. ft. on a large site of 1.95 acres, the property comprises a detached single storey industrial unit with integral office accommodation. It is let to Speedy Support Services Ltd (guaranteed by Speedy Hire plc), for a term of 15 years from March 2004 at a current rent of £97,379 per annum.

Mark Atkins Associates acted for Yelverton, the owner of the premises. The purchaser, a private investor, was represented by Alder King Property Consultants.



# World class training centre will change landscape of social science

THE Universities of Bristol, Exeter and Bath have come together to form one of the UK's largest Centres of postgraduate research training for social scientists in fields ranging from economics and human geography to quantitative methodology and psychology.

Together, the three Universities educate over 5000 masters and 1600 doctoral students in the social sciences. The new Centre will draw on the established research excellence of the partners, including the expertise of more than 750 social science research staff. This represents one of the largest groupings of social scientists in the UK.

The Economic and Social Research Council has granted doctoral training centre status to the collaboration. The South West Doctoral Training Centre (SWDTC) has been accredited to offer a hub of world-class social sciences research. As one of only 21 Centres in the UK, the SWDTC will be part of a national network to be launched in October 2011 that will train a new generation of social scientists. The SWDTC has been allocated 41 studentships per annum.

The SWDTC offers research training in a comprehensive range of disciplines, including in the priority areas of Economics and Quantitative Methodology. The SWDTC will also expand social science training options beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries with innovative multi-disciplinary programmes being established to encourage students to address important challenges in today's society through their research. Themes tackled will include lifestyle behaviours and public health, energy and sustainability, global development and security.

Close liaison with partners in the commercial, public and third sector through placements and joint supervision will be central to the SWDTC as these experiences will prepare students for careers in the global economy and promote knowledge exchange. The collaboration will build on the Great

Western Research project that has united the three Universities and a range of other partners over the last four years in offering doctoral training to over 130 students.

## Forging stronger research links

The internationally recognised research expertise of the Biosciences department at the University of Exeter and the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) will now work in closer collaboration following a new agreement.

A Memorandum of Understanding has this week been signed between the two organisations which will promote the exchange of expertise and knowledge.

Fera is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It works to support and develop a sustainable food chain, a healthy natural environment, and protect the global community from biological and chemical risks.

The agency has already worked extensively with the University's Biosciences department – which has internationally-recognised expertise in biodiversity, food security and environmental research.

Previous collaborations include looking at badger ecology to better understand TB transmission, bat migration to understand the risk of rabies entering the UK, and establishment of new techniques for evaluating biodiversity.

The new partnership will see even closer links formed to carry out research, teaching and develop strategy.

## Report highlights opportunities

A new report created by the University of Exeter for Devon County Council has highlighted a number of opportunities for the county as part of the examination of the Low Carbon Transition Plan (LCTP).

A collaboration between the Business School and the Centre for Energy and the Environment, based in the College of Engineering, Mathematics and Physical Sciences produced the report.

Dr Daniel Lash and Tony Norton from the Centre and Michael Finus, Professor

in the Economics of Climate Change from the Business School were assisted by Jonathan Colmer, a final year undergraduate, in undertaking the analysis.

The report, 'The Low Carbon Economy in the context of the Devon Economy' was commissioned by the Council as part of its Local Economic Assessment. It includes an examination of how Devon can meet the targets outlined in the government's LCTP, which sets out emissions cuts for 2020.

The report also discussed Devon's specific challenges. For example, transport emissions are more than 25% greater proportionally within Devon when compared to the UK average, and agricultural emissions are proportionally double the UK average.

Despite this, a number of areas of opportunity have emerged. The most significant national policy in the LCTP is associated with reducing emissions from existing domestic dwellings. This could support an additional 800 jobs and generate £500 million for Devon's economy.

Policies aimed at more efficient use of fertiliser, better management of livestock and manure, advice and financial support to the agriculture sector, encouraging woodland creation, reducing landfill and uptake of anaerobic digestion could mean that Devon also has the opportunity to lead the way nationally in reducing agricultural emissions.

Large scale renewable energy will have an increasing role to play in Devon, with its wealth of natural resources, for example for wind and marine technology. There may be chances for the port towns in North Devon to support this, and also for manufacturing firms to become component suppliers to this growth sector. Over time Devon could become an area of national skill and expertise in

marine technologies, bringing employment and fresh talent to the county.

## Over 100 PhD funding awards

The University of Exeter is offering more than 100 funding awards for PhD students to show its commitment to developing the next generation of researchers.

Ranked 12th in the Times Good University Guide 2011, Exeter is a research intensive university with a strong reputation. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, all 31 subjects were assessed as including world-leading (4\*) research and nearly 90 per cent of research was rated as being internationally recognised.

PhD funding is available in science, arts, business, humanities and social science subjects. The awards for the academic year 2011/12 vary according to the subject area and range from full studentships covering all fees and a maintenance grant for three years to partial funding. Awards may be open to both UK/EU and international students.

The University offers:

- a world-class research environment with £120 million being invested in research infrastructure
- high rates of PhD completion with 92% of students completing within five years
- research which has an impact on the world and is engaged with the business sector, industry and communities
- strong interdisciplinary research culture with opportunities to work at the interface of science, humanities, arts and social sciences
- superb research and teaching training for PhD students through the Effective Researcher Development Programme and Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Programme.

## £20m privately back 'fund' for South West business start-ups

BUSINESS start-ups in the South West of England have a new opportunity to obtain angel investment in the form of Horatio Investments – a £20m privately backed vehicle based in Glastonbury, Somerset.

The five member team is headed up by Martin Bowles, former Head of Corporate Solutions at Hargreaves Lansdown and Andrew Maynard, former Investment Manager for the South West Ventures Fund (SWVF).

"The South West Ventures Fund has been an excellent source of funding for businesses in the region and continues to do a great job managing its portfolio. However, having now reached the end of its investment period and not able to make new investments, there is a funding gap for small businesses in the South West. Horatio Investments is delighted to be able to address that gap," says Horatio Investments MD Martin Bowles.

"Add to that the fact that the budget for RDAs has slumped 20% and that banks aren't lending and the situation for a lot of South West business start ups has been looking pretty bleak. Horatio aims to change all that. We're open for business".

Horatio has £20m ready to invest across all sectors. The only criteria is that the business must be in the South West of England. The current status of businesses can range from 'proof of concept' through start up, early stage, expansion capital, buy out and buy in. Horatio will invest between £100,000 to £500,000 in start-ups with additional investment planned for follow-on funding rounds. The focus is on all sector small businesses with exit plans from three years to ten years or more. In return, Horatio will take an equity stake in the business.

Small business owners will find clear guidelines about their initial screening criteria on Horatio Investments website ([www.horatioinvestments.com](http://www.horatioinvestments.com)) which should be reviewed before submitting a request for funding. They can also look at Horatio's investment process where they are taken through the steps they need to follow, and the timescales expected for each step. Small businesses and their advisers will be fully informed throughout the process. For anyone interested in applying, Horatio expect to see a detailed plan to achieve strong, sustainable growth in profits.

## Emily's fashions on London catwalk

A FASHION student from Bath Spa University, Emily Booker, is to have her designs paraded on the catwalk in London. She was selected as a finalist in a national competition, which allows her work to feature at London Fashion Week.

The competition is run by the charity Fashion Awareness Direct (FAD). This organisation aims to launch the UK's most promising undergraduate designers and bridge the gap between college and industry.

Emily Booker is in her third year on the University's BA Fashion Design course at Bath School of Art and Design. She entered a sketchbook documenting the concept and development of two outfits based on the competition brief 'Escape'. Emily also had to submit styled fashion illustrations of the outfits.

As one of 15 finalists Emily then had to develop her two outfits, drafting the paper patterns to make each piece, printing fabrics and making accessories so that her designs can be worn by professional models. They will be showcased on the catwalk as part of London Fashion Week. The overall winner receives £2,000 and a work placement.

Emily's designs were inspired by the clothing traditionally worn by Eskimos, which she associates with warmth, comfort and protection from the pressures of daily life.

Emily said: "This is an amazing opportunity to showcase my ideas as a designer and to represent Bath Spa

University, which has given me the skills to make those ideas a reality."

Two years ago Holly Simpkins reached the finals of the same annual competition – the first fashion student from Bath Spa University to do so.

Louise Pickles, Fashion course leader at the University, said: "It is a tremendous accolade that Emily has got through to the final of this prestigious event, which will give her well deserved exposure to the fashion industry, as well as the national fashion press.

"There is an incredible amount of work involved in developing designs for the catwalk, especially at a time when students are also preparing their degree work. Emily has been incredibly hard-working and professional in the way that she has managed her studies alongside developing this collection."



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# West Lothian

## – the future's looking positive

West Lothian, at the hub of the Scottish economy in Central Scotland, has welcomed the news that, despite the recession, the latest employment figures show that the area has gained 1,000 new jobs.

The area has seen a number of positive developments in recent months. At Starlaw Park, Bathgate Glen Turner opened its new whisky distillery, and specialist ink firm Paragon Inks began the construction of a brand new, bespoke £3.5million 23,000 square foot manufacturing facility, which will allow them to triple their present production.

On Livingston's Alba Campus, Glenmorangie opened their new whisky bottling plant, and biotechnology company Quintiles saw the opening of their new laboratory.

Strengthening the area's retail sector, the new Sainsbury's store opened in Almondvale, Livingston in time for Christmas trading, and Dobbies began work on their new £8million garden centre at Houston Mains, on track to open this Spring.



Dr Nicholas Psaila of OptoScribe (right) and Dan Arnold of Epistemy moving into the Alba Innovation Centre in Livingston.

Site work is also underway for the eagerly awaited Primark store in Livingston's Centre.

Other firms growing in the area include Schuh who have announced significant expansion plans, and satellite broadcaster BSkyB – which employs over 4,000 people in

Livingston – announced that it has passed its target of reaching 10 million customers. The launch of the East of Scotland Loan Fund enabled growing businesses such as Helia Photonics, Balfour Beatty and AB Simulation to be supported in West Lothian.

West Lothian welcomed new

business arrivals Epistemy and Optoscribe – winners of the Innovation Challenge – who moved into the Alba Innovation Centre. Other new arrivals include Nisa Today, Planet of UK and Batt Cables Plc.

A local infrastructure development of significance across Central Scotland was the opening of the new Bathgate – Airdrie rail link in December. The new route allows passengers to travel direct to West Lothian from Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Access to West Lothian from Glasgow and West Central Scotland will be further enhanced by the upgrading of a six-mile stretch of the A8 in North Lanarkshire to motorway status. Ministers have given the go-ahead and it is hoped tenders for the work will be approved in 2011/2012.



West Lothian Council Leader Peter Johnston (left) and Executive Councillor Development & Transport, Martyn Day, at the opening of the new Bathgate station.



Paragon Inks' sod cutting ceremony for their new facility at Starlaw Park, Bathgate.



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