



Business Information Point

Okehampton Business Centre
 Higher Stockley Mead
 Okehampton
 Devon, EX20 1FJ
www.bipwestdevon.biz
team@bipwestdevon.biz
0800 592872

BIP NEWSLETTER

RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – GOOD NEWS STORIES DESPITE THE ‘CHALLENGING TIMES’

IN THIS BUMPER ISSUE

Local Action Group
 Awarded **£2.4 Million** for East Devon and the Blackdown Hills.

Beat the Credit Crunch Blues with inspiring words on success in business from **Nick Agg-Manning, General Manager** of the award winning **Land Rover Experience**.

WORKSHOPS that will arm you with the necessary tools to fight off a downturn in the economy

Typically, the Chinese have an expression ‘may you live in interesting times’. It could certainly be argued that this is relevant to the current economic situation, but there are still unique businesses here in East and Mid Devon flourishing. In this issue, **THE BUSINESS INFORMATION POINT** are fortunate once more to bring you progress reports from around the district to add a more positive outlook to the current climate.

We start with the news that **Debra Raymond**, of **Debra Raymond Military Figures and Gifts** has finally ‘bitten the bullet’, and relocated her business to new premises, **Military House** on the outskirts of Cullumpton. Having started life in a large converted workshop at home, the business had encroached on their large four bedroom property to the extent that action needed to be taken. But what brought the partners to this level of success? Debra was happy to take the time to provide some background...

The Business: Debra started painting military figures many years ago. We are not talking about ‘toy soldiers’, but high quality resin and white metal figures that can take up to half a day simply to prepare for painting. It can then take anything from a day to a week to meticulously hand paint them to connoisseur standard.

First Job: Debra originally worked for the Police Force, then moved into a part time catering job to supplement her income whilst the business grew. Partner Bridget Hill is a qualified accountant and insolvency practitioner. In theory at least she should know how not to run a business!



What sparked Debra’s interest in Military Figures and all things military? Making and painting Airfix Kits with her father as a child started her interest, then a birthday subscription to Military Modelling magazine, and the discovery of metal figure kits (and a lot of practice!) enabled a hobby to become a business.

What happened next? Gradually Debra developed the business from commissions obtained at trade events to offering a large selection of military products. Sharing a mutual interest in a First World War, Bridget and Debra first met at a Western Front Association meeting in Newton Abbot in 1996. Each now brings their own expertise to the business. Debra deals with the creative side, while Bridget deals with the money! The business has expanded into selling model kits, as well as other accessories such as badges, ties, mugs and coasters to name but a few, many of which they produce themselves. Debra secured a limited licence from the Ministry of Defence in 2005 to use various regimental logos, all of which are Crown Copyright. This licence was expanded in 2007. Successful marketing has been through attending trade shows, as well as a website which Bridget first built 10 years ago, and has been redeveloped many times since. Turnover has increased steadily despite a reluctance to get involved in most forms of advertising! With so many exciting plans in the offing, Debra has very kindly agreed to allow us to come back in six months time for a review of the first chapter of life in Military House; watch this space.....or give her a call on 01884 34845. Military House can be found down the lane opposite Mole Valley Farmers in Cullumpton.



Another business that THE BUSINESS INFORMATION POINT has been delighted to work with is Exmouth based business 'Splash'. The Company was set up in February 2000, and since then has had a wide range of clients- from the Royal Bank of Scotland and Ford Motor Company to City and District Councils.

The Team is made up of experienced Project Managers, all former Commando and Parachute Regiment Engineers who have delivered community projects and training courses across the globe.

One of the many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects Splash has recently been involved with was helping 60 Royal Bank of Scotland staff transform a migrant school in China in just one day. Managing Director Simon Poole said the event in partnership with Save the Children at Qing Pu, near Shanghai, had entailed months of planning and delicate negotiations with the Chinese authorities. The sixty RBS staff from Hong Kong, Tokyo, Singapore, Sydney, Beijing and Shanghai worked for nine hours to transform the Lan Tian School.

The team refurbished the school's kindergarten, including decorating a nursery classroom and creating three jungle and ocean themed activity rooms, laying out a soft play floor, installing new desks, blackboards and abacuses, and improving the very basic toilet facilities. They also created a 36 meter wooden stage in the playground for morning assemblies, drama and martial arts, a 20 meter climbing wall and basket ball court and activity tables for the children.

Andrew De Groot, Regional Head of GBM Operations Asia Pacific, said: "The way our people pulled together was spectacular, such an intense shared experience sealed relationships in a new way. The energy and effort everyone put in, the enormous satisfaction they gained, the skills they shared and the commitment they made were astounding. The value of this in terms of training and development, community links and positive press coverage was incalculable."

Andrew concluded by saying: "Corporate Social Responsibility projects can come in for some criticism for not providing general benefits for the charities involved, but we knew from our experience with Splash that working with them would ensure we delivered a high quality result, and lasting legacy for Lan Tian."

Our congratulations to Simon Poole and his team from **The Business Information Point!** We look forward to being a part of your future success.

BLACKDOWN HILLS AND EAST DEVON AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONBs) WIN NEW FIVE YEAR FUNDING BOOST

The South West Regional Development Agency has announced that the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB's are set to benefit from an injection of £2.4m.

'**Making it Local**' was one of 15 successful bids to the Rural Development Programme for England for **Local Action** in the South West. The money, which comes from Defra and the European Union, is managed through the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and is used to fund economic, creative and social activity in the area.

The £2.4m RDA injection will stimulate investment from a wide range of other sources across both AONB's and their surrounding market towns in Devon and Somerset between 2008 and 2013.

Counsellor Paul Diviani, Chairman of East Devon District Council, Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership and the Shadow Local Action Group that will oversee the programme, said: "It is fantastic news we have succeeded with our bid for project funding for the next five years. **Making it Local** is our initiative for using our outstanding natural resources in an environmentally sensitive way for the benefit of everyone who lives and works here. I am absolutely delighted that the hard work and long hours of preparation have paid off so spectacularly for the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB's".

The programme has already attracted massive interest in the area with over 80 project ideas put forward even before the funding had been announced. The new programme is due to get underway in October 2008, and it is anticipated that in 2009 a grant scheme will be available, and assessors will be particularly interested in applications concerned with culture, tourism, recreation, using natural resources sustainably and network building/ bringing people together.

To find out more, visit www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk or call (01823) 680626.

IT'S AMAZING WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED IF YOU SET YOURSELF A DEADLINE!

Husband and Wife team, Andrew and Jayne Collier, surprised even themselves with the sheer amount of progress they were able to make in a short space of time, officially opening Axe Valley Bird and Animal Park in time for the school holidays.

Though the facility has gradually expanded over a number of years, the original purpose had been to provide a 'show case' to breeders purchasing the vast range of rare birds Jayne and Andrew had collected and bred. However, a winning combination of Jayne's knowledge of birds and Andrew's zoo keeping experience has produced an amazing range of wildlife housed in the very scenic and well laid out Summerleaze Farm just off the A35 in Axminster.

Feathered friends include ornamental geese, black swans and ducks, birds of prey including owls and kestrels, kookaburras, rare breed chickens, cranes egrets and many more. Meanwhile in wonderfully constructed pens (miles of them), RJ the Raccoon, Ruby and Clancy the Wallabies, Brucie and Tess the cute Kune Kune Pigs, Mango and Tango the Meercats and Canadian Tree Porcupines, and a great many more, live in their immaculately clean surroundings.

The challenge was to install additional facilities such as a refreshments hut, toilet, car park and play area, as well as ensuring the park met with all appropriate health and safety requirements- all in the space of a few weeks (they are nothing if not spontaneous- perhaps they should have hired 'Splash' judging by the previous article).



The result? Andrew and Jayne worked around the clock- and with a little help from friends and family the Park opened for business on the 19th July.

Jayne could not be more delighted with the number of visitors they have attracted. With the only advertising being through local word of mouth and Axminster Tourist Information Centre, they have welcomed over 600 visitors over the past few weeks, with as many as 60 at one time. The Visitors Book is an illustration of how well the attraction has been received. Comments such as: "Absolutely fantastic- good luck" and "congratulations, something else for Axminster to be proud of" speak for themselves.

October 1st – The Deadline for Energy Performance Certificates

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is intended to inform potential buyers or tenants about the energy performance of a building, so they can consider energy efficiency as part of their investment or business decision to buy or occupy that building.

An EPC will provide an energy rating for a building which is based on the performance potential of the building itself (the fabric) and its services (such as heating, ventilation and lighting). The energy rating given on the certificate reflects the intrinsic energy performance standard of the building, relative to a benchmark, which can then be used to make comparisons with comparable properties. It is accompanied by a recommendation report, which provides recommendations on how the energy performance of the building could be enhanced, together with an indication of the payback period.

An EPC is only required for a building when constructed, sold or let. For the purposes of the regulations a building is defined as:

- "A roofed construction having walls, for which energy is used to condition the indoor climate, and a reference to a building includes a reference to a part of a building which has been designed or altered to be used separately".

For a building to fall within the requirement for an EPC it must:

- Have a roof and walls
- Use energy to condition the indoor climate (such as fixed services: heating, mechanical ventilation or air-conditioning). Although the provision of hot water is a fixed building service, it does not "condition the indoor environment" and would not therefore be a trigger for an EPC. The same argument applies to electric lighting.

WORKSHOPS

- These workshops are designed to be very interactive to allow you to be able to relate the topic to your specific business, and your specific queries

There is a nominal charge of £10 per candidate as a project contribution, and businesses in both East and Mid Devon are eligible

- Do you have suggestions for topics? Many of the workshops featured have been developed as a result of in-put from businesses.
- Could you benefit from some one to one business support? Do you need help with marketing, planning the next stage of your business, or do you have a problem and need some confidential and impartial advice? If so, our qualified Business Advisors are on hand. Just contact us to discuss this **FREE SERVICE** and see how we can help you.

Using Spreadsheet for Your Accounts

Transfer your paper-based accounting information to the computer and use spreadsheets for fast efficient accounting. During this workshop, Deborah Turner will introduce you to a fast-track learning method to create a new spreadsheet, enter text and numbers and save the data you input. You'll learn how to use formulas to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers, how to analyze your accounts for reporting purposes and how to print off different pieces of information from your spreadsheet.

**Thursday 25th September - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30**

How to Get Your Website Listed in the Top Ten of Google

Deborah Turner will show you how to increase income using your website and get it listed in the top ten search results, and effectively increase the sales of your products and services. Discover how to use Google Adwords, online E-commerce solutions, and increase visitor numbers to your website. This jargon free workshop explains the tips and techniques to successful Internet marketing.

**Tuesday 30th September East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30**

Cracking Christmas - Effective Selling at Markets, Trade Shows and Fayres

Selling - some people love it, most of us dread it, especially selling to new customers. Christmas trade makes the difference between profit and loss for many businesses. If you are selling at markets, Christmas fayres or trade shows, then come along to this workshop and pick up some valuable tips and techniques from Catherine Broomfield, she'll bring out that inner sales person without turning you into Mr Pushy or Mr Cheesey!

**Wednesday 1st October - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30**

The Art of Telephone Marketing

This can be one of the most cost effective forms of marketing when you know how! If the thought of 'cold calling' leaves you cold, then this work shop is the solution to your needs. Discover the techniques that will optimize your ability to make effective sales calls, and give you the confidence to embark on a productive marketing campaign. With a background in managing a successful telesales company as well as marketing, Deborah Turner will take you through a step by step guide to success.

**Tuesday 7th October - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30**

Preparing for Battle- getting your Business on Top Form

The times ahead could be challenging, and so you need to ensure that your business is in the best possible shape to do battle! Graham Sindle, Chartered Accountant has extensive experience in helping business across the region to do just that! Benefit from some very practical guidelines that will assist you in honing in on the areas of your business that could leave you vulnerable. Ensure that you are taking every opportunity to maximize the profitability of your business to weather the storm.

**Thursday 16th October - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30**

Crack The Credit Crunch!

No doubt there is an economic downturn, but does that mean thumbs down for your business? Dithering is dangerous. Wobbling is worse. Take a look at the market with Catherine Broomfield and discover how smart businesses with good leadership can steer through the slump and be ahead of the competition when the upturn starts. If you're not sure what you should be doing in response to the credit crunch, then start by coming on this workshop!

Wednesday 22nd October - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30

Creating Marketing Materials to Promote Your Business

Would you like to produce a newsletter or flyer for your customers? Deborah Turner will help you to develop the skills and techniques you need to create professional-looking documents using Microsoft Publisher and Microsoft Word. Once you have mastered the basics, you'll be shown how to use the software to create a range of eye-catching and professional publications from scratch. You'll learn how to position text and pictures on a page, how to select colours and fonts that suit your design and how to use different borders and backgrounds to add impact.

A must for all advertising and marketing activities

Tuesday 4th November - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30

LEVEL 2 FOOD SAFETY IN CATERING (CIEH Food Hygiene)

Designed for any of you working in Catering, Care, manufacturing or a retail setting where food is prepared, cooked and handled. This was previously known as the Foundation Food Hygiene Course, and tutor Jeff Coombes will guide you through the very common sense theory to the multiple choice test at the end of the session.

N.B. There is a £20 charge per person for this workshop to include certification. Tea and coffee are provided, but candidates are requested to make their own lunch arrangements.

Tuesday 11th November - The Tiverton Hotel (Best Western), Tiverton
Registration 8.45 am course finishes 5.30 pm.

Assertively Managing Awkward Situations

Were you aware that if a customer has used your business or services over a period of time and has never had cause to complain, they will be 84% loyal to you? More Interesting though is the fact that if they do encounter a problem, and you manage to solve the matter in an effective and empathetic way, they will actually become 90% loyal to you. Look at complaints as being 'opportunities' to create an even stronger relationship with your customers, by focusing in on techniques that will reap positive rewards.

Thursday 13th November - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30

Food Safety Refresher Course and Introduction to HACCP

An ideal workshop for those who have completed their Food Safety Level 2 (previously known as the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate), and are looking to up-date their knowledge and review the principles. The afternoon session is a 3 hour course introducing employees involved in the food industry to the Safe Food Management System most frequently used in food preparation.

N.B. Tea and coffee are provided, but candidates are requested to make their own lunch arrangements.

Wednesday 19th November - The Tiverton Hotel (Best Western), Tiverton
'Refresher Course' commences 9.00 am- 1.00 pm
Introduction to HACCP Commences 2.00 pm- 5.30 pm

Maintain the Performance of Your Computer

Complete simple tasks to ensure the optimum performance and efficiency of your computer. Learn how to free up disk space, detect errors, and how to protect your computer from viruses- all in a very practical and interactive environment.

Tuesday 2nd December - East Devon Business Centre, Honiton
Registration 9.30 am, course finishes 12.30

OKEHAMPTON BUSINESS CENTRE OPEN DAY

Friday September 12th is the official opening of the Okehampton Business Centre, and we at Business Information Point would like to invite all readers of this newsletter to come along at anytime between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Local MP Geoffrey Cox will officially open the centre at 2.30 pm.



Throughout the day visitors will have the opportunity to view the latest in environmentally friendly building techniques together with micro power generation from photo-voltaic panels and the wind turbine along with a wood pellet heating system.

To enable visitors to get as much as possible out of the event we have representatives from the following organisations and projects attending ready to give you help to make your businesses grow and develop: -

Business Information Point

We'll be here to tell you about our latest projects, offering business advice and training. Please stop by for a chat!

Business Link

Will be here brokering solutions for all businesses, young and old

Dartmoor Hill Farm Project

Offer support for Dartmoor's farmers, including the Dartmoor Farmers Association

Dartmoor Partnership

Previously the Dartmoor Tourist Association, see how they are working for Dartmoor's businesses

Devon County Council's IT Training for Producers

Will be here to tell you about their free IT training, software advice and information available on grants for software

Devon Renaissance

Find out more about this rural funding organisation

Devon Rural Network

Meet the people that communicate rural issues to both local and national organisations

Duchy Rural Business School

Would like to tell you about their VTS training, apprenticeships and work based learning

Envision

South West businesses can find out about the environmental advice available

Redundant Building Grant

Are helping rebuild Devon's redundant buildings, find out how

Ruby Country

Assisting businesses through the branding of the Ruby Country area and their network of trails

South West Forest

Making the most of existing and new woodlands, find out what grants are available

South West Rural Enterprise Gateway

Learn about the gateway to the new RDPE grant program

Train to Gain

Find out about the training brokerage and funding available for all businesses

West Devon Food & Drink Network

Are supporting food and drink businesses in the area, see what advice and training they can offer

Women and Work

Learn about Lantra's flagship training grant and support for women in the land based and rural industries

Please drop in at anytime between 10 and 4 pm and we will be pleased to show you round and discuss your needs for the future.

Unitary Structure of Local Government in Devon

Following the failed bid for unitary status from Exeter City Council, there has been much debate over the alternative proposals and the resulting effect on Local Government. We asked Philip Skinner, local business owner and Councillor for East Devon District Council to give his opinion on the current situation.

In February this year the Boundary Committee was requested to advise the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on an alternative unitary structure of local government in Devon. This request for advice followed a failed bid for unitary status from Exeter City Council. The remit given to the Boundary Committee did NOT include considering the status quo as one of the options.

The Committee's draft proposal for Devon, announced on 7 July, is for a Devon unitary authority comprising the existing county of Devon, with no changes to Plymouth and Torbay. This would mean scrapping the existing eight Devon districts and absorbing their work into the single county authority. East Devon District Council is disappointed with this recommendation and doesn't believe it represents the best way forward for either its residents or its business community.

Both East Devon District Council and Devon county Council welcome views on unitary status via their websites www.eastdevon.gov.uk and www.devon.gov.uk

Internet Advertising Becoming More Important Than Ever

The use of the internet to provide information to consumers who are making buying decisions is continuing to expand.

During 2007 the annual spend on online advertising is up by almost 40 per cent, reaching £2.8bn in 2007. For the first time, more money was spent on internet advertising than the combined advertising spending on ITV1, Channel 4, S4C and five (£2.4bn).

Paid-for search advertising (such as Google Ads) still dominates the internet market, up by 39 per cent during 2007 at £1.6bn. Classified advertising saw the largest increase in 2007 – up by 54 per cent to £600m while display advertising grew by 29 per cent in 2007 accounting for a further £600m of advertising spend.

Should you consider how you are approaching the use of the internet to advertise your business?

Newsletter Distribution

If you would like to receive your BIP newsletter by email or fax, send your details through to us at: -

E-mail: team@bipwestdevon.biz

Fax: 01837 659314

Address: West Devon Business Information Point, FREEPOST RRXU-ZBSL-GGZS, Okehampton, EX20 1YZ

Income Tax - Self-assessment deadline for paper returns just weeks away

Don't forget that if you file paper self-assessment tax returns then you need to get the paperwork in before 31 October this year, the new deadline for filing paper returns. Online returns must reach HMRC by 31 January.

HMRC is advising anyone who wants to file a paper return to start thinking about information such as self-employment records, P60s, and record of savings and investments. The fine for failing to return the paperwork on time is £100.



Is military precision and planning the key to success in any business?

A theme seems to have developed in this issue, as Nick Agg-Manning, General Manager and Co-Founder of the Land Rover Experience calls on skills and disciplines ingrained during his service with the Rhodesian Army, to serve as the backbone of his work philosophy. Land Rover Experience South West, located just outside Honiton, is rated the most successful of its type in the country in all of the key performance measures. Although better known as an inspiring and delightfully entertaining after dinner speaker, Nick was 'honoured' to be invited by THE BUSINESS INFORMATION POINT to give some 'wordage' on his personal take on success in business.....

"If I am fortunate to enthuse or inspire it is only because every day should be a new challenge, and every day I meet people who are more important than I, and so should be respected and acknowledged. I cringe that there are people out there who find saying 'thank you' so very hard – it is the cheapest form of PR available- and it's free!

No man is an Island- I take that quote so to heart, as any success I have achieved has been because there has been help or support somewhere. Failure is my fault- success is a team's victory.

I start pre 07.00 which makes me first in and I am last out. I must be able to do, or at least understand how to do everything that I ask others to do for me. I need respect and that can only come from matching effort.....plus!

I welcome every morning. I have been close to death a few times and therefore, I say my prayers at night and rejoice in the morning.

I find it hard to say 'no'.

Coming second is the first of the losers- first is my target and I strive to take my team there with me- set parameters by which people can feel fairly judged and they will respond accordingly.

Be open; politics in the workplace is a cancer.

Stay true to yourself and your ideals and tell the truth..... You will be found out otherwise.

Stay loyal- do not rush to conclusions- and treat problems as obstacles to be beaten.

The grass is never greener- it only looks it- so settle for your paddock, graze carefully and be happy- jealousy is time consuming.

Be competitive but set your goals against yourself- anyone can beat a better player on a good day but can you actually beat yourself?

Accept your failings- use them to your advantage and openly confess and apologise if you do wrong; like 'thank you', 'sorry' can be a very positive word."

On that note, our thanks to Nick for taking the time to lend some food for thought to the Business Information Point newsletter.



DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been taken to ensure the information contained in these notes is correct, however, West Devon Business Information Point will not be liable for any loss arising from the use of these notes or any omissions or errors contained within. Sponsored by Devon Renaissance / SWRDA, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council and Business Link.