global trader magazine

FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE AND THEIR WORLD

ISSUE 9: SUMMER 2013

SUPPORTED BY THE INSTITUTE OF EXPORT

IOE INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Go West!

North America rises to the challenge of the emerging markets

- It's the 'Real' deal for Lancs CGI firm
- Adzuna boss looks to Canada
- Four pages of IOE news
- Avon Rubber's trade bounce in the US

In association with the

British Chambers of Commerce
The Ultimate Business Network

Essex Chambers of Commerce
Better for business

UK TRADE & INVESTMENT

Want to grow your business globally?

UK Trade & Investment can provide you with expert advice and support.

www.ukti.gov.uk/ukti/export

TAKE IT TO THE WORLD UK

global trader magazine

TEAM

Publisher:
JULIE BARBER
julie.barber@tenalpspublishing.com

Editor and design:
ERIC JACKSON
eric.jackson@gtglobaltrader.com

International Project Manager:
GAURAV AVASTHI
gaurav.avasthi@gtglobaltrader.com

Production Manager:
ANGELA HURST
angela.hurst@tenalpspublishing.com

This publication is now available as an ebook
http://gtmagazine.gtglobaltrader.com/

Designed and published by Ten Alps Publishing, Trelawney House, Chestergate, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 6DW. Tel: 01625 613000. www.tenalpspublishing.com. July 2013. Ref: OEI

We very gratefully acknowledge the support of the firms whose advertisements appear throughout this publication.

As a reciprocal gesture we have pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to their announcements.

It is necessary however for it to be made clear that, whilst every care has been taken in compiling this publication and the statements it contains, neither the promoter involved nor the Publisher can accept responsibility for any inaccuracies, or for the products or services advertised.

ON THE NO.10 DASHBOARD: P14

GAS MASK MARVELS: P34

Inside this issue

3 BRITAIN AND CANADA: Natural partners, by British Consul General in Toronto

5 GT SUMMIT: Who could rival Churchill on a fiver?

7 ANSWER THIS: Ambassador Theatre Group boss, new kid of the Broadway block

9 AMERICA TO BELARUS: The Lancs CGI perfectionists

12 THE BUZZ ABOUT BURMA: Spotlight on Asia's new hot-spot

14 ABUNDANCE OF IDEAS: Now Adzuna takes on Canada

16 COOL OPERATOR: USystems boss on Queen's Award and breaking the States

18 NEW YORK SPIRIT: The Brit taking Bibby to the next level

20 TORONTO TIPPED FOR THE TOP: Axxsys boss predicts great things

21 INSTITUTE OF EXPORT: Four pages of IOE news

25 GATE EXPECTATIONS: BIFA boss on the London Gateway Terminal

27 GETTING A GRIP: How AmSafe's got it all tied up

28 CONQUERING THE WORLD: How we did it, by Europlus Direct boss Jim Hart

30 WATER WONDER: 20 things you didn't know about Lifesaver Systems

31 MOVE OVER CAFFEINE: The Scot with a healthy energy drink alternative

32 SEDUCTIVE STATES: HLB on the favourable American economy

33 BANK ON CA$$H: Says Western Union Business Solutions

34 BOUNCING BACK: Avon Rubber hits new heights thanks to US business

36 YES KHAN DO: Benoy boss talks about the attractions of Mongolia

38 DIGITAL DYNAMOS: Cardiff Start on the 'easy' way to export

40 THE SKILLS GAP: Why it's holding us back, by British Chambers of Commerce

41 ESSEX CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE: On course for new markets

42 NEWS: Postcode Anywhere is first past the post

44 THIS IS MY WORLD: Ed's Easy Diner Boss Andrew Guy

Radisson BLU
EXPERIENCE MEETINGS
MEETINGS DESIGNED WITH SPACE TO THINK,
FAST FREE WIFI AND FOOD FOR THE MIND.
ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS.
EXPERIENCE SUCCESS
EXPERIENCE MEETINGS
HOTELS DESIGNED TO SAY YES!
radissonblu.co.uk/meetings
RADISSON BLU HOTEL FRANKFURT

ISSUE 9: SUMMER 2013

global trader magazine

THE mere mention of acronyms such as BRICS and MIST or talk of 'high-growth this' or 'emerging market that' gets UK politicians of all hues weak at the knees.

But while countries such as Brazil and Turkey do offer great opportunities, the fact remains that most of the UK's business is done with the EU – and North America.

Our links to Canada aren't just about language and culture. We still share a Queen, of course, and as Jonathan Dart, the British Consul General in Toronto, says on this page, we have a sense of humour and a liberal attitude in common.

And while some people may carp about certain aspects of the US, such as its foreign policy and overbearing economic might, the fact remains that if there was no USA, the free, British way of life as we know it would probably not exist, snubbed out by totalitarian, intolerant or expansionist ideologies. Like it or not, we are all partly American. We listen to downloaded Springsteen and Beyonce on Apple devices, slurp coffees at Starbucks and drive around in Fords. Our movie and TV idols are from across the Pond.

This issue of Global Trader Magazine reflects that symbiotic relationship between the UK and North America on a business level. As Liz Basing, the regional director for UKTI East, says: "The USA remains our most important single overseas sales destination with exports growing by over a quarter year on year. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and USA looks set to reinforce these existing strong bonds."

And Barack Obama and David Cameron wrote jointly that "ours is not just a special relationship, it is an essential relationship - for us and for the world." We should never forget such sentiments when the fashionable or expedient alternatives elsewhere try to seduce us too much.

ERIC JACKSON
editor

Trade and investment partners – naturally!

By Jonathan Dart, British Consul General, Toronto, and Director General of UKTI in Canada

ONE of the curious things I have discovered in my four years in Canada is that Britons and Canadians seem to prefer each other's country to their own.

The truth is that the two aren't really foreign countries to each other – we share a Queen, legal and parliamentary systems and much of our history and values. At a personal level we share a language (except of course for French-speaking Quebec), a sense of humour, a largely liberal attitude and a sense of fair play in doing business which makes us natural trade and investment partners.

We may be similar in attitude, but our geographies differ enormously. Canada has 34 million inhabitants, just over half the UK's population, in an area 40 times the size of the UK. Admittedly most are located along the southern fringe of the country, but still, distances between cities in Canada are enormous. St John's in Newfoundland is closer to the British Isles than it is to Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia.

Geography has directly influenced the relative competitive advantages of the two countries. Plentiful hydro-electricity and gas makes electricity cheap in Canada, but presents opportunities for UK companies who have felt more pressure to develop energy-saving devices. Green buildings, renewable energy technologies and waste treatment are similarly promising areas for collaboration.

Greater industrial and social density in the UK has led to the development of diverse and innovative goods and services which Canadian partners and distributors are keen to include in their product ranges. Resource development is also a key plank of the Canadian economy, and British companies are involved in oil, gas and mining projects. Hundreds of billions of dollars worth of resources are locked up in remote parts of the country which lack basic infrastructure such as roads, rail or electricity grid access.

The Canadians play straight with partners and suppliers. They are on the lookout for British capital, expertise and ideas to help develop resources across the country. As an open trading nation, Canada has not been immune from the economic effects of the global downturn, but it has fared significantly better than most. It continues to perform at the top of the G7, has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of that group, and is on track to eliminating its budget deficit by 2015-16. Canada has regained all the jobs it lost during the recession, and the unemployment rate has held steady at 7.2 percent. Despite ongoing global economic uncertainty, it is expected that Canada's growth will be 1.8 percent and 2.5 percent in 2013 and 2014 respectively, largely supported by low interest rates and a strengthening in the US economy.

What are UK companies exporting to Canada? It may come as a surprise that oil is the top export, but we perform well across the board on a range of services, investment and merchandise trade, and pretty much anything innovative or globally competitive will find a market here; two-way merchandise trade was £9.7bn in 2012.

The Canada-Europe trade agreement (CETA), which at the time of writing is approaching a conclusion, will deepen our commercial relationship in all sectors, especially procurement, food and beverage, and services. We have a network of UKTI Trade Officers across the country with both sector and geographical expertise to help British companies enter and grow in the market. The services we provide have some of the highest quality ratings from customers of UKTI in the world. UKTI will be producing a comprehensive guide to the new opportunities presented by CETA– follow @UKTI_Canada on Twitter to be the first to know.

We have identified a number of areas of focus. The rail sector is one, with billions of dollars of contracts to be let over the coming decade in Ontario and Alberta. Nuclear is another, with potential for UK suppliers to be better integrated into the CANDU supply chain. And we believe that opportunities in the resource sector are as good as in the BRICS and other emerging markets.

Any downsides? Well, travel around the country is expensive, both in time and dollars. Public transport is patchy. There is a protectionist streak running through some of the economy – by UK standards the energy, broadcasting, airline industry, legal services, alcohol distribution, utilities and telecoms sectors are heavily restricted for foreigners.

But it would be wrong to see Canada as a closed economy – UK companies have found good profits here for centuries, and UK companies tend to be more surprised than disappointed at the extent of the opportunities the country offers. In short, UK companies should be doing more in Canada. It is a relatively straightforward market for those new to exporting. We speak the same language (in more ways than one) and it is a beautiful place to visit. We're waiting for you.

● ***Web: www.ukti.gov.uk . Twitter: @UKTI_Canada. LinkedIn – UKTI Canada***

RICHARDS BAY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The RBIDZ is located along the N2 business corridor that links the province's two major Ports, Durban and Richards Bay. Richards Bay boasts exceptional educational facilities, best-in-class housing, exhilarating recreation, second-to-non-health care facilities and world class communication and road networks as well as rail infrastructure.

INVESTOR SUPPORT

We offer speedy administrative support in obtaining government permits from registration of entities, IDZ enterprise permit, Customs Controlled Area Enterprise, Environmental Impact Assessments, Permits of factory construction to import and export permits.

OUR MANDATE

The RBIDZ is mandated, through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, to:

- Accelerate and improve infrastructure for Industrial Development
- Promote local beneficiation of products prior to export
- Create jobs and improve South Africa's balance of trade

Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (Pty) Ltd
Captains Walk Building, Pioneer Road
Tuzi Gazi Waterfront, Richards Bay
Private Bag X 1005, Richards Bay 3900
Tel: +27 35 788 0571 / Fax: +27 35 788 0578
Email: info@rbidz.co.za / Website: www.rbidz.co.za

RICHARDS BAY
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE
Gateway to World Markets

Business leaders and academics discuss a hot global trade topic. The question this issue is:

Wartime leader Winston Churchill has been chosen to replace Elizabeth Fry on the new £5 note. Who, from the world of business and politics, would you choose and why?

CHARLES RUSSAM

Chairman, Russam GMS

My choice would be the Scottish author and reformer, Samuel Smiles. One of the best known figures of the Victorian era, he wrote one of the most inspiring self-help books, entitled Self-Help. He set out to tell people that morality and hard work were all that was needed for success. The book was written in 1859 and its teachings are more relevant now than they were then, during the height of the Industrial revolution and of the British Empire. By the time he died, over a century ago, a quarter of a million Britons had bought Self-Help. The book was also a bestseller in Italy and Japan. Smiles had chanced upon a literary seam that continues to fill entire bookshop aisles and is one of the most read self-help books of all time.

DAVID STURGES

Chief Commercial Officer, WorkPlaceLive

My choice would be the greatest British post-war prime minister Clement Attlee. His government was truly transformational. He refashioned Britain in the face of post-war misery, creating the welfare state, the NHS and tackling high levels of unemployment. Abroad, he recognised the national rights of millions of people throughout the British Empire and was able to maintain the sense of solidarity in the form of the Commonwealth. Even before he was Prime Minister, he was a highly successful deputy, ensuring that the war machine worked, that the fabric of society was held together, and that the nation was fed.

JOHN HARGRAVE

Financial Director, Pitmans LLP

Why not Richard Branson? He's an outstanding example of a natural and gifted entrepreneur who identifies opportunities to create businesses and improve service levels and pricing to consumers while making a return for himself. He takes instinctive decisions based on his feel for the risks and returns and is unafraid to follow his "screw it, let's do it" dictum. He doesn't always get it right but learns from setbacks and ploughs on into new markets to challenge the establishment. His keys to life and business are: have faith in yourself, believe that anything can be done, live life to the full and never give up. To all the unemployed youth in Europe, these guidelines should be a clarion call to anyone wanting to get something started.

STEPHEN ARCHER

Business Analyst and Director, Spring Partnerships

Alan Turing should be on the next £5 note. He was a complete genius. He developed computing thinking way beyond what was envisaged as possible in the 1940s and shortened the war by at least a year – some may argue single-handedly. He also managed to work well with many people at Bletchley Park despite being what is often thought of as a genius and a loner. He also developed thinking for very advanced computer processing after the war. His demise was very sad and a lesson in enlightenment and in today's society he would not have suffered homophobia as he did then. He remains nonetheless one of our greatest ever minds.

PROF ALISON WRIDE

Provost, Greenwich School of Management

Given the criteria that the bank sets – that the individual featured should be a Great Briton, non-controversial and dead – it's a tough call to find someone to replace Elizabeth Fry. I'd put to one side the second characteristic and focus on the impact the individual had on Britain and beyond. Marie Stopes was a campaigner and pioneer in the field of birth control, and her legacy is seen throughout the world. Without access to contraception, most women's economic power is severely diminished and their ability to play a full role in business, politics and other sectors is limited. Giving women the freedom to choose when, and if, to have children allows society and the economy to benefit from the huge number of talented and able women we see at the forefront of today's workforce.

PROF AMIR SHARIF

Assistant Head, Brunel Business School

If allowed to choose someone living I believe Sir Clive Sinclair, the entrepreneur and inventor, is deserving of this accolade for introducing home computing to the UK and changing our relationship with computers forever. While the focus is often on the Sinclair C5 electric car (and its failure), Clive Sinclair was also responsible for the first slimline electronic calculator and the UK's first mass-market home computer under £100, the ZX80, followed by the ZX81 and ZX Spectrum. Despite the tremendous impact Sinclair's inventions have had on technology and society, he doesn't use the internet or email, believing them to be distractions which stifle innovation. But imagine a £5 note with a ZX Spectrum on the back.

Business. Guidance. Trust

It is not always a smooth road when creating a new business whether large or small, especially now in this uncharted economy.

It is a matter of great concern for indivuals and businesses to **maintain growth** and **manage wealth**. That is why, for more than 30 years Apex Juris has provided legal balance and helped increase chances of success in all stages of growth in all kinds of business, Whether it be;

Freezones or Mainland Establishments,
Mergers or Take Overs,
Contracts or Settlements,
Airlaw or Maritime Law,
Arbitration or Litigation,
Whatever you require,

Our objective is to connect clients to appropriate sources and **keep your business moving** with the times.

Apex Juris
Advocates & Legal Consultants

For more information call us on +971 4 2222 314 or visit our website at www.apexjurisadvocates.com

In the spring, the Ambassador Theatre Group made its first inroads as a venue operator in the US with the purchase of the 2,000-seater musical house, The Foxwoods Theatre, on Broadway, making ATG the first British company to operate a Broadway theatre in the modern era. ATG bought the venue, for between $60m-$70m, from Live Nation Entertainment, the same company from which it also bought much of its UK stable in 2009. Here David Lazar, who oversees the North American division of ATG, talks to Global Trader. He played a key role in the acquisition of The Foxwoods and is focused on further North American expansion for the company. Since joining ATG, he has been involved in such Broadway productions as Boeing-Boeing, Guys & Dolls, The Seagull, The Norman Conquests, La Bete, La Cage, Elling, and The Mountaintop and U.S. touring productions such as Sweeney Todd, South Pacific, and 9 to 5. He has negotiated deals for the creation, production, presentation and investment in entertainment properties across multiple platforms with organisations such as Cirque du Soleil, The Really Useful Group, Las Vegas Sands, Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, Disney, MGM, Miramax, Sony, Madison Square Garden/Radio City Entertainment and The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organisation.

Answer this!

GT *Hello David, your company has bought the Foxwoods Theatre on Broadway. If you could pick one famous number from a hit musical, what would it be to sum up your feelings about being on Broadway?*

DL "New York, New York It's a Helluva Town!" – On The Town

GT *Today America, tomorrow the world? How are your plans going to expand into the Asia Pacific market?*

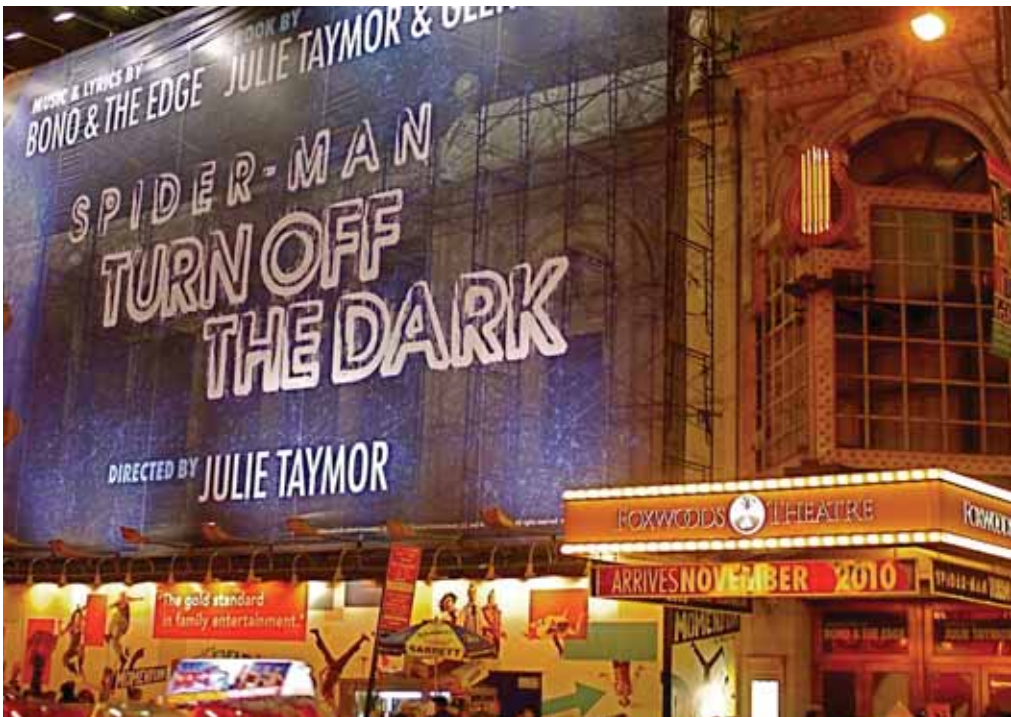
DL We are always looking for opportunities to expand into new territories with our approach to operating theatres and producing shows. The key is finding the right opportunities. For markets which already have a solid tradition of attending commercial theatre, we assess whether we can bring a higher level of service and greater quality of offerings to the customer. For markets where attending West End/Broadway-type plays and musicals is not as common, we consider whether the building blocks are in place to attract new audiences. As for opportunities in the Asia-Pacific market, we recently opened an office in Sydney, Australia, focused specifically on such expansion. There is a fast growing demand for high quality live entertainment in this part of the world, as well as a great existing pool of talent. We fully expect to move ahead with growth initiatives in this region in the very near future.

GT *As the country's largest theatre operator, how do you view the current economic climate for the arts, both inside and beyond the London scene?*

DL Despite a challenging economic environment in the last few years, we

TURN TO PAGE 8

The Foxwoods Theatre: A Broadway first for Britain



A question of trade

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

see a vibrant West End and an encouraging trend in the regional markets. First-time touring productions such as The Lion King and the soon to launch Wicked are breaking sales records across the UK with never before seen demand. That being said, we remain weary of the ongoing funding cuts to the arts, as it hurts many organisations that play a significant role supporting the creative community and audience development.

GT *How does the American market differ from the UK's? Can you use the same business model or will it need to be radically different, especially if your expansion there continues?*

DL Of course, there are certain cultural nuances and business traditions that differ between the West End and Broadway. However, the family seeing a show in London or seeing a show in New York ultimately want the same great experience. They want to see a great show with great actors and feel it was a special experience well worth the trip to the theatre. That's the business model that works in theatre regardless of the location.

GT *You already produce shows in America. What has been your biggest success – and greatest disappointment?*

DL In terms of success, I tend to point to projects that exemplify our interest in finding the best theatre around the globe and bringing it to larger audiences. Our productions of Sweeney Todd and The Mountaintop were originated in small developmental theatres in the UK, and Exit the King with Geoffrey Rush was the result of attending a wonderful performance of the show in Melbourne, Australia. Finding success on Broadway with those productions was particularly special given their unlikely journey. The greatest disappointment is probably a revival of Guys & Dolls that unfortunately wasn't embraced despite a first class team and great dedication to the work. When you have a chance to work on one of the greatest shows ever written, it's certainly disappointing when it doesn't all come together. That being said, I value the experience of working with so many talented people on that project which has ultimately led to new collaborations together.

GT *Musical theatre has boomed, unlike cinema attendances, against the onslaught of TV and the internet. How would you explain that?*

David Stern: one of David Lazar's business heroes

DL As other forms of entertainment become more fragmented and can be viewed by multiple devices in many different locations, live theatre is an experience that remains unique and can't be replicated. Live theatre connects deeply with people in a way that special effects and car chases can't achieve.

GT *Where do you see ATG diversifying in the future, if at all?*

DL We are focused on diversity of offerings in our venues and how we find new ways to reach audiences. We're a company that is all about live theatre, and we like it that way.

GT *If you could run another business or enterprise for just one day, what would it be?*

DL As a lifelong sports fan and Chicago, Illinois native, it would be running my favourite American Football team, the Chicago Bears.

GT *Name your top three business heroes, and say what it is you like about them.*

DL Steve Jobs. His ability to imagine what the consumer will want, before they even know they want it, was a special talent. David Stern (National Basketball Association). He grew the sport by understanding the marketing power of its stars and the quality of entertainment they needed to deliver to fans. He always thought globally. Lorne Michaels (Saturday Night Live). If you can consistently find and cultivate great talent, the success will follow.

GT *Which country in the world would you most like to move into to revolutionise its theatrical offerings?*

DL China. The combination of the greatest untapped potential market along with all the inherent challenges understanding the culture would probably be too exciting to pass up.

GT *It must be great to mix business with other people's pleasure. What gives you the biggest buzz working in the theatre business?*

DL Working with creative artists can often be inspiring. After seeing countless productions, there are still many times I'll be sitting in the audience when a moment on stage makes the hair on your arm stand up or you feel your emotions well up. The buzz of creating those moments for other people is what compels someone to work in this business.

> For the Asia Pacific market, we recently opened an office in Sydney, focused on such expansion

Total War Rome: RealtimeUK made the graphics seem extra lifelike. Below, Tony Prosser

From America to Belarus, a small company is making big progress in the world of CGI. The boss of RealtimeUK talks to Eric Jackson about the Lancashire company that is the ...

Real deal

THE force must definitely be with Tony Prosser – his CGI business is expanding across America and Europe and the company's boardroom is guarded by a stormtrooper.

Luckily for visiting clients and staff, the guard in question is a life-size model of one of the sinister-looking soldiers from the first Star Wars film, made by Andrew Ainsworth, the original designer. Meanwhile his office is full of smaller model stormtroopers.

The married father-of-two, who lives in Westby, near Lytham St Annes in Lancashire, and has studios near his home and in Manchester, admits the George Lucas franchise has had a profound effect on his life and launched his obsession with special effects.

"I saw the first Star Wars movie when I was 8 and my life was never the same again," laughs Tony, 39, who has been the MD of computer animation firm RealtimeUK since graduating in technical and information illustration in 1996 from Blackpool Art College.

Now Tony is creating a bit of an empire of his own, with a list of impressive blue-chip clients including Aston Martin, Sony and Microsoft, while breaking into new markets such as the USA and even Belarus.

"I think our clients in Belarus typify what is happening in the games industry right now, which is where we continue to get a lot of our core business from," says Hitchin-born Tony, whose hobbies, befitting a man in the games industry, are wakeboarding, snowboarding, running and cycling, while he's got a major love of supercars, track days and movies.

"New clients are emerging in the most unlikely of places compared to just a few years ago. In this case, our Belarusian client, Wargaming.net, are one of a new breed of games developers who have taken advantage of the fact that creating a successful game is no longer dependent on its distribution across the usual two or three main games consoles on the market at the time.

"A proliferation of new gaming platforms which enjoy increased interconnectivity has meant that games can be created and distributed more cost effectively than ever before.

"Smartphones, social networks and online digital game stores are all valid platforms that offer games players a valid alternative to the usual Xbox and PlayStation offerings. Warmgaming have over 50 million registered users who play the game globally. Fortunately they also understand the need for high quality marketing trailers in order to attract people to play their game and maintain their position in a very competitive market."

In contrast to the Wargaming work,

TURN TO PAGE 10

Game on

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

RealtimeUK has also made inroads into the more established US market, which Tony has found particularly satisfying, give that country's reputation for animation excellence.

"We enjoy working with US clients – they're hugely appreciative of our work and we've found a great way of making the time difference actually work better for both parties.

"We work for many different video games publishers in the US – various divisions of Microsoft, Sony and Namco Bandai," says Tony, who insists quality always comes before quantity – or quick bucks – for his firm.

"We're extremely fortunate to have such exciting, forward thinking international clients," he enthuses. "Right from day one we focused all our efforts on winning the very best CGI work from the very best clients in the world.

"We had to make some tough decisions in our early years as we turned down well paying work that wouldn't help us get where were going. We understood that to become truly world class in the areas we were so passionate about we could not afford to 'dilute' our skills and activities in tangent or lesser quality areas of work."

As a result, after 16 years, RealtimeUK – whose work encompasses cinematic game trailers, cut scenes and in-game animation for the video games sector as well as TV commercials and specialist CGI services to the automotive industry – has spread out from its sleepy backwater origins on the Fylde coast to the more metropolitan offices of Manchester.

"After operating in the middle of nowhere, it's a very welcome and refreshing change," admits Tony. "Interestingly the reason for having an additional studio in the city centre wasn't actually to attract more business, it was done to be able to attract more talent, more rapidly, and already the plan is working nicely.

> We believe we've established a very special set of values and methodologies here

"We've had a lot of people tell us that they've always wanted to work with us but they couldn't because of our previous, remote location."

And he takes pride in the fact that a northern operation has managed to trump rivals in London, who he thinks have a sense of entitlement when it comes to the media industry.

"Us northern folk start life feeling in the shadow of our London competitors and perhaps work harder with more dedication to ensure we rise as quickly as possible to an international position, despite being so far from the capital city."

Expansion

Even so, to maintain the expansion of the company RealtimeUK has been supported by various agencies, including Regenerate Pennine Lancashire.

"We've grown progressively and organically since we started, but quite recently we've needed to expand more rapidly and make major investment in new computer hardware to help us continue to pioneer within our specialist areas of work," says Tony.

"The Regenerate Pennine Lancashire fund was a great way of helping us invest ahead of actually needing the new equipment, helping us keep competition at bay."

Another way of meeting the challenges posed by rivals is to get out in the world and meet prospective clients.

"Since starting, my role has evolved quite dramatically," he says. "It started as being very sales focused and I travelled a great deal to bring the work into the studio, but I now have two very experienced account directors who do most of the travelling.

"However I still attend key client meetings and major international events. I still thoroughly enjoy that side of my role."

And while the market for video games may be shrinking, Tony has few fears about the future of his industry and the company's place in it.

"The video games sector makes up for around 70% of turnover now and although the games console market has been shrinking recently, the entire games sector across all platforms and business models couldn't be growing any faster," he says.

"The development within the CGI industry is accelerating. The technology is continuously being improved and enhanced and obviously the skills and abilities of the CGI artists is continuously growing and developing too.

"Developments in lighting and rendering are enabling us to make CGI scenes even more real with even greater amounts of detail than before. In particular our abilities in creating truly lifelike human characters is a specialism that is constantly moving ever closer to being completely indistinguishable from real film."

And Tony emphasises that he is hugely ambitious and excited about the company's next phase of development.

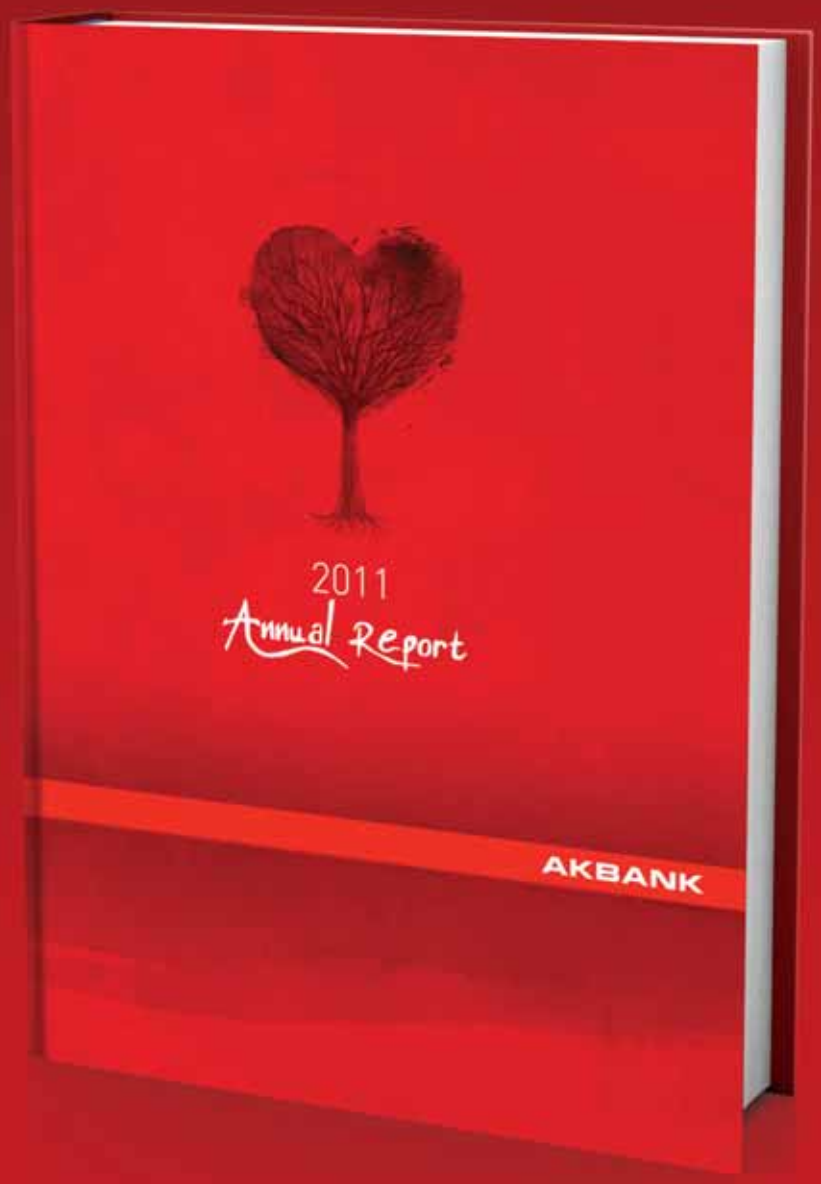
"Although we've only recently opened our second studio, I already see huge benefits in having multiple sites close to talent pools and key clients, so more studios on a bigger scale is very much on the agenda.

"We believe we've established a very special set of values and methodologies here that will enable us to grow much faster in the future."

● ***For more information, visit www.realtimeuk.com***

A touch of class: the Aston Martin advert created by RealtimeUK

“It’s a tour de force!”



Get stronger with a strong financial partner.

Visit the link below.
www.akbankannualreport2011.com

While Asian BRIC nations China and India are stumbling, the neighbour inbetween has come in from the cold and is all set to join the high-growth brigade, reports Rosie Healey

Why there is such a buzz about Burma

WHEN a repressive regime comes to an end, there is always optimism inside and outside the country that it will herald a bright new dawn of freedom and economic growth.

Sometimes these hopes are realised, as was the case with countries such as Panama after the fall of Manuel Noriega and his drug-running henchmen in 1989.

However, as Egypt and Libya have demonstrated, the opposite can often apply. So when, a few years ago, the military relaxed its grip on power in Burma and elections were held in which Thein Sein became president and long-term political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest, the world held its breath.

As Aung San Suu Kyi said: "If I advocate cautious optimism it is not because I do not have faith in the future but because I do not want to encourage blind faith."

But now, with stability returning to this once wealthy country which had been reduced to pauper status under the army, there is almost a feeding frenzy over the opportunities for business and to engage with this fascinating nation. When UK Trade & Investment recently staged a seminar in Manchester for Malaysia – a beacon for political and economic sense in the South East Asia region – it was no surprise that Burma (or Myanmar, as it now often called) should be included too.

Such a thing would have been unthinkable a few years ago, but now mighty and prosperous Malaysia can sit comfortably with its ASEAN neighbour to the north, both sharing a common goal for increased high-growth and development. Keith Win, a Burmese-born businessman and founder of the Myanmar Britain Business Association, now seems like a man whose birthdays have all come at once. After struggling for years with his country's shocking image problem, when he even acted as an emissary for Tony Blair's British government and handed a special letter to Aung San Suu Kyi while she was under house arrest, Mr Win is, well, in a win-win situation.

"It's incredible how much money is now flowing into the country," he told the audience of north west business leaders. "There's investment across the board, but especially in oil and gas and real estate. Prices are sky high in Yangon, and in some parts they are higher even than in New York. Jim Rogers, the former partner of international financier George Soros, has been quoted as saying that if he could he would invest ALL of his money in Burma."

First country

And although historically the oil industry is more associated with the likes of Saudi Arabia, the first country ever to dig for oil was Burma.

"There are old black and white photographs of ordinary people digging down a couple of hundred feet into the soil to extract oil, and now, all these years later, there is huge potential again," said Mr Win. "Oil and gas, palm oil and mining make up 90 per cent of the economy, while China is the largest foreign direct investor with 34 projects, mostly in oil and gas and manufacturing, with Malaysia second with seven projects."

Mr Win, who launched his organisation as far back as 1995 to help British companies set up there, pointed out that not only is Burma rich in resources and potential, it is ideally placed in Asia.

"It's right between India and China and at the heart of the ASEAN countries," he said. "Before the political situation deteriorated British Airways used to stop over there, so it's got great potential for transportation and logistics, and there's a lot of economic development taking place around that."

Another sector attracting strong interest is tourism, as Burma, which is 1,270 miles long with a population of 60 million – approximately the same as the UK – features snow-capped mountains, pristine beaches and 300 offshore islands.

"That's on a par with the Caribbean," said Mr Win. "So tourism is set to really take off. In 2011 we had 400,000 tourists, and it is projected that by 2014 it will be 3million. Thailand currently gets 20million a year, so you can see the potential Burma has. There is a scramble for new hotels and the service sector that goes with it."

However, the Burmese are keen not to sacrifice the country's strong heritage for the sake of an easy dollar.

"When the ministries moved out of Yangon, which has a population of 6million, they vacated some magnificent old colonial buildings, which can be seen throughout the city. Lots of hotel chains have been looking to move in, but there is resistance among the locals who want make sure nothing happens to spoil this lovely architecture," said Mr Win. Although Burma accommodates scores of languages and ethnicities, the predominant religion is Buddhism, which, Mr Win says, creates a general feeling of homogeny, although there have been disturbing reports of ethnic conflicts with Islamic communities.

"Burma is a very traditional country, and when you travel around you will see monks everywhere," said Mr Win. "But they are not backward looking people. Education, for example, is highly revered there and there is

Burma's delights are being revealed again, including the Schwedagon Pagoda in Yangon

a big demand for schools and colleges."

One of the lynchpins of the new Burmese economy will be the construction of the major Japanese-backed $8bn Dawei deepwater port and special economic zone in the south, which will bring the economies of Burma and Thailand closer together. Recent financial hiccups have cast doubt over the construction of the port, although the Burmese government remains upbeat about is prospects. A major new highway, providing better access to and from China, is also being planned, and, says Mr Win, "if it all takes off it will totally change the dynamics of trade in the region as goods will be able to bypass the Malacca Straits."

A new foreign investment law was put in place last year, giving a five-year tax holiday for new companies, when previously it was just three. "And the government allows 100 per cent foreign ownership in most sectors," said Mr Win. "But if you approach the government with a project and you've already linked up to a Burmese company, they will look more favourably on you.

"There are a few restricted sectors where you need 20 per cent local ownership, but generally business is getting easier in Burma all the time. All the sanctions have been removed by the EU, and although some US sanctions are still in place it won't be too long before they have gone as well.

"Censorship has been removed, with hundreds of journals and newspapers available now, with a massive rise in the advertising and marketing sector.

"The only obstacles I can see for Burma really taking off are poor infrastructure and a skills shortage."

Law firm lured by new climate

In May, Stephenson Harwood partnered with Burma law firm U Tin Yu & Associates, becoming the first UK-based international firm to associate with a local firm. Corporate partner Matthew Gorman and consultant Peter Church, right, explain why

U TIN Yu & Associates has a respected and established presence in Burma, and specialises in a number of areas.

The association comes at a key time, when changes in Burma's political and economic framework are opening up the country to foreign investors.

President Thein Sein has ushered in the highly anticipated new framework for foreign investments in Burma, the Foreign Investment Law.

Furthermore, there has been a recent reshuffle at the Myanmar Investment Commission, the body responsible for assessing and approving foreign investment, which most commentators agree should result in a more open and progressive approach.

On the back of this tide of change, Stephenson Harwood has seen an increase in client interest in Burma. Matters we have advised on include:

- Helping a major international bank on a Burma law governed bond, to be issued to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in Burma in connection with the much publicised nationwide telecommunications licensing round
- Advising a well known Korean clothing company on the establishment of garment manufacturing operations in Burma; and
- Advising a leading Burmese conglomerate with a turnover of $363m in connection with a housing project.

After being largely off-limits for most of the last 30 years, Burma is now emerging as a high growth target market for investment, due to the size of its population and an abundance of natural resources, including arable land, oil and gas, minerals and freshwater and marine reserves.

Burma has a population of around 60 million, and potentially provides a pool of young, motivated individuals eager to work at regionally-competitive wages plus a sizeable market for a whole host of consumer goods and services.

Coca Cola and Ford are just two examples of high-profile companies that have announced deals in Burma in recent months. Burma also has a range of attractive tourist destinations. These attributes, together with its strategic location bordering Bangladesh, Thailand, India, Laos and China give Burma the potential to emerge as one of the fastest growing economies of the 21st century.

Highlights of the new FIL include:

- No maximum foreign ownership level for a large number of industries. Subject to the discretionary approval of MIC foreign investors may own up to 100% of the investment project. Retail and wholesale activities have been opened up to foreign investment.
- Tax relief for foreign investors.
- Foreign investors able to lease land from government or authorised private owners for a period of 50 years, with two 10-year extensions possible.
- Where foreign investment is in sectors requiring skilled personnel, foreign companies are permitted to use foreign employees with the relevant skills. However, locals must make up at least 25% of the workforce in the first two years, 50% in the next two years and 75% in the third two-year period.

The association between the two companies will extend the reach of both firms, enabling each to broaden their client offering. The association enables Stephenson Harwood to offer its clients, local knowledge and expertise from within Burma, which it believes is crucial in being able to properly understand the market.

Notwithstanding the government's recent reforms, Burma remains a country where there are often significant differences between what might be possible on paper and what happens in practice. Human rights, corruption, accountability and transparency issues are still very real challenges, as is the independence of the judiciary.

● The association with UTY will be managed by SH's Singapore-based Corporate partner Matthew Gorman and consultant Peter Church, who has been involved in Burma for some 20 years, and continues Stephenson Harwood's recent international growth with new offices opened in Dubai and Beijing late last year and an association formed with Indonesian firm Christian Teo Purwono & Partners in 2011. www.shlegal.com

Doug's had

Now Adzuna is on the No.10 dashboard, but you'd expect nothing less of the man who pioneered so much on the internet. Eric Jackson reports

AS an English graduate from Cambridge University, Doug Monro can pretty much get away with any description he likes about his many business successes. The joint boss of hip internet ad site Adzuna, 38-year-old married father of two Doug recalls the progress he made as MD of Gumtree as a 'fun growth ramp,' which to the layman may sound like something from a skateboard park rather than the boardroom.

But Doug, who also has the title of COO of property site Zoopla on his CV, is possibly more responsible than anyone for writing the British internet lexicon – as well helping his brands become as familiar as Kellogg (Doug got his MBA at the Kellogg Business School) or Marks & Spencer.

With such credentials, it would be easy for Doug – who runs Adzuna with fellow ex-Gumtree friend Andrew Hunter – to rest on his laurels. However the company, based in Clapham, south-west London, attracts over 1.5m visitors a month, and rising, to the site, in the hunt for jobs, motors and property, and David Cameron and his cabinet use Adzuna as part of the No.10 'dashboard.'

Not content with that, Adzuna – it comes from the conjoining of ad and an African word, zuna, meaning abundance – is now also being rolled out in Canada, Brazil, Germany, South Africa and Australia on the way to being a global brand. The move to Canada, though, probably has the most resonance for Doug, as it was from there that his university professor father and mother came in the sixties to start a new life in England.

Doug Monro: after successfully launching in the UK, Adzuna is now spreading to Canada and beyond

That move across the Atlantic – at a time when most people were going in the opposite direction – set in motion something that Doug believes became part of his DNA.

"My father, despite being a university professor, started a number of small businesses outside of his core job, and as a

Getting all fired up by Ottawa ballistics deal

FORENSIC ballistics company Pyramidal Technologies, whose software development is carried out in Canada's capital Ottawa, has forged a strategic agreement with UK firm Forensic Pathways.

The deal, with the help of UKTI, was signed at the British High Commission in Ottawa, and covers the product distribution of ALIAS – the next generation in forensic ballistics – throughout the European Union, along with technology licensing, and ongoing collaboration to advance the state of the art in crime scene innovations.

The companies estimate that the market size within EU countries for this technology is $250m.

ALIAS builds visually rich 3D cartridge case and bullet images, then provides powerful tools to analyse them using topographically sensitive colourisation, adjustable light source illumination and axis orientation.

It will now include image processing technology from Forensic Pathways created by the company's team of computer science, optics, mathematics and photonics experts. Forensic Pathways' unique software solutions in the area of criminal and business intelligence are patented in Europe, the U.S. and Australia.

"This agreement between Pyramidal Technologies and Forensic Pathways is an excellent example of how UKTI helps British firms grow their businesses with

success in abundance

teenager I started businesses or took on jobs to make money.

"So I guess I had the gene, and the 90s 'bubble' attracted me to the world of the internet," says Doug, who lives in Wandsworth and is also a qualified accountant, though his squirms to admit it.

Canada and the other new countries represent an exciting new frontier for Adzuna, all being "large and exciting growth markets underserved by existing job search tools," according to Doug.

"Adzuna is a search engine (like Google), where we show a snippet of information from around the web and then users click through to the original host site to apply for a job. The technology is pretty scalable – we offer the same search tools, salary data and social networking plugins on all our international sites – but we need to localise for things like language changes, different location structures and making sure we pick up all the important sources of job ads in Canada in our search engine.

"We're pretty confident from what we've seen so far that Canadians like our product and it will work well there. Brazil and South Africa's internet usage has really exploded in the last few years – we're keen to be part of the growth in internet use in these countries. Germany, Canada and Australia all have large, mature internet populations so these markets pose their own challenges and opportunities. We're now present in six markets, so our focus for the next few months will be on nurturing these sites into a useful tool which people in these countries love." No doubt the journey into more exotic markets will expose Adzuna to a whole new world of job vacancies, although not much would surprise Doug now.

"There were some pretty bizarre ads around Christmas for trainee dogsled mushers, reindeer chef or Miss Santa for office Christmas parties," laughs Doug. "There has also been a new wave of language being used by employers to lure top talent – right now we can see 515 UK employers looking for 'gurus', demand for 49 'ninjas' and even five companies looking for a 'jedi'. Tech giants Google, Apple and Facebook are leading the hunt for these superhero staff, while Mini will accept only 'sales legends.' "

Trusty Vespa

While Monro-Hunter sounds like a duo from an action film – Doug jokes that James Dean and Heath Ledger could play them in a biopic – several other members of staff, out of a total of 15, are Greek, and work out of Athens, but there are no immediate plans to explode Adzuna on to the Greek market.

"Greece is a relatively small and shrinking economy, so it's not at the top of our list, although we may well get there eventually, given our local connections," says Doug, whose preferred mode of transport is his trusty Vespa scooter. Such a machine wouldn't look out of place in the parking bays of the new Tech City in the East End of London, but Doug and his team decided that wasn't the venue for them.

"The decision to base our HQ in Clapham instead of in the East London tech hub was a very conscious one. We're not part of the Shoreditch, Tech City crew, although some of our investors are," says Doug.

"Andrew and I are both south west London boys. It's good value, a nice area and also a little bit less distracting. When you know what you're trying to do as a business and you're focused on your customers and the things you need to build, sometimes being part of a local tech community can be a bit of a distraction.

"There are lots of benefits to being able to access the London tech community and talking to other people and learn from them and share, but sometimes, day to day, you just want to be in your office with your team and executing the stuff you need to do."

The idea for Adzuna was born on the back of the proverbial envelope over a pint of real English ale in a central London pub two years ago, and Doug jokes that these days "we only drink Cristal champagne out of solid gold flutes".

As a startup business, though, albeit one that is unnerving its rivals and doing phenomenally well, Doug realises that the genuine champagne days lie in the future, but the company has been confidently backed by Index Ventures, Passion Capital and the Accelerator Group.

"We raised £800k in funding in two seed rounds in 2011," says Doug, whose greatest business hero is Steve Wozniak, the brains and technical genius behind Apple's success and much of computing as we know it today, "who did it with integrity and without self-promotion."

"The UK business has gone extremely well, hence our desire to expand internationally at this stage. Adzuna's rapid user growth has been reflected in our financials, with revenues doubling every three months throughout 2012 and 2013. We also have plans for further international expansion in the future."

One of the many features of Adzuna is a 'social media layer', where visitors are encouraged to login with Facebook and Linkedin to use Adzuna Connect, which shows all the companies they are connected to with all the live vacancies.

"You can then message your connections to get the inside track on what it's like to work there, or ask them to put in a good word for you," says Doug.

"Once you're plugged in to Adzuna Connect, you'll automatically start to see images of your friends next to relevant vacancies."

expert trade advice and in-country support around the world," said Corin Robertson, Deputy British High Commissioner to Canada.

"Strategic partnership support is something that UKTI does on a regular basis. Last year our UKTI Canada office alone assisted over 900 UK firms with export guidance into Canada. The UK is one of Canada's top three sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) as was demonstrated through the joint purchase of Vue by OMERS and AIMCo."

Ardavan Tajbakhsh, Chief Technology Officer of Pyramidal Technologies, is thrilled with the market expansion and technology collaboration plans underway with Forensic Pathways.

"I have long admired Forensic Pathways' software expertise as well as its long history as a trusted partner to European security organisations and we see many opportunities to incorporate its software to establish unambiguous and unequivocal gun crimes evidence for prosecutors," he said. "I can't think of a better partner to advance the cause of ALIAS in the European market for forensic ballistics systems."

A human hair measures approximately 100 microns wide. ALIAS's 3D cartridge images offer resolution of 2 microns, or 1/50th the diameter of a single human hair. This unsurpassed level of accuracy produces infinitely better results that vastly reduce the time it takes firearms examiners and technicians to complete their analysis. Forensic Pathways is an international award winning company headquartered in the UK with an international distribution network, including an Australasia office based in Perth, Western Australia.

It was in the holiday heat of the Dominican Republic that Michael Cook heard about his company's Queen's Award. But, reports Eric Jackson, the USystems boss is one...

Cool operator

AS he was sitting with his wife Dawn on the beach in the Dominican Republic at 7.30 in the morning, with the waves gently lapping at his feet, Michael Cook was probably thinking that life couldn't get much better.

Then he got the news that his company, USystems, which specialises in cooling technology for date centres, had won the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

"We were looking out to sea – it was a very surreal and beautiful backdrop to receive such great news," says Michael, 50, the founder and MD of the privately-owned firm, which has been backed over the years by Barclays Bank along with investment from Michael's ex-business partner.

It wasn't just a joyous moment for London-born Michael, whose career as an engineer began as an apprentice at BAe in 1979 after leaving school, but a surprise one too.

"To be honest, I didn't believe for one moment we would receive such an honour. My attitude was that this doesn't happen to companies like ours; these awards are for the likes of Glaxo, Rolls-Royce and companies from science parks," says Michael, dad to grown-up sons Callum and Dean.

Now, though, Michael can proudly look at the award – clinched mainly for the company's ColdLogik range, the world's first intelligent and fully integrated rear cooling system – and ponder the fact that, while his company may not be a multinational with offices in Paris or LA, it has been involved in over 100 projects worldwide and is turning over £5m a year.

Not bad for a little company with just over 50 employees in the Cambridgeshire village of Gamlingay, which has prospered against increasing competition from the Far East.

"Unfortunately, like most manufacturing companies in the UK and now throughout Europe, we have been hit with the influx of subsidised cheap imports arriving on our shores from the Far East, as there is no protection from our government against this type of import," says Michael.

"It has taken its toll on the 19" cabinet market and we have seen a number of UK companies close and jobs lost due to this.

"Combined with the downturn in business due to the recession, this is the sad state of UK manufacturing. We have been fortunate to introduce new designs and concepts throughout the years and have grown into a technical house anticipating allied product needs within the industry, which has thus far kept us going during uncertain times."

But perhaps the proudest bit of business for USystems has been breaking the North American market, with its sophisticated consumers and the hi-tech companies to serve them.

Substantial growth

"The American market is vast but is equally very difficult to get into, and so we are proud, despite it being early days for us, that we have successfully sold our high end products throughout the States, and we look forward to substantial growth there in the future," says Michael, whose career path has taken in a series of roles and disciplines, including production manager, commercial manager, sales and marketing director and company director. He started specialising in the datacomms industry 20 years ago and USystems was born just under a decade ago. In that time, with the computer and internet sector booming,

> The American market is vast but is equally very difficult to get into

Michael Cook: proud of sales in the US and of recognition at home. Below left, his data centre cooling system

USystems – whose exports currently account for 20% of the business, although that is increasing year on year – have never been short of new technological challenges to meet.

"When we started there were a number of products available on the market, but nothing seemed to fit the bill of cooling a cabinet in-situ other than fans and CRAC cooling," says Michael. "We were also motivated by the industry itself due to a measure of arrogance shown to us as we were assumed to be lacking in the knowledge to enter their world. These were obstacles we successfully overcame – nothing motivates more than when you are looked down upon. It still happens and it still keeps pushing us on."

It would be easy to look at USystems' location, close to Cambridge University, and assume that it has somehow helped the company in terms of research and development and kudos when chasing business.

But Michael is quick to dispel any such notions, saying: "Being so near to Cambridge University has had no impact on us one way or the other, until very recently, that is, as we are now in the middle of our first ColdLogik installation there.

"Naturally, this will give us huge credibility, but in fairness, it is the 11th university where we have installed ColdLogik. Universities invest greatly in the future of their infrastructure as well as their students. They have to make considered and relevant decisions based on the best technologies available which also help to save energy and money, and that's a great endorsement of our products and solutions."

Of course, just as data centres weren't here 20 years ago, they may not be here in another 20 years, when newer, brighter technologies come along. But USystems aren't waiting for the day when they wake up and find there is no longer any demand for what they supply.

"We've developed four brands which overlap in various ways, and this combination allows us to focus on different markets. We've already positioned ourselves not to be totally reliant on data centres. I'm always looking at what the future holds – change happens at colossal speed nowadays and you can't afford to sit on your laurels – it is with this in mind that I am always adapting our product lines for the latest requirements in our allied industries, which I hope will keep us going for the next 20 years," says Michael, who believes the firm's success is based on respect.

"That's respect for your suppliers, respecting your customers and respecting your colleagues to create a win-win environment that only good can come from," he insists. He points to people such as James Dyson – "he has such great ideas and puts them into such practical use. He sees things that he could improve on and goes ahead and does just that – I'd like to think that's how I approach our designs," concludes Michael.

Canadian PM Harper hails shared values

CANADIAN Prime Minister Stephen Harper trumpeted Canada and Britain's shared values in a speech to the British Parliament in June.

In the first speech by a Canadian prime minister to the British Parliament since William Lyon Mackenzie King in 1944, he extolled the economic leadership of both countries, the importance of signing a "monumental" Canada-EU free-trade agreement and the need to show "steadfast resolve" amid threats to global security.

Harper's address focused heavily on the global economy, the need for countries to get their fiscal houses in order — or "face consequences" — and international security threats from countries like Iran, North Korea and Syria.

And he believes one of the best ways to increase economic prosperity for Canada, Britain and the entire European Union is to liberalise trade and sign a historic Canada-EU free-trade agreement that is in the final stages of negotiation.

"I know that in many countries there is a considerable debate between austerity and growth. Let me tell you, it is a false dichotomy. You need good measures of both," Harper said.

"It remains our hope that we will soon achieve a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union, Canada's second-largest trading partner after the United States. For Canada, and for Great Britain as a member of the EU, this will be a historic step — a monumental one, in fact."

He also said that while Canada may not be Britain's most powerful friend, it is the "truest and most reliable."

"Indeed, these are the days when our two countries — and those other nations that share both our values and our difficulties — will, whether by action or inaction, choose their future," Harper added.

"Countries that do not bring their finances under control or that close their economies to the world, will face consequences. And those consequences are not only economic. In the absence of solvency, relevancy will also disappear."

There are massive shifts in the global economy bringing prosperity to traditionally poorer countries, but the dramatic change also brings a lot of uncertainty that demands Canada and Britain lead by example on the world stage, he argued.

"We cannot hope to effectively spread our values unless we live by them and demonstrate our own success by virtue of doing so … I believe this is the challenge we in the West face today," Harper added.

Altius on cloud 9 with US contract

DERBY compliance software solutions company Altius is expanding its US operation.

The company is working with global creative agency Leo Burnett as its software partner for monitoring and assessing information security and data compliance. The prestigious export contract with Chicago headquartered Leo Burnett signals the latest phase in expansion for Altius, which provides specialist cloud-based compliance management software solutions, consultancy and assessment services to help companies manage all areas of compliance, risk and supply management.

Leo Burnett is one of the world's largest advertising and marketing services agency networks with 96 offices in 84 countries and more than 8,500 employees worldwide.

The agency is using the software to improve management of information security and data privacy. This is enabling Leo Burnett to reduce risk, ensure compliance and automate management reporting.

Erik Hart, VP Director, Information Security and Infrastructure Solutions at The Leo Burnett Group/Arc Worldwide, said: "Altius has helped us create efficiencies in the way we assess the security and compliance of our suppliers. By utilising the Altius portal we can create automated touch points with our suppliers, as well as generating reporting, as needed, on various data points."

Gary Plant, ***pictured left***, Managing Director for Altius Vendor Assessment, said: "We are delighted to partner with Leo Burnett and expand our American operation by collaborating with such an iconic brand.

"We see huge demand in the USA and other export markets for our compliance software."

Altius' cloud-based software solution, Exigo, can be configured to meet all areas of compliance management, competency assessment, monitoring and management.

AS the son of a Lithuanian father and a German mother who was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, but raised and educated in London and who now lives in Manhattan, the one thing Tony Brown could not be accused of being is parochial – or of not having a sense of humour, for that matter.

In keeping with Tony's eclectic influences and interests – he is an avowed foodie who enjoys cycling, classical music, opera, jazz, ballet and 'playing in the sand on golf courses' – the new Head of Trade Finance in the Americas for Bibby Financial Services jokes that his epitaph would be: 'Here lies a trade financier who dared to dress British but think Yiddish.'

"So I think I'm perfectly mixed up ethnically to be well suited to cross-border business," adds Tony, an alumnus of the London School of Economics and Harvard Business School who started his professional life at Lloyd's of London in export political risk insurance and left these shores in 1980 for the States, where he has stayed ever since.

But now, after years of blazing a trail across the American financial services sector – including the pioneering of purchase order financing as co-founder of the Trading Alliance Corporation – he is back with a British headquartered global company whose Liverpool roots had a certain appeal.

"Since I idolised The Beatles as a kid, any connection to them would be a draw, but actually the bigger attraction to the company was not so much the group HQ in Liverpool but the network of 48 offices in 15 countries," says Tony, whose wife Andrea runs her own brand strategy business.

"From a trade finance perspective, to be able to serve the needs of SMEs over such a wide network and leverage BFS' financial strength and 207-year history was the main reason I joined the company."

Now Tony will be reconnecting to a Britain that he believes has changed radically – and for the better – in the past three decades.

Boozy

"Brits are no longer stuffy, long-winded and boozy. They're as driven, service-oriented and aggressive as their American counterparts," says Tony, whose move to the States was prompted by a transfer with the Manufacturers Hanover Trust, then the fourth largest American bank, where he eventually managed the international trade finance business and became a director of the bank's export trading company.

"Fortunately for the Brits, to the American ear, a British accent can make even a banal comment seem impressively authoritative.

"When I left the UK in 1980, Britain was suffering from the British Disease – industrial strife between unions, industry and Margaret Thatcher. It had lousy food and it took 30 rings before anyone answered a

The trade financier who...

Dares to dress British but think Yiddish!

Tony Brown has got the New York go-getting attitude that Bibby aim to capitalise on, reports Ian Stewart

phone. Today, London is not only one of the world's leading finance and business centres, it's also a culinary capital," enthuses Tony, whose passion for cooking, international cuisine and wine led him, for a time, to import Italian olive oil and balsamic vinegar and develop a range of non-red pasta sauces for sale in gourmet stores.

"Trade finance is a much simpler business," he laughs, before warming to the theme of the UK capital again. "With climate change it might even get a summer every other year. If London was in 1980 what it is today, the allure of New York would have been far less."

Prior to joining Bibby, which provides financial solutions to SMEs worldwide, Tony ran his own consulting firm, the Trade Advisory, but he felt the move was right because "renting one's brain is never as much fun and challenge as building a globally successful business.

"True, strategic consulting allows one to see the bigger picture without being mired in internal politics, but putting together and delivering a compelling panoply of trade products to delight international traders is truly gratifying," he says.

And he's never been one to turn down a challenge, such as when leaving the 'cosy environment' of a bank to start a successful trade finance business, where he "confounded the naysayers who said that a client's purchase orders could never be acceptable collateral to lend against."

Home comforts: Manhattan, home to Tony Brown, above left

That was in 1989 when he raised $25m to co-found the Trading Alliance Corporation, which he sold to MTB Bank, where he created and managed DirecTrade, the first-ever bank-owned integrated B2B trade finance, freight forwarding, warehousing and distribution service offered to foreign exporters to the USA.

Other career highlights saw him spearheading global marketing and business development for Delta Trade Finance, building a successful international division and launching a suite of trade finance services, including international factoring, trade payable financing and inventory purchase funding at First Capital and heading the international division of GMAC Commercial Finance, where he managed the $700m factoring business.

Tony's remit at Bibby is to champion the company's trade solutions, among many other things, and he believes that some of the principles used at business level could help the UK get out of its current mire.

"Speaking personally, I'm a believer in the use of money supply tools and fiscal stimulus to support economic activity," he says.

"In the U.S. we've already seen the effectiveness of this strategy in supporting job growth, increasing business activity – and thereby tax revenue – and improving confidence."

With the financial sector receiving a bit of a kicking in recent years following the collapse of banks and whole countries, Tony thinks that it will take many years – perhaps until the end of this decade – for normal conditions to be restored.

"Trust and belief in the stability and health of the banking system is the cornerstone of economic life and those attributes have certainly been compromised in the financial crisis.

"The financial and regulatory pressures on banks (e.g. Basel III) will make it tougher for smaller companies to gain access to the support they need for domestic and international trade business," he says. "This creates a strategic opportunity for unregulated companies such as Bibby, who are focused on serving SMEs for such business needs.

Striving

"We're striving to be the best in class global provider of end-to-end trade finance solutions for SMEs. To that end, we're investing in a state of the art operating platform over which to offer international invoice financing, risk management, foreign currency services, letters of credit, purchase order financing and bespoke supply chain finance solutions."

Simon Davies BFS's London-based Global Head of Trade Finance, said: "With companies falling short of the credit they need to expand internationally, the market needs a mercantile lender that speaks their language and sees opportunities through their eyes.

"We're delighted to deploy Tony's skills. His experience will play a key part in linking up the various components of the trade process within Bibby Line Group and helping us achieve our vision of a seamless door-to-door added value trade service to our clients."

Look out London and New York...

Here comes Toronto

Philip Ritchie: Canadian optimism

That's the view of rising player Axxsys Consulting who have expanded to Canada, writes Eric Jackson

WHEN it comes to challenging London and New York as the world's major financial centres, Hong Kong and Singapore are often cited as the major contenders.

However one rising UK player, whose client base includes several financial titans from the City of London, believes that Toronto – and Canada generally – shouldn't be ruled out either.

Philip Ritchie, a director of UK management and technology consultancy firm Axxsys Consulting, which serves the asset management and hedge fund sector, says: "Canadians are looking to put themselves seriously on the map as a financial centre to be mentioned in the same breath as New York and London, and we believe that with our experience we can help the Canadian asset management industry get there."

Which is why Axxsys, which is headquartered on Throgmorton Street in London, has now opened a new office in Toronto, with plans for further expansion in the United States for a greater North American axis. Philip, who has an Msc in project analysis, finance and investment from York University and a Bsc in economics from Aalborg University, Denmark, adds: "They have a good education level, which also helps for companies like ours, as we are dependent on finding talented individuals who can deliver our services to the clients.

"The long term goal of opening the Canadian office is to start educating local talent in our specialist areas, to provide our services in Canada, while also building a presence closer to our existing clients."

Axxsys was formed in 2003, with a focus on the London hedge fund business, and was "as most start up consultancies, really a group of individuals coming together to offer their individual skill sets to the market under one brand," says Philip. "In 2007 it was decided to invest in enhancing our offering and focusing on building the appropriate level of in-house IP as well as developing best practises for our client base.

"We went from selling the individual to selling the value of our consultancy firm. We also went from competing on price, to competing on quality.

"We have since had a major increase in both turnover and profitability, which enables us to re-invest in building even better tools for our clients. We were six people in 2007 and today we have 25 consultants, and expect to increase the number to 30 by the end of 2013."

Core values

But while Axxsys – who says its core values are to be inspiring, Innovative, honest and respectful – is establishing a presence across the Atlantic, where it considers to the conditions to be highly favourable, its ambitions stretch a lot further, as Philip outlines: "The regulatory environment in Canada and the US, is a major driver for these projects.

"We currently cover our clients in the Middle East out of Europe, but we will consider opening offices there in the future, as well as in Australia and Asia, as we see a general focus worldwide in the financial sector to cut costs, while handling the regulatory pressures."

The core of Axxsys's business, though, remains in the City of London, where the optimism of Chancellor George Osborne about the beginning of the end of the recession, is well founded, believes Philip.

"From the meetings we are having in the City of London, the UK asset management market is starting to look at investing more heavily in change again. However the days where you just sat waiting by the phone for a call asking for a specific type of resource, are over," he says.

"Clients want value for money and proof of the value, they therefore look for a partnership with consultancies that can provide the specialist knowledge that they require. We find that clients will pay for quality in the UK. However they also expect the consultant to add value, not just be a replacement resource."

Heading the North American operation is Helen Weir, who says: "We have, for the last two years, experienced an increased demand for our services in North America, and we expect this to continue. We therefore want to strengthen our position and build an infrastructure to support our commitment to the North American market and the long-term partnership with our existing clients in the region".

Helen, with 15 years experience in the financial industry, has been involved in running a programme of change at one of Canada's largest fund managers with $70bnn of assets under management.

"We work with some of the largest pension funds in Canada," says Philip, "and the initial engagement was based around our specialist knowledge of the asset management application SimCorp Dimension. This is still an area that we focus our effort on increasing, but we are also getting more and more traction towards our strategic services and our practice focusing on data management and reporting.

"In terms of working in Canada, the clients want to be the best in class and are willing to invest in the infrastructure necessary to achieve those goals."

FOUR PAGES OF NEWS AND VIEWS
FROM THE INSTITUTE OF EXPORT

IOE INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Out of step

THE results of the 2013 International Trade Survey, commissioned by The Institute of Export (IOE) and conducted by Trade and Export Finance (TAEFL) Ltd, highlights a growing divide between corporates and smaller UK businesses in the drive to enter overseas markets.

Lack of experience, finance and government support, coupled with ambivalence about Europe, are constraining factors for micro, small and medium sized businesses to trade internationally, reports the survey, an annual barometer of Britain's export industry since 1996.

The survey, sponsored by global insurance company American International Group, Inc (AIG), canvassed the views of 1,600 businesses that trade internationally.

More than 53% of respondents were from the manufacturing and engineering sectors. Their feedback points to a growing divide between companies with a turnover of up to £25m and larger enterprises with a turnover in excess of £25m.

With Europe still seen as the UK's main export market, fewer than 50% of exporters believe that continued membership of the EU is critical for their business.

The latest IOE survey reveals that size matters when it comes to exporting – with the big corporates taking more advantage of the opportunities

Awareness

While nearly one in four respondents showed an awareness of government schemes, those with a turnover above £25m are making the greatest use of the support on offer, and two out of three companies are using their own funds, rather than approaching the banks.

This year's survey incorporates the annual AIG Export Confidence Index which reveals a drop in business confidence to 58.5 from the previous findings of 71.2 in 2012. Despite this fall, three out of five companies remain optimistic of achieving export business growth in the next five years. A lack of experience and confidence in the export process is the single most constraining factor for companies entering overseas markets.

To address the lack of experience, IOE Director General Lesley Batchelor is calling for businesses to take advantage of the plethora of knowledge and skills training on offer.

"The majority of companies surveyed do not train staff in international trade and less than one in three small companies see a specific need for training. Yet this lack of knowledge and training is holding back export momentum, especially for SMEs," she said.

"Much more needs to be done to make these companies aware of the training programmes, apprenticeship and finance schemes available. IOE graduates demonstrate that success and competitive advantage in global markets has to be rooted in sound knowledge."

The annual survey builds up a clear picture of the UK's export market which is then used by Government, the Bank of England and other UK policy makers to help shape and influence future government policy.

Rising 'Stock

West Country students show the way to export – by keeping it local!

THE Institute of Export and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) has witnessed teenage entrepreneurs in action during a visit to specialist sports college Plymstock School.

Students at the school are collaborating with Plymouth-based Real Ideas Organisation to create an exporting project, which has some very real ideas about enhancing understanding of international trade.

IOE Director General, Lesley Batchelor, and BIS Head of Enterprise Education & Culture, Joanna Hill, heard presentations from year 10 students on their plans to act as export agents for local food, drink, surf equipment and jewellery manufacturers.

Working closely with their French teacher, the students plan to take these products to Brittany – in particular Plymouth's twinned town of Brest. The 15-year olds had identified specific manufacturers as having a strong product to maximise in international markets, and the youngsters will next test their market propositions on their business trip to the region.

Lesley said: "The creativity and business savvy of the students set me wondering how powerful it would be if small companies across the UK sought out opportunities in towns across the world which are twinned with places where they live?

"Each of these joint international endeavours has amassed a wealth of local intelligence and insider knowledge of market potential which they can transport into the world of exporting and international trade.

"We wish year 10 every well-deserved success with this vibrant venture – and with their potential as young international traders!"

Mapping out international trade possibilities: enterprising students at Plymstock School

Clamour for courses as graduates

do the IOE proud

THE IOE's 2013 vibrant graduation ceremony at London's Mansion House heard how the last 12 months have seen a 68% increase in the number of students embarking on IOE courses.

Key guests and speakers included the Institute's Vice Presidents, Sir Eric Peacock and Lord Empey of Shandon, Alderman and Sheriff Jeffrey Evans and BBC Breakfast business presenter Steph McGovern. The graduation was sponsored by global trade management software company Amber Road.

Special accolades were awarded across four categories. They included Nick Rowlands from Dairy Crest in Surrey, who received a special accolade for achieving the top mark in his qualification.

Championing export success (L to R): IOE Vice President Lord Empey of Shandon, IOE President Jim Davis, BBC Breakfast business presenter Steph McGovern, IOE Director General Lesley Batchelor, IOE Vice President Sir Eric Peacock and IOE Chair Doug Tweddle

Nick commented: "The IOE course is well-designed to cover all the different features of international trade, making it an informative and enjoyable programme. I am sure this well-recognised qualification will stand me in good stead for the future".

Nick's fellow graduates included Sarah Jonathan, product manager from International Greetings Plc, Mid Glamorgan, Wales; Robert Marampa-Lartey, international trade expert from Trotylex, based in London; and Rachel Stockton, buying office manager and the customs compliance manager from Sports Direct, Nottinghamshire.

Lesley Batchelor, Director General of the IOE, said: "Our graduates are a great source of pride for the Institute. Their commitment and hard work is acknowledged by everyone and we will all watch their careers develop with interest.

"There is no doubt that the skills and expertise they have acquired through their studies in international trade will be a huge asset to their own companies and to the British economy as a whole."

Building on the IOE's solid Foundation

AN additional module is being added to the IOE's innovative two-year Foundation Degree in Professional Practice of International Trade, which gets underway in September.

Developed in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University, the flexible learning course programme equips students with the academic and professional skills essential for successful higher education workplace study.

Designed to develop analytical, technological, communication and learning skills, the new module will cover areas including study skills, work-based learning, personal development and sector specific elements.

IOE Director General, Lesley Bachelor, said: "As UK university fees continue to rocket, the Foundation Degree has been specifically designed to meet the needs of businesses and their employees trading in a competitive global market.

Partner: Anglia Ruskin University

"For fees of just £6,600, which can be paid in stages across the two years, the Foundation Degree offers exceptional value for money for a high quality university programme. The additional module will further accelerate our goal to help British companies to match the level of commitment to professionalism in international trade, training and education made by their European and worldwide counterparts."

● ***For more information or to sign up to the degree, contact the IOE on +44 (0)1733 404400 or visit http://www.export.org.uk/professional-qualifications/foundation-degree.***

Neat BRICwork

IOE joins the Guardian debate about the high-growth countries

AMONG the national media calling on the IOE's expertise is the Guardian Small Business Network, who invited IOE Director General, Lesley Batchelor, to join their expert panel for a live online session about exporting to BRIC countries.

Fellow panellists included Nick Sinfield, CEO at women's footwear brand DUO; Madeleine White, head of strategic partnerships for Whizz Education; Ignaty Dyakov, director at Russia Local Ltd; Mark Walker, London's International Trade advisor at UK Trade and Investment; Jessica Zhang, manager at China-Britain Business Council; and Michelle Raven, marketing manager at Stirling Dynamics.

Hosted by Emily Wight, questions and issues included Brazil hosting the Olympics in 2016.

Experts

Several experts agreed opportunities for British SMEs to launch products would be limited with the event being more of a showcase for Brazilian culture and goods in the same way that London 2012 was for the UK.

SMEs expressed concerns over products being copied if they export to China, with panellists advising UK businesses to have appropriate intellectual property security in place to protect their brands.

Top tips for exporting to BRIC countries included the importance of businesses understanding and researching their markets, taking into account cultural differences, knowing their customers and creating the right products for their target market.

Companies were also advised to tap into the support services available for advice and best practice, seek out good local partners and build relationships and harness awards such as the Queen's Awards for Enterprise to showcase their businesses overseas.

Lesley said: "As increasing numbers of UK SMEs are looking to grow through exporting and, although there is no substitute for thorough planning, research and knowledge about new markets, online platforms like the Guardian's live Q&As are invaluable resources for sharing experiences and picking up expert tips.

"The issues we discussed reinforce how critical it is for UK businesses to recognise the significance of professionalism in international trade if they are to compete on a global stage.

"Once again, this online debate highlighted how the Institute's own expertise in providing education, training programmes and qualifications is critical for those businesses that are serious about trading internationally."

Economic shakedown: BRIC countries, such as China, offer splendid opportunities, but firms need to be well prepared before entering the markets

The Institute of Export, Export House, Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 6FT. Tel: +44(0)1733 404400. Fax: +44(0)1733 404444. Web: www.export.org.uk

Gate expectations

So the question is, asks Peter Quantrill, *right*, Director General of the British International Freight Association, can the new London terminal deliver on its promises?

EARLIER this year members of the British International Freight Association's board enjoyed a visit to the new London Gateway Terminal and got a first-hand view of the most significant UK port development of recent years, taking place in the Thames Estuary.

London Gateway is due to open at the end of the year, but the operating company behind the development is keeping its cards close to its chest on the specific date when operations will commence, as well as which shipping lines will be calling.

From comments received by the secretariat at the recent Multimodal event and elsewhere, that is a subject of great interest to BIFA members as they plan customers' ocean freight supply chains for the future.

London Gateway is a relatively new proposition, and no doubt shipping lines have been doing their own homework on how it can complement and enhance their operations in the UK.

All of the large container ports in the UK have been making or planning major investment in their facilities – putting their case about the efficiencies they offer and the potential they have to deliver big wins on landside cost savings for forwarders and shippers.

Every member of our trade association for UK freight forwarders is interested in taking costs out of their supply chains, and I'm sure that all will be keen to see if this new venture can deliver on its promotional promises. And talking of delivery, as BIFA members anticipate the Airport Commission's report, due for delivery by the end of this year, assessing the evidence on the nature, scale and timing of the steps needed to maintain the UK's global aviation hub status, the House of Commons Transport Committee pre-empted matters somewhat recently with the publication of a call for the government to reject the Thames Estuary airport plan and expand Heathrow instead.

Committee chairwoman Louise Ellman, MP, said that research commissioned by the committee made plain that building an entirely new hub airport east of London could not be done without huge public investment in new ground transport infrastructure.

BIFA has already stated that it supports the structured approach of the Airport Commission to its task of reviewing airport capacity and has submitted its initial response to the commission relative to the constraints imposed by capacity limitations, UK global connectivity, the importance of air freight and the key facilitative role played by the forwarder. It will be interesting to see if the views of the Transport Committee are reflected in the Airport Commission's report later this year.

Health and Safety

BIFA does not routinely issue health and safety advice, but will publicise matters when appropriate. Recently we have issued communiques focusing on safety issues such as the continuing EU debate about longer and heavier road vehicles, the risks of using inappropriate methods to open container doors and some cautionary advice for members that operate commercial vehicles and have yards where loading and unloading is a daily activity.

Also, in the light of the plethora of recent news articles about the Bribery Act, we have repeated our advice that now it is more important than ever to ensure that all involved in international freight and trade are aware of the bribery and corruption risks faced by your business and have a robust compliance programme in place.

British Chambers of Commerce

EXPORTING WITH EASE

Simple exporting with your local Chamber

Receive completed electronically processed export documentation within minutes.

Save your business time and money by applying for export documents online where they will be checked, stamped and authorised by UK Chambers of Commerce and returned to you quickly and effortlessly.

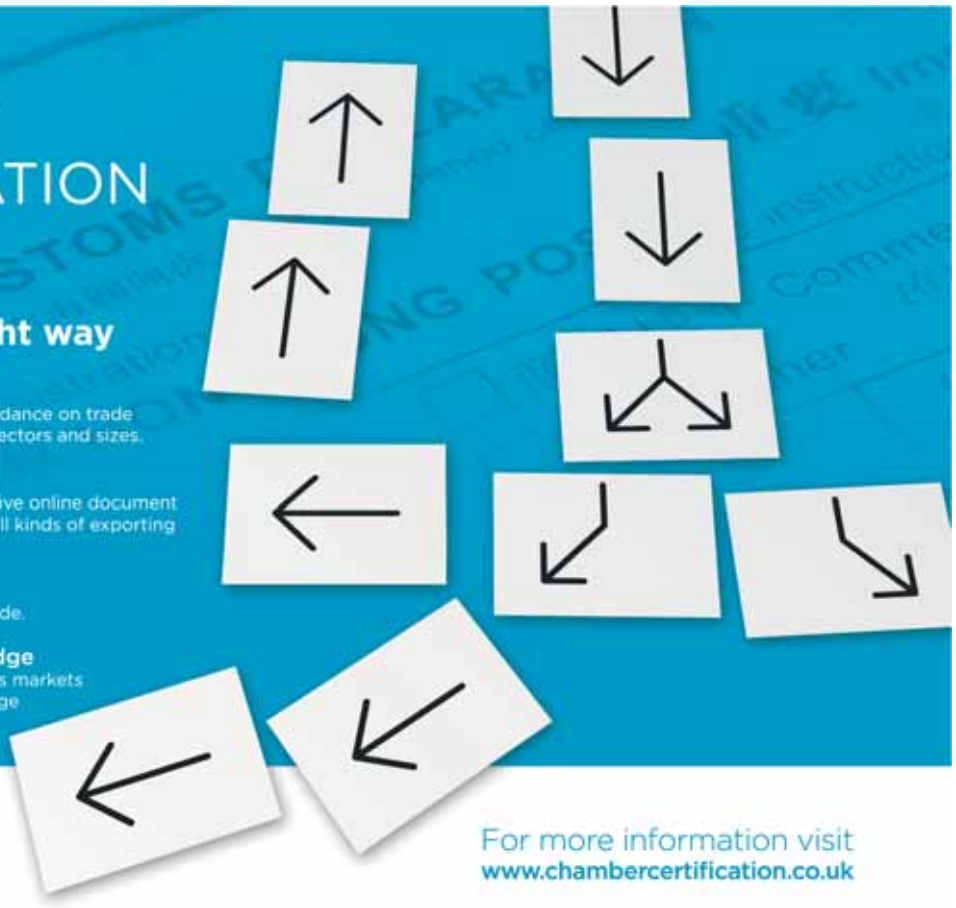
- **Significantly improve your efficiency in exporting**
- **Reduce the cost and time spent in obtaining export documents**
- **Improve business sales & competitiveness**

For more information contact your local Chamber or visit www.britishchambers.org.uk

CHAMBER CERTIFICATION SERVICES

Exporting the right way

- **Documentation Services**
  providing documentation and guidance on trade procedures for businesses of all sectors and sizes.
- **Export Certification**
  offering a reliable and cost-effective online document processing service extending to all kinds of exporting documents.
- **Export Training**
  training in all aspects of world trade.
- **Market & Sectoral Knowledge**
  a wealth of experience in overseas markets and specialised industry knowledge across all sectors.



For more information visit
www.chambercertification.co.uk

Getting a grip

...to Canada and beyond, as AmSafe gets the nod on both sides of the Atlantic for its ground-breaking safety device, which has been embraced by major carriers

A Dorset company has become the first firm in the world to be granted regulatory safety approval in both the US and Europe for a vital piece of logistical equipment.

AmSafe Bridport Cargo Product Group, based in Bridport, has been awarded a Technical Standard Order (TSO) by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), in addition to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to provide a globally recognised certified approval for tie-down straps.

Tie-down straps are used throughout the world to rigidly hold down air cargo or equipment during transport, ensuring there is no risk to the cargo, plane, air-crew or general public.

This is the first time both agencies have issued a TSO for this type of product, thereby raising the standard of this safety critical equipment. Currently no other ULD equipment provider has received both European and US regulatory approval.

Certified straps will become mandatory for air cargo operators from 2016, providing the industry with a phase-out period for the use of non-certified cargo straps. The reason for the creation of the TSO C172 regulation is to provide a global standard which increases safety by stating a recognised minimum design, performance and quality standard for all air cargo straps.

AmSafe Bridport is the world leader in safety restraint products for the aerospace, defence and specialty vehicle industries. The firm manufactures high-performance products such as the RPG net protection system, fire containment covers, lightweight cargo nets, airframe barrier nets and helicopter underslung equipment.The firm's safety products are used around the world in both commercial and general aviation, in military and civilian applications.

The new strap, and right, Ian Kentfield, president of AmSafe Bridport, and Joe Ashton, senior sales manager, with the FAA and EASA certificates

International airlines and air cargo operators have been quick to contact AmSafe Bridport to understand more about these new requirements and to place orders for the new tie-down strap.

Firms such as British Airways, Singapore Airlines and Air Canada, plus several other leading commercial aviation names have quickly adopted it for their global air cargo operations – thereby ensuring they will be in accordance with the latest regulatory requirements in addition to obtaining a 20% reduction in weight, based on existing designs.

AmSafe Bridport's TSO C172 Cargo tie-down strap has been designed, tested and then regulatory-certified after several years research and design. The new TSO requirement for the strap to be tested in simulated 'gust' loads, ensures it will remain safely secured during periods when the aircraft is subjected to turbulence, as previously strap types were tested using just one straight pull.

Customers are seeing the benefits of using AmSafe Bridport's cargo restraint expertise. Urs Wiesendanger from Air Canada, said: "'As a leading commercial aviation operator, the earliest compliance with industry safety regulations is paramount. Signing AmSafe Bridport to deliver these TSO C172 tie-down straps means we're ahead of vital industry regulations and have the peace of mind of knowing we're working with the global industry leader in safety restraint products."

From raw textile to finished product, AmSafe has a team of engineers who conduct thorough testing, from analysis to documentation, to ensure the safety and integrity of all AmSafe products. Along with dynamic and prototype testing, they also measure tensile strength, endurance, flammability, corrosion, smoke, toxicity, susceptibility to fluids and substances, temperature, humidity and more.

Tan-tastic: How Vincent has boosted the Welsh economy

Vincent Tan: success at Cardiff

WHEN Cardiff City owner Vincent Tan, insisted, last year, that the club should swap its traditional blue jerseys for red ones, most people viewed the heresy against the Bluebirds as just another reason why the billionaire from Malaysia would lead the club to ruin and failure.

One year on, though, and the sceptics will now happily believe that black can be white, pigs might fly and Cardiff can conquer the Premiership, where Cardiff, thanks to the money and guidance of Tan, now find themselves after a 51 year absence from football's top tier.

And 61-year-old Tan the Man, who started out as a bank clerk but set out on the money-making trail by buying a McDonald's franchise at 29, is now the toast of South Wales, where the fans will be hoping he can reproduce the formula for success which has seen him, as the founder of Berjaya Corp, launch the RadioShack chain, run the Sports Toto lottery, develop a $3.5bn resort in South Korea's Jeju Island and own TV and mobile businesses, among many other enterprises.

It's a CV which would seemingly give Tan – who has signed the Giving Pledge, committing to donating half his wealth during his lifetime – little time to do anything else, but somehow he's managed to also father 11 children and now become the owner of a rising football club.

And his achievement in guiding the Bluebirds to the top flight, believes one Cardiff politician, is a "life-changing moment" for Cardiff. Cardiff Council's economy chief Russell Goodway says promotion to the Premier League is the equivalent to the Welsh capital "winning the EuroMillions",

The former Labour council leader said: "We could never package a marketing campaign to promote Cardiff and get Cardiff's name around the world in the way that Cardiff playing the Premiership is going to do.

"This is really a change of gear for this city in terms of our global profile. That can't be underestimated what that does in terms of recognition. Cardiff will become a city recognised by hundreds of millions of people. They'll have heard of it, know where it is and know a little bit about it. We could have never, ever put together a marketing campaign to achieve that."

And the cabinet member for business and economic development wants to use the "Malaysian connection" to stimulate inward investment interest in Cardiff, particularly in the new enterprise zone. The zone, a Welsh Government initiative, stretches from the city centre to the bay, and aims to attract professional and financial services companies by offering incentives.

"We know that the enterprise zone is predicated on attracting professional and financial services, of which there are many in the Far East and Malaysia," Coun Goodway said.

"We know that Vincent Tan has important connections in China too, so hopefully he'll be prepared to introduce Cardiff and Cardiff government to leading individuals we may persuade to take an interest in opening offices in Cardiff's enterprise zone.

"That is going to be an important aspect for us in the immediate term. Also, what could come in terms of related developments having a club in the Premier League. Will it mean we can look forward to more hotel developments? Or associated leisure industries?"

Meanwhile Richard Yates, a sports lawyer with Farleys solicitors, believes the Tan factor is putting a very healthy glow on the Cardiff economy.

"The promotion comes just three years after Cardiff avoided a winding-up order in relation to an unpaid tax bill in what was the Welsh club's fifth visit to the High Court in seven months," he says. "Since then more than £60m has been injected into the club by Tan. Initial indications suggest that Cardiff's promotion will have an immense impact in terms of boosting the Welsh economy and generating employment.

"By way of comparison, Swansea's first season in the Premier League generated about £58m for the Welsh economy and up to 500 new jobs in local hotels, restaurants and other establishments."

Taking

CEO Jim Hart, who founded Europlus Direct in 2004 and now employs 45 staff, reflects on some of the lessons learned en route to global trading

IT was a round-the-world trip aged seven that got me excited about exploration and travel – a trip fondly remembered through the regular photo slideshows that followed at home.

I studied languages at university and got my first job with a publishing company selling into Germany. Another stint of travel followed, and I worked in Australia and Chile before returning to the UK and selling translation software first to France and Germany then across Europe.

After that there was a time with a marketing company from which I was made redundant, so I decided to use my experience to set about making a business of my own.

From the start I was convinced that a business model based on a multiple market strategy can offer greater stability than one reliant on a single country.

By spreading the risk and operating across economies worldwide you can ride financial peaks and troughs to maintain consistent growth. With this in mind, 95% of our business is based on export.

So in the beginning we were selling IBM services into France, but quickly moved into the UK, Western Europe and Australia, and more recently we have moved into the Sub-Saharan Africa region and Las Vegas in the US.

Africa is strong – our offices in Mauritius look after the African market which has generated more than £1m in revenues over the last three years.

Many banks, mining and telecommunications companies are moving into African regions and a lot of investment is going into Sub-Saharan

heart from CEO Jim

Africa in advance of markets taking off in two to three years' time.

To leverage this 'security', however, it is vital to be constantly thinking in terms of 'where next?' Our offices are full of maps and globes so that we are always reminded of the need to be thinking ahead to the next location.

As a seller rather than direct provider of services (we sell contracts – the engineers are from IBM), the business is quite agile and adept at creating a presence in an overseas market relatively quickly.

So, for instance, in the last year we have launched Europlus Direct International in Las Vegas, allowing us to buy IBM services very competitively in the US.

Our client base is of companies looking to trade, or already trading, internationally, and many of our customers are European looking to move into the US market, so it is looking good.

We are hoping over the next year or so we can generate $600,000- $700,000. Looking to the future, we are currently researching opportunities in China, India and the Latin America region with a view to entering these locations over the next 12 months.

In managing growth on a global scale, it is vital not to underestimate the importance of building relationships with high-quality professionals in the financial and legal world. I speak from experience – there have been a couple of occasions when we've made this mistake.

After the company's initial success with the Queen's Award 2008, it became clear that in order to expand our global presence, high-quality multilingual sales professionals were required, but these were in short supply. We therefore established our own in-house translation and language recruitment division One Global, whose services have undoubtedly underpinned the growth reflected by the second award. This sister business manages a network of 2,500 translators all of whom are required to be quality assessed and native speakers living in the country of the language they speak, ensuring that they are familiar with the current cultural and linguistic idiosyncrasies of that location.

One Global therefore not only supports Europlus Direct but also provides a revenue stream of its own from clients with translation and multilingual staff needs.

There is, of course, the 'English is the language of business' approach, but I estimate that making the effort to work in a prospect's own language improves the likelihood of a successful relationship by up to 40%.

Taking the multilingual route has more to it than simply communicating information accurately (although it is pretty important to avoid serious faux pas) – it conveys respect.

Prospective clients want to know that you value their business, and investing in the services of native experts to facilitate the relationship demonstrates how much you care.

Operating across different cultures and languages is the basis for a fascinating business model, but I cannot recommend strongly enough the importance of a local approach – it has worked for us.

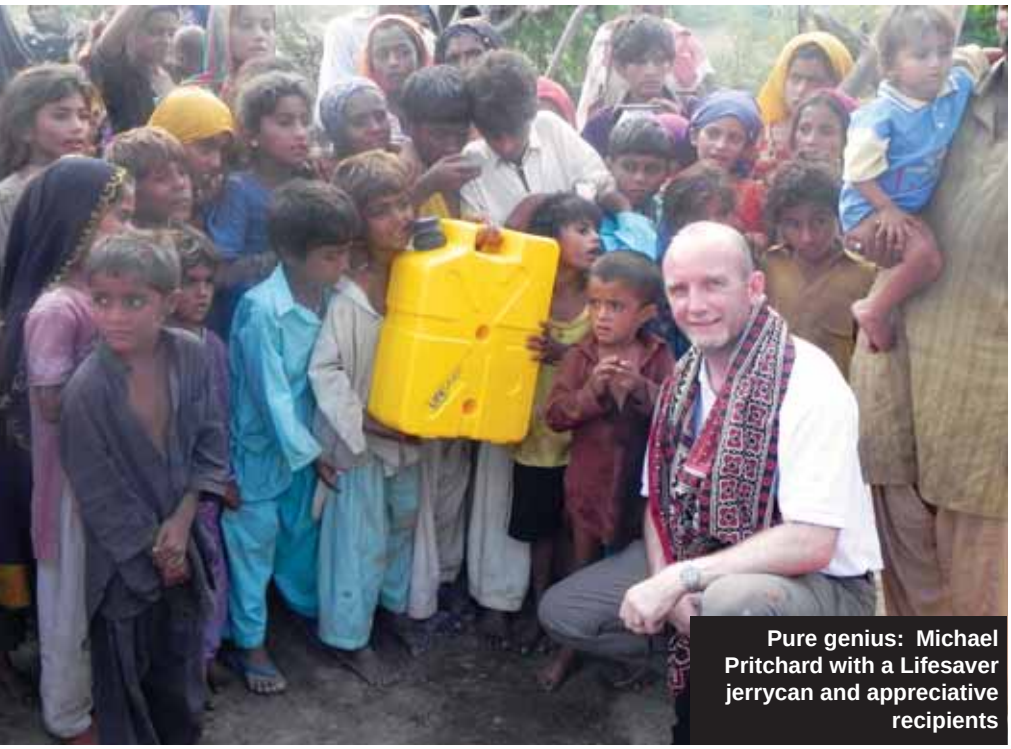
ABOUT EUROPLUS

- **Europlus Direct, an outsourced seller of IBM support services in 120 countries, has recently received a Queen's Award for Enterprise (International Trade) for the second time in five years. Based in Saltaire in West Yorkshire, the company has increased its overseas sales turnover by more than 70% since 2008 and is expected to achieve revenues of over £7.5m in 2013.**

Water purification specialists Lifesaver Systems has teamed up with the Malaysian government to lift a million people out of water poverty by the end of this year. Lifesaver Systems design and manufacture the world's only portable water purification technology to remove all bacteria, viruses, cysts, parasites, fungi and all other microbiological waterborne pathogens without the aid of any chemicals, or the need for any power, UV light or any significant effort

20 things you didn't know about the...

Lifesaver



Pure genius: Michael Pritchard with a Lifesaver jerrycan and appreciative recipients

1 It is the world's first and only portable water purification technology proven to remove all microbiological contamination.

2 The filter technology provides unrivalled filter life. Bottles can provide between 4 to 6 tonnes of sterile drinking water, depending on the model.

3 The company is based in Essex and designs and manufactures at the plant there, but operates on a global scale.

4 Michael Pritchard, Lifesaver founder and inventor, is at the premisis on a weekly basis to support the team and lead in the development of new products.

5 The firm works directly with key humanitarian organisations such as Oxfam, The Red Cross, Shelternow, MSF and is one of the members of DFID rapid response team.

6 Michael Pritchard has a dog called Alfie, and uses his 'presents' when demonstrating how Lifesaver products can filter even human and animal waste.

7 Lifesaver Systems is a small but dedicated team made up of 12 office staff and 15 factory staff.

8 Lifesaver has a blog, which is all about the team, where donations are sent and about health issues associated with dirty water (http://www.lifesaversystems.com/_blog/LIFESAVER_Blog/)

9 Lifesaver is looking to expand its reach and take on resellers globally to ensure customers can buy their products quickly from local stores.

10 All the members of the Lifesaver team are baptized when entering the company, and made to drink water from the local pond filtered using Lifesaver equipment. The pond is also used to test the products filters from time to time.

11 The Lifesaver bottle can be used by children as young as two, based on the marketing manager's little boy Jasper, who is 2 years old, and when left alone with a bottle, demonstrated just how easy it is to use (and make a mess).

12 Storing portable water requires the use of chemicals, or sealed sterile containers to prevent it deteriorating. Neither is desirable or practical in austere environments. The Lifesaver approach is to store locally sourced water 'dirty', and only filter it once you need a drink. No need to store, no problem to resolve.

13 The Lifesaver products operate failsafe technology – therefore the filter will not allow dirty water to be filtered. When the filter life is exhausted, it simply stops passing water.

14 The smallest known virus is Polio at 20 nanometres, meaning the Lifesaver bottle protects you from all known viruses.

15 You are able to purchase Lifesaver technology online and the product range includes the Lifesaver bottle and jerrycan.

16 The products have a maximum shelf life of three years before they must be used. Once they start being used, as long as a little bit of water is kept in the product to keep the filter damp, the in-use life can last much longer.

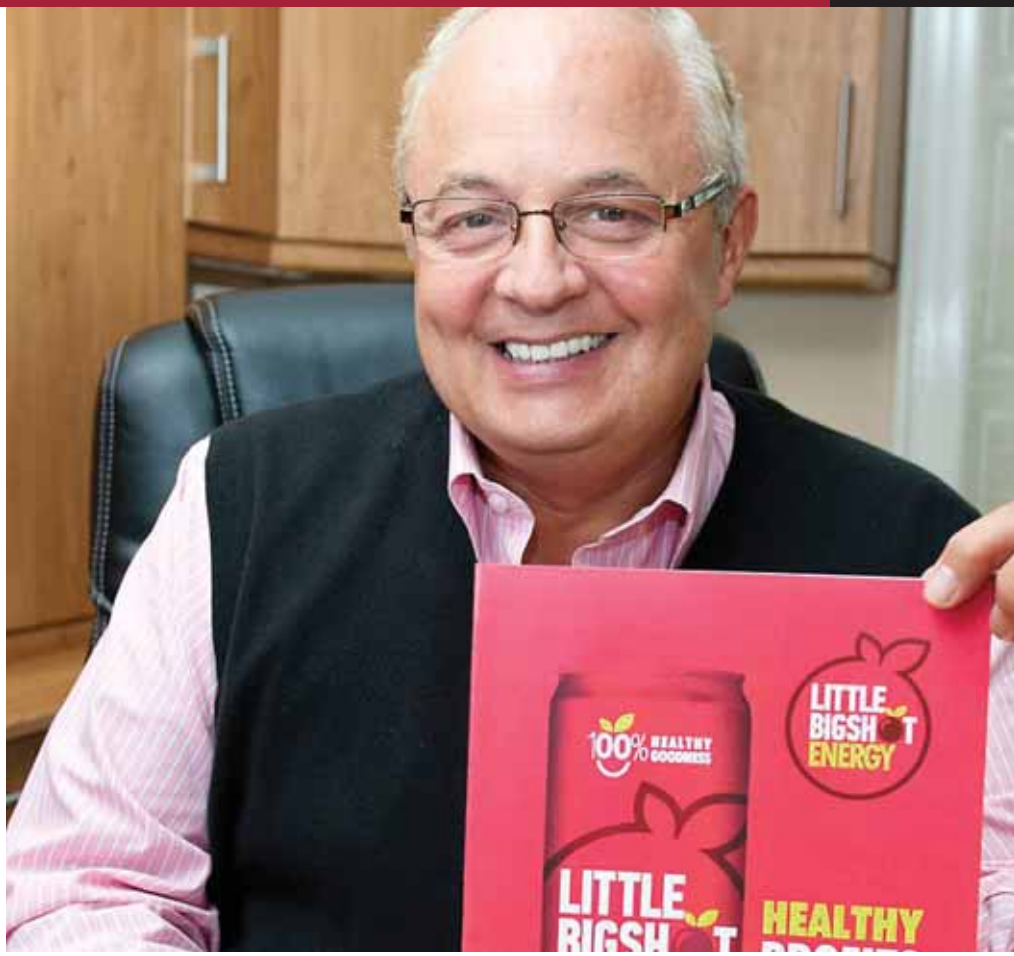
17 Lifesaver provides military grade foil packaged disaster packs – enabling the shelf life of the products to be increased by a further 10 years.

18 Lifesaver covers three main markets – humanitarian, military and the leisure market, meeting the safe and sterile drinking water requirements of non-government organisations, government agencies, and the well-informed adventurer.

19 Lifesaver launched the Lifesaver cube in June, based on feedback from DFID and Oxfam, for humanitarian relief. The cube was designed to be robust, simple, compact, easy to palletize and to ship quickly; each cube provides 5 tonnes of clean, sterile water to those in need – at 180 cubes per pallet, that represents an unparalleled level of support.

20 Lifesaver's Managing Director is from Sheffield. While he has moved to Essex, he still supports Sheffield Wednesday.

www.lifesaversystems.com



Jukes boxes clever: Bert has a shot at breaking into America

Mineral wealth

But can Bert Jukes' 'colossal' ingredient help make his product more successful than caffeine-based rivals? Alison Riley reports

BERT Jukes has the kind of name and CV – entrepreneur, motivational speaker and author – which makes him seem perfectly suited to the American market.

So it's no surprise that the larger than life Scottish businessman has targeted the USA and Canada as part of the next stage in the global expansion plans for his energy health drink Little Big Shot.

The product, which this year picked up the Best New Drink of the Year prize at the Natural and Organic Awards in London and is stocked in almost 1,000 Tesco stores, is being positioned to crack the American market this summer thanks to £1.5 m from investors and potentially a further £65.6m from American venture capitalists.

The drink, which contains natural fruit juices, B vitamins, ginseng and deep ocean minerals and is completely free of stimulants such as caffeine and taurine, is also available at health outlets, including the Spirit Health Club.

In January, Little Big Shot was named as one of the Top Five Most Interesting Products from more than 80,000 on display at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco.

Mr Jukes, who also distributes omega 3 supplement Lyprinol in Northern Ireland, said: "The response to Little Big Shot has been absolutely amazing. While other energy drinks rely on short-term stimulation, Little Big Shot offers sustainable healthy energy, without the preservatives or additives."

The company was unveiling Little Big Shot with a "major presence" at annual rodeo show Calgary Stampede in July, and Mr Jukes says he is in talks with an internationally known sports star to be the drink's ambassador in the country and plans to sponsor a youth hockey team and training scheme that will be called the Little Big Shots, reported the Scotsman newspaper.

The company has announced a deal to license the product with Planet Foods, a Calgary-based distributor of natural and organic food and drink brands across western Canada.

Mr Jukes aims to make major inroads into the £22bn global energy drinks market, saying: "We can have just one per cent of that. That is all coming but that takes money.

"We have three major investors at the table which will get us to the next level. We will have five divisions – Europe, Far East, Middle East, Africa and the Americas."

Mr Jukes said the company was close to a "multi-million deal" with a drinks bottler and distributor in the US and has established an office in Dallas, and he is banking on the appeal of Little Big Shot being the only drink in the world to use deep ocean minerals – high density nutrients and trace elements piped from sea depths of 2,000 feet off the coast off Taiwan.

Potency

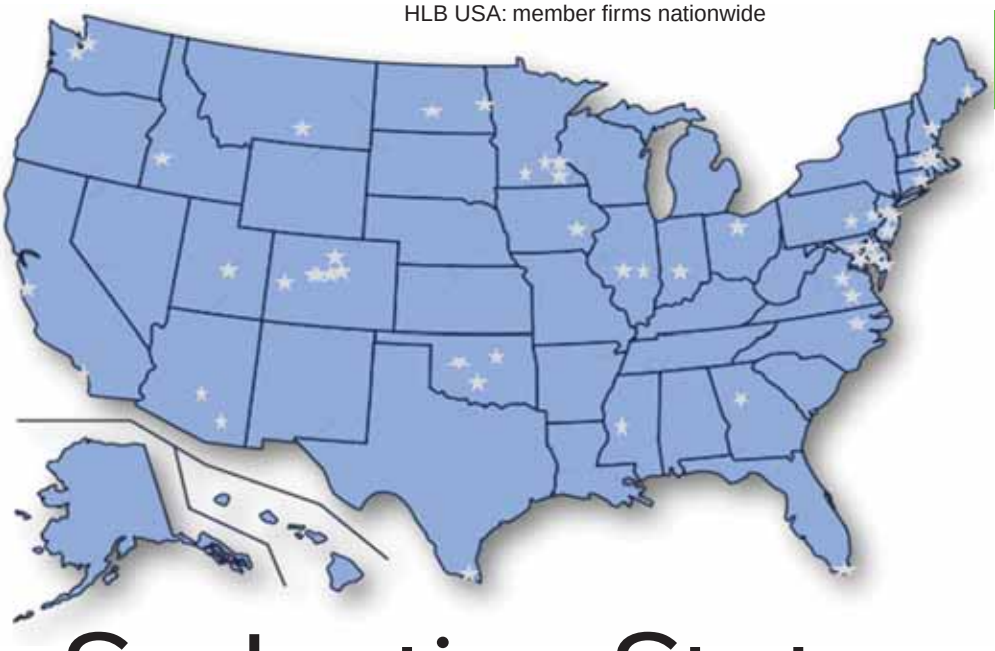
"Deep ocean minerals is a colossal new find," said Jukes, who sees the mineral concentrate being suitable for a range of products including snacks and yogurts.

"The potency of these minerals is very high. The liquid is easily absorbed in the blood stream – within half an hour of drinking it you have a purified body. If you want an energy lift, this is the baby," he said. Speaking on the deal with Tesco earlier in the year, My Jukes said: "This deal with Tesco is a fantastic step forward for Little Big Shot – and helps us answer the daily stream of inquiries we get from customers asking where they can buy it on the high street. But this is only the first step. We're growing business in Scotland, Northern Ireland and heading into America, Europe, the Middle East and beyond.

"As the health impact of high-sugar, high-caffeine drinks becomes more apparent, people will be looking for a natural, healthy energy drink."

Little Big Shot is safe for children and mothers to be due to the absence of caffeine and taurine, and the inclusion of B vitamins, antioxidants and natural fructose.

HLB USA: member firms nationwide



Seductive States

Inbound investment into the US is doing well, says leading worldwide audit and accounting network HLB International – as long as you make sure to take a few essential precautionary steps before entering the US market

MANY companies currently see international markets as a key growth strategy, both as a short-term tactic to escape economic difficulties in their own markets and as a longer-term trend.

According to Dave Stene, Chairman of HLB USA and Partner at Eide Bailly, "clients that are not yet marketing in foreign markets are currently looking and learning about which countries may have the best opportunity and the least risk."

Outbound activity is indeed doing comparatively well, considering the current economic context, however inbound business is doing even better with the US economy remaining very attractive for international investment.

Leon Janks, Managing Partner of HLB member Green Hasson Janks, California, says that "despite the slowdown, the US economy offers great stability, a tremendous market with consumer-driven growth opportunities and a wide spectrum of potential investments."

Within the State of California, the firm assists clients with investment opportunities in real estate, distribution, consumer products and the digital space sector.

However, a few necessary precautionary steps need to be taken in order to make the initial investment fully successful. Tax pre-planning, for instance, is key and although there are "numerous opportunities to do creative and strategic planning, this must occur before the individual or company becomes a US taxpayer," says Leon Janks.

New rules such as harsher regulation against money-laundering have made it more difficult to take such basic steps as setting up a bank account, and bureaucracy can sometimes be a challenge – so much so that "maintaining reasonable regulation and reducing uncertainty around tax policy would certainly be helpful," says Dave Stene.

While pre-planning is crucial when it comes to investing in the US, finding the right local partners and resources is equally important.

"Assistance through local experts is critical and the HLB network is a great way to achieve this," says Leon Janks, who sees international collaboration within HLB as the foundation for success, bringing worldwide high-quality references along with personal knowledge of business colleagues from around the world.

WHEN AUDIT IS FUN: AUDITING HOLLYWOOD

Steven Sills is a partner at HLB member firm Green Hasson Janks and co-author of Movie Money: Understanding Hollywood's (Creative) Accounting Practices. He tells us more about his 30-year expertise in auditing the entertainment industry

OUR job is to represent talent (actors, writers, directors, and recently an increasing number of financial investors) against the movie studios.

We perform contract audits of movie and television producers and distributors to make sure talent receive their fair share of profit according to the contracts they have signed.

For confidentiality reasons, we do not disclose our clients' names, but we have worked on 80 of the Top 100 films based on box office performance.

This is an increasingly international industry. While 20 years ago, 70% of film revenues originated from the US and Canada, today, as much as 65% of a blockbuster's revenues can be generated abroad.

There is also international investment in this sector with foreign tax shelters funding US production and the purchase of AMC theatres by a Chinese conglomerate.

We consequently spend considerable time auditing international distribution of films in foreign countries and work a lot with our HLB counterparts abroad.

In the last year alone we have collaborated with HLB firms in Amsterdam, Tokyo, Munich and Madrid and have been called as expert witnesses by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in the UK."

CA$$H rich

For many SMEs, it can be challenging to find the right buyers and sellers in international markets. Raj Agrawal, President of Western Union Business Solutions, takes a look at the latest coterie of countries offering potential growth opportunities

MUCH has been written about the BRIC economies – Brazil, Russia, India and China – and the potential for growth in these fast-growing booming economies.

Entering these markets, however, can be difficult: language barriers with unfamiliar cultural and business norms, concerns about corruption, and geo-political risks.

SMEs looking to trade with emerging markets will also quickly discover that the banking infrastructure is not as developed as it could be, which can present cash flow and fund management challenges.

Where, then, does this leave SMEs looking to start or increase global trade, especially in the face of stagnating domestic demand in many parts of the world?

One potential answer is CASSH.

The CASSH countries – Canada, Australia, Singapore, Switzerland and Hong Kong – have become the latest geographical acronym to emerge and offer an interesting opportunity for SMEs to explore, one that combines the excitement and sense of potential of the BRICs with greater stability and cultural affinity with the UK.

The phrase was first coined in 2012 by Russ Koesterich, global chief investment strategist at BlackRock. He determined that the CASSH countries are fundamentally stronger than most of the large, developed economies for a number of reasons, including lower systemic credit risk, potential for future growth and how their markets have fared against a backdrop of global economic uncertainty.

The investment case for some of these countries has diminished in recent months, with interest rate cuts in Australia and Singaporean growth slowing in comparison to some of its South-East Asian neighbours. Nevertheless, SMEs may well want to give these markets a second look. Some facts of note:

- Three-fifths of Singapore's economy is made up of SMEs
- Canada's rate of GDP for the first quarter of the year was 2.5%, the fastest since 2011, principally due to rising oil exports and an industrial rebound in recent months
- Hong Kong has also seen 2.8% growth in the past two quarters

Recent trade data from HMRC also revealed that the CASSH group's appetite for trading with the UK is growing. In March, the second biggest month-on-month increase in value of imports was from Canada, up by £120.1m (25.4 per cent) to £593.2m. During the same period, the fourth largest increase in exports was Australia, with a month-on-month increase of £99.9m (33.3 per cent).

As smaller, developed countries, the CASSH economies have proven to be far more resilient than the likes of the US, UK and Western Europe over the last four and a half years.

If we look at the latest data from the Doing Business reports from the World Bank, which cover 185 economies, it is clear that the CASSH countries are leading the field.

Singapore is the easiest place to do business with, closely followed by Hong Kong in second place. Three of the five CASSH countries rank in the top 10, with Australia in tenth position. Singapore has held the top position for the past two years, meaning that the regulatory environment is conducive to business operations for SMEs.

Proximity

Another point to consider is the CASSH countries' proximity to other economic powerhouses. Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong are well-placed for European businesses to strategically tap into the major APAC economics, such as the Chinese and South-East Asian markets.

Canada, which shares deep cultural and historical ties with the UK, its primary European trading partner, is adjacent to the USA and therefore provides UK companies indirect access to the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which covers Canada, the United States and Mexico.

UKTI also recognises the fact that the Canadian market "remains receptive to British products and Canadian business are familiar with UK business practices" – an important advantage that UK SMEs cannot exploit with other countries, such as China or Russia, as readily.

Perhaps the combination of Canada's recent economic performance and its historical ties with the UK had some bearing on the Bank of England's decision to hire Canadian Mark Carney as its new governor.

Carney's arrival and his reputation as a "monetary activist" will undoubtedly cause much stir this summer, but it is hoped that the success he had in Canada will be emulated across the pond.

So, how can small and medium-sized enterprises maximise their business potential with the CASSH countries? With SMEs struggling to survive domestically, much can ride on a SME's international relationships and their ability to do good business overseas.

Whether exporting to an emerging market or one of the CASSH countries, business owners and finance professionals should consider implementing a tailored cash and risk management plan before commencing international business. By having such a cash flow strategy in place, SMEs may be able to minimise their exposure to currency fluctuations using risk management tools such as forward contracts and stop losses..

These are all straightforward and effective financial products that assist businesses to attempt to protect themselves against a volatile FX market without losing the ability to be flexible.

Not only does such a strategy allow SMEs to thoroughly plan costs well in advance, but having a proven, detailed risk management strategy may increase that company's competitiveness against its peer group.

Small and medium-sized enterprises should certainly keep an ear to the ground for business opportunities in the CASSH countries – their growth could depend on it.

Canada's parliament building in Ottawa: similarities to London

It's Avon

The company, whose products are the last word in protection and security, is based not in LA or London but in rural Wiltshire. Rebecca Evans investigates

ROBOCOP, the half-man-half-machine American police officer, operating in a dystopian society of mega cities and mega crime, is how Hollywood has depicted the future of advanced security equipment and responses.

In reality, though, some of the most cutting-edge developments are taking place in the far from brutal surrounding of Melksham in Wiltshire at a design and engineering company which started at an old, semi-derelict cloth mill on the River Avon in Limpley Stoke in 1885.

And unlike the sinister technocrats of director Paul Verhoeven's imagination, the people who run Avon Rubber are far more quintessentially English, such as finance director Andrew Lewis, who when not working to increase sales of the company's protection and defence and dairy products, can often be found refereeing football matches or umpiring at the cricket.

However, while Robocop may only be fantasy, the most profitable market for Avon Rubber's range of gas masks and respiratory filters designed to counter chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, is the United States, with the military and police forces avid customers.

Sporty finance director Andrew Lewis, and right, Avon Rubber's equipment in action. Far right, another Avon Rubber device

So much so, in fact, that sales have increased by a fifth and operating profit has jumped 17 per cent on a turnover of £107m and the dividend is up 20 per cent at the firm that designs, tests and manufactures specialist products from a number of sites in the UK and the US, serving markets around the world.

And in these times of outsourced production in emerging markets, married father of three Andrew, 41, a graduate in mathematics and accounting from Bangor University, puts that down to quality over quick profit.

"There will be cheaper companies, but we take pride in the quality of our products and quality is not a matter we compromise on," says Andrew – who joined Avon Rubber in 2008 after spells as a director at Pricewaterhouse Coopers in Bristol and New Zealand and group financial controller at Rotork – about countering rivals from the likes of Mexico or Brazil, where Americans are increasingly sourcing their manufactured goods. With such growth across the Atlantic, some firms would be tempted to relocate entirely to the States, but Andrew says that Avon Rubber, founded by E G Browne and J C Margetson, has absolutely no plans to abandon its modern UK HQ, which, because of its national security status, is X listed and International Traffic in Arms Regulations approved.

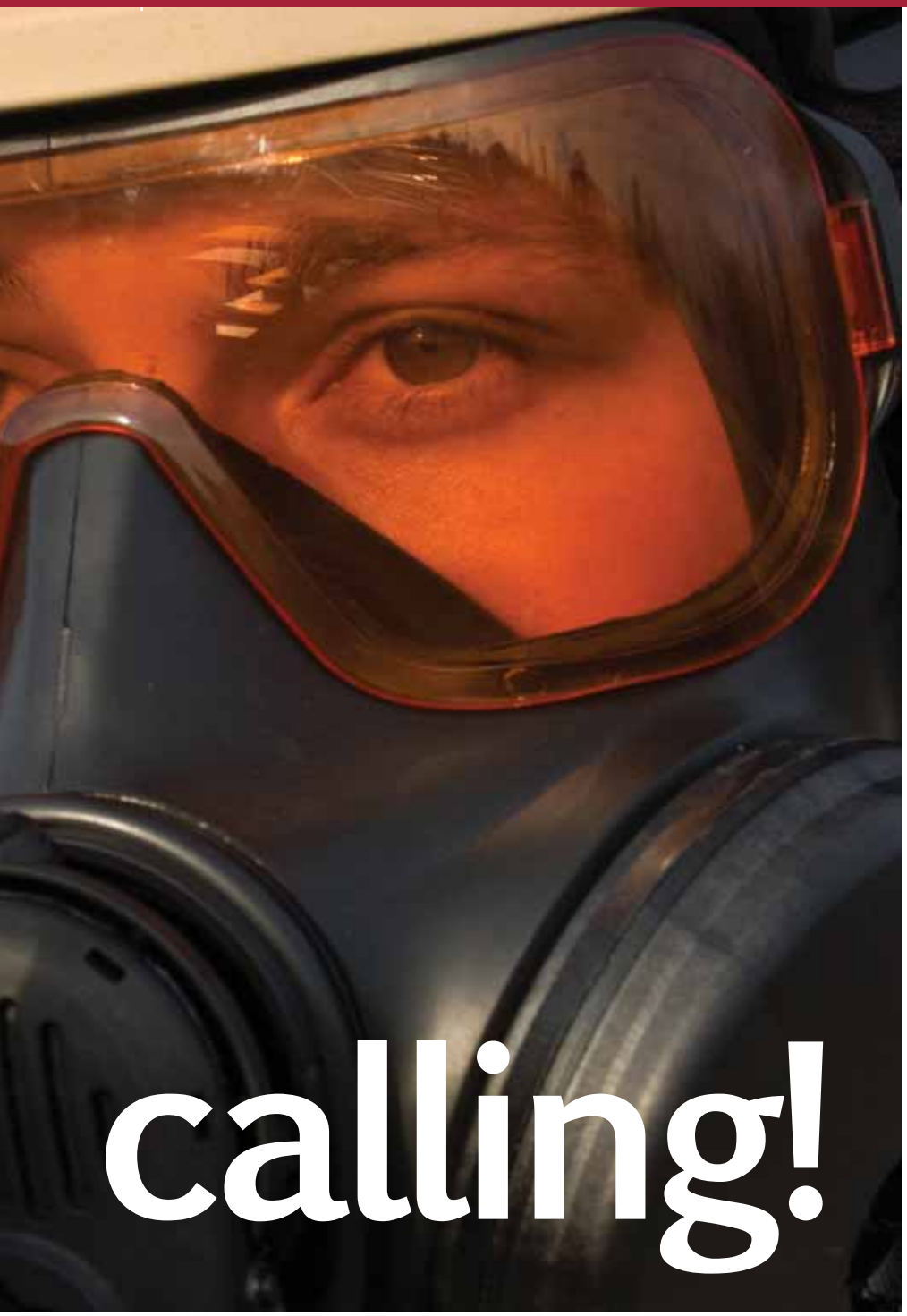
In fact it is investing even more in the UK, with Andrew saying: "We have recently acquired the business and assets of VR Technology, a market leader in diving rebreather systems and dive computers based near Poole in Dorset.

"Their products and key technologies complement and enhance our current and planned product ranges and will increase respiratory protection equipment opportunities for the group globally, especially with naval forces."

With David Evans as Chairman, backed by chief executive Peter Slabbert, Richard Wood and Stella Pirie and Andrew Lewis on the board, Avon Rubber – company motto "Investing in innovation" – takes pride in its expanding global market, which includes military forces, civil and first line defence troops, emergency service teams and industrial, marine, mineral and oil extraction site personnel. Which makes the other strand to the company's business – dairy equipment – seem almost surreal, but Andrew sees no conflict of interest.

"Both businesses have some very exciting times ahead with product development and we look forward to sharing new technology with our new and existing customers."

Avon Rubber has established a physical foothold in Asia with a sales and distribution



calling!

facility in Shanghai for the dairy industry, and Andrew says: “Having started operation in 2012, this office has demonstrated significant strength, showing sales improvements each quarter.

“We are set up to benefit from the growing automation of the milking process in China which is driven by the desire to improve milk quality.”

And while the military products are rigorously tested by an advanced team of engineers to obtain NIOSH and CE approvals, it would be nice to think that a local herd of friendly cows helps the dairy boffins, but Andrew dispels such fanciful ideas.

“We work closely with academia and industry to ensure that the products we develop meet their needs and regularly we will ask the trade to test our products.

“Before going anywhere our products must meet the highest health and safety standards,” he says. “Our consumable products come into direct contact with the cow and are replaced regularly to ensure product hygiene, animal welfare and to maximise milk quality.

> We take pride in the quality of our products, and quality is not a matter we compromise on

“The global market is concentrated in high consumption automated markets in North America and Western Europe where we have significant market share.

“Potential exists outside these traditional markets, in particular in China, India, Eastern Europe, Australasia and South America, which are experiencing rapidly increasing demand for dairy products which is being satisfied through mechanised milking.

“Our products are manufactured for major original equipment manufacturers as well as being sold through distributors under our own Milkrite brand.

“We are working to bring a wider range of dairy products to market, enhancing the farmer’s view of Milkrite as the primary technical solutions provider in this area.”

But it’s the masks and filters sector that forms the core of Avon Rubber’s business, and with chemical attacks rearing their ugly head again in Syria and civil dissent increasing around the world, it’s a business that shows no sign of dissipating any time soon.

The company states: “The strategy is to build on our strong position in the military market, initially through our long term sole source mask systems contract to supply the US military, and subsequently through sales to and further long-term contracts with other governments.

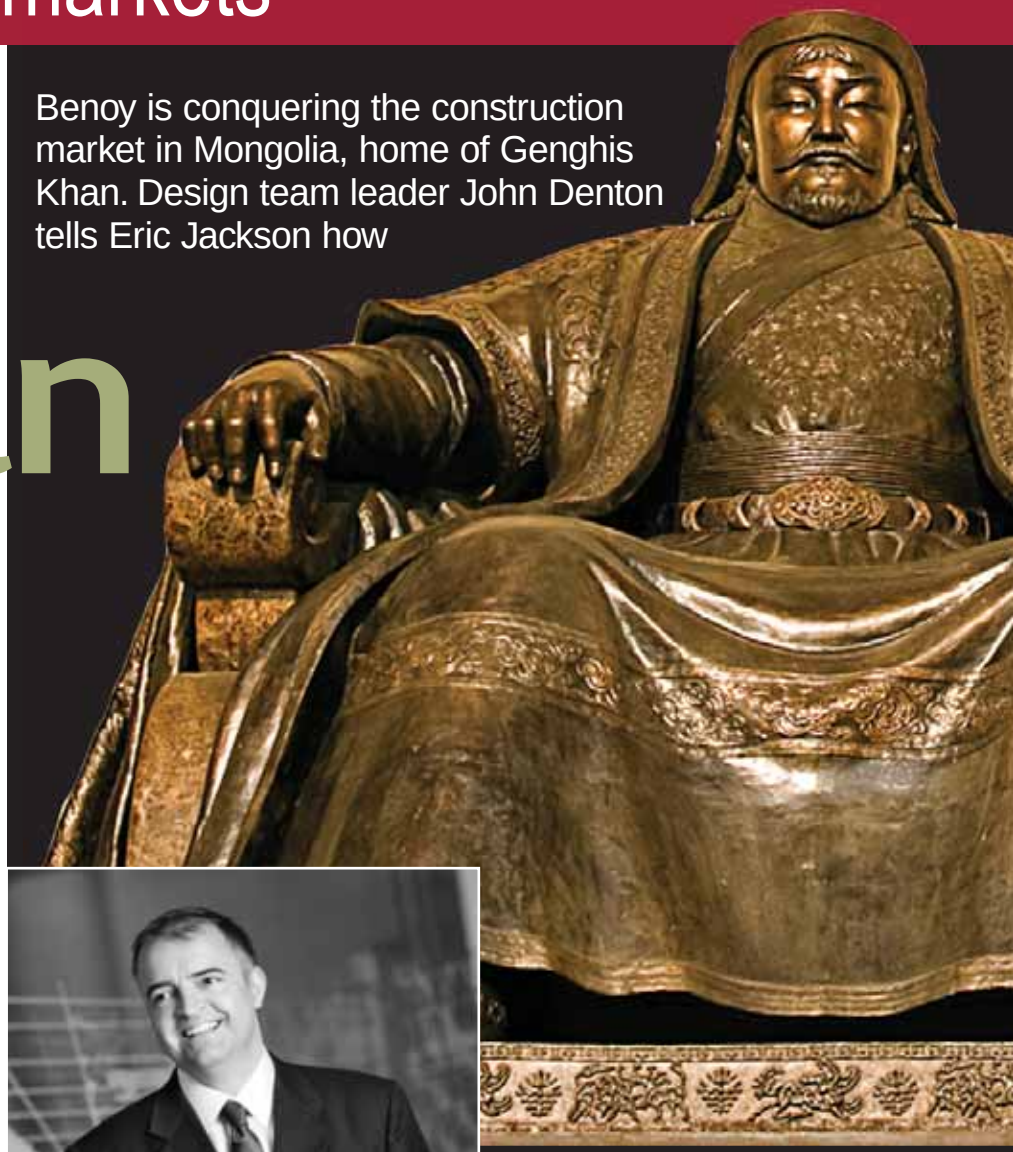
“Our range of filters and capacity for filter manufacture is increasing. We believe that our existing product range and customer base, together with our credibility and development expertise, will put us in prime position to supply into all accessible global markets.

“We are simultaneously targeting homeland security markets with non-military versions of these products.

“These developments will primarily be through organic growth in the short term although with the group’s strengthened balance sheet the acquisition of complementary technologies can now be considered.”

Yes Khan do

Benoy is conquering the construction market in Mongolia, home of Genghis Khan. Design team leader John Denton tells Eric Jackson how



Mongolia past and present: Above, a statue of Genghis Khan; left, John Denton, who is in charge of the Olympic Residence project, seen under construction, right

IT'S good to be hot in your job and cool under pressure, but for one leading British architectural and design firm the temperature gauge swung a staggering amount in the search for business.

When Benoy, which employs a team of 500 worldwide, was finalising the deal to help design the swankiest new building in Mongolia, its Far East delegation went from the 35°C of Kuala Lumpur to the -35°C of Ulaanbaatar, the world's coldest capital city, within 24 hours.

"Coming from subtropical heat to such a freezing climate is some experience and we were very grateful to have packed plenty of woollies," says John Denton, who leads the interior design team for Benoy in Asia, about the city which makes Moscow and Ottawa seem balmy by comparison.

In the spring, Benoy, which is headquartered in the UK and has studios in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, Mumbai and Newark, picked up a second successive Queen's Award for Enterprise thanks to its international trade success, especially in emerging markets such as India, China – and now Mongolia.

The company has been appointed as the interior designers for the entrance lobby, residential apartments and the private leisure clubhouse at the Olympic Residence, a high-rise, multi-use development in the centre of the city, and John believes that work in China swayed the deal.

"Our client had seen our recent EAST Hotel projects in Beijing, which they really liked - this was our best advertisement in order to be selected for the job," says John, 47, who joined Benoy's Hong Kong office in 2005 and became a director two years later.

John, who enjoys property development in his spare time – he is currently completing the renovation of a 350-year-old Grade 2 listed country house in Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales National Park – adds: "Benoy has an extensive record of working globally in new locations. The local culture is very important to the destinations we create and each project we work on is specifically designed for its own unique local region and characteristics, adding genuine personality to our designs."

Now John sees the Ulaanbaatar project as the springboard for a great adventure in the country, believing it is an 'exciting time' for Mongolia and Benoy, which was founded in the village of Collingham in 1947.

"As Mongolia is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, we are confident that this will be just the start of our involvement in the country, along with other British firms.

"We are already speaking to other developers with enquires in Mongolia. They are still a little cautious, so things are moving a little bit slowly, but we are confident that the Olympic Residence will be a reference project for our continued success in the region."

And Benoy – along with every other consultant – will be able to start with a relatively blank canvas, as Mongolia's cityscapes have a long way to catch up the pace of development in the oil, gas and minerals industries, which are generating much of the wealth.

"In Mongolia the building industry is still in its infancy – contractors are not yet as experienced as those we are used to working with across other Asian cities like Beijing," says John.

"It was only until recently that the tallest buildings found in Ulaanbaatar were only five-storeys high, so the building industry still

DOUBLE SIX APPEAL LANDS VEGAS AWARD

PARC 66 in Jinan, China, won the 2013 Best of the Best VIVA (Vision-Innovation-Value-Achievement) Sustainable Design and Development Award for Benoy in the spring.

The award was presented as part of the International Council of Shopping Centre's (ICSC) global awards programme at the ICSC annual RECon Conference on May 19 in Las Vegas. Honouring the most outstanding examples of shopping centre design, the ICSC Best of the Best Awards bring together the Gold Winners from prior regional competitions to compete for the global title.

Parc 66, ***pictured below***, previously received the top Gold Award in the 'New Design & Development' category and the special 'Sustainable Design' award at the ICSC Asia Retail Real Estate World Summit in September 2012.

Parc 66 is recognised as a retail landmark in Jinan, located on the "Golden Avenue", the busiest pedestrian street in the city. Reflecting the region's natural beauty in its design, the Parc 66 mall takes its theme from the surrounding lakes and springs, embodying a fluid water themed interior design.

The mall has been designed to use LED light to reduce energy consumption and has a comprehensive recycling and recovery programme that treats and supplies recycled water for non-drinking purposes. The cutting edge technology and timeless design brings vibrancy and caters for a new level of luxury for the city's increasingly affluent community.

Commenting on the global award win, Simon Blore, Managing Director Asia, said: "Parc 66 has been recognised with one of the highest honours in sustainable shopping centre design and we are extremely proud of Benoy's involvement with the development. The ICSC's prestigious accolade truly embodies Benoy's commitment to being at the forefront of retail design."

has a way to go, which is often reflected in the on-site building conditions that we find and that makes some creative planning necessary."

John – who has been responsible for the design of complex projects, including Elements Mall Hong Kong, ION Orchard Singapore, Seoul IFC, EAST Hotel Beijing, IFC Pudong, iAPM Shanghai, Plaza 889 Shanghai, China World Beijing and Holiday Inn Hanoi – points out that although traditional Mongolian design is heavily influenced by Russian and also Chinese styles, the Olympic Residence concept caters for the specific expat market.

"But it still has a sense of place to the location," he says. "In design we have used a more open-plan concept for the apartment.

"Each area has been carefully positioned to maximize natural lighting as well as taking advantage of the external landscape view of Bogd Khan Mountain. With the interior we have incorporated rich textures and colours to create a warm and welcoming environment as needed in this location."

The development is backed by the Asia Pacific Investment Partners, and John praises their 'strong vision'.

"APIP are one of the leading property developers in the country, so we relish this opportunity to build a strong partnership," says John, who was fascinated on his first trip to Mongolia over 20 years ago by the pervading image of the country's most famous ever citizen, the marauding conqueror Genghis Khan.

"He is everywhere and far from taboo," he says. "Khan dominates the city. The main street is named after him, there is also a series of very large monuments to him that are main tourist magnets in Ulaanbaatar, a lot of bars and restaurants carry his name and, of course, he is the main character in any souvenir shop – mugs, fridge magnets, towels, you name it." Benoy, of course, has a major fingerprint on the domestic architectural landscape too, such as Bluewater in Kent, the Bullring in Birmingham and Westfield, London.

But the privately-owned firm now sees some 70 per cent of its business realised overseas with schemes such as Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.

Graham Cartledge CBE, Chairman of Benoy, says: "The world has changed dramatically in recent years and the economic landscape remains unpredictable, but our resolve and determination have enabled us to succeed where others have not been so fortunate.

"We continue to enjoy great success in what some may describe as the more 'traditional' markets, but also actively seek pockets of opportunity in areas that are new, at least to Benoy, such as Belarus, Burma, Mexico, Peru and Mongolia."

US potty about pottery firm Steelite

A 13.5% increase in orders from the US helped pottery firm Steelite International achieve record sales for the third year in a row.

The ceramics manufacturer broke its turnover record with sales of £70.2m, up six per cent from £66.3, reported the Stoke Sentinel in May.

Revenues were helped by strong performances in Eastern Europe, South America and Asia, as well as in America.

Steelite employs more than 800 people, mostly at its Middleport headquarters.

Next year, work starts on a new production facility alongside the existing site that will create at least 170 extra jobs.

Company chief executive Kevin Oakes, said: "It's been a truly incredible year for Steelite International, and I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved.

"The commitment and passion of the team here and overseas has been a real driver for growth. We sell into more than 130 countries, and more than 80 per cent of our turnover is from export markets. I have no doubt that's largely because we manufacture in the UK.

"Our overseas customers see a real value in the Made in England backstamp."

Steelite was also handed the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its international trade success.

The company said demand was helped by three new ranges – Craft, Koto and Optik.

Sales this year will be bolstered by Royal Crown Derby as it moves into the high-end hospitality market with new products and designs.

Mr Oakes said: "It's great for this city, it's great for the industry and it's great for Steelite International. Everyone who has contributed to our success in 2012 should feel a huge amount of pride, and I fully expect 2013 to be another exceptional year."

Business experts and community leaders believe Steelite's success shows the ceramics industry has turned a corner.

Stoke-on-Trent North MP Joan Walley said: "Its policy of quality ware made in the UK by skilled local pottery workers is a recipe for real success. Steelite is now ideally placed to create more jobs, and be proactive in the steady but sure resurgence underway in Burslem."

Laura Cohen, chief executive of the British Ceramics Confederation, said: "This is excellent news for the company and broader sector including suppliers."

The start of

Welsh network Cardiff Start shows how digital firms are breaking through export barriers to deliver their goods to a worldwide market. Connie Alexander reports

FOR digital business networks such as Cardiff Start, there is a massive opportunity for exporting to a global market.

From a growing city which was, up until recently, considered an example of Britain's industrial past of coal and steel production, regeneration through digital industries has been tremendously valuable. The tech sector is thriving in the Welsh capital and is enjoying the benefits of exceptionally easy exports of their products.

Digital products can be delivered easily and very quickly, in contrast to the bulky products of Cardiff's past industry which required a lot of time and effort to transport. The growth of a sector which can deliver products globally almost instantaneously and without huge expense proves that being in Wales is no boundary to success.

The ease with which companies can market themselves internationally or export digital products means that you don't have to be based in a large city to enjoy success. Even in a city of only 325,000 people like Cardiff, companies can grow a global customer base.

Evan Rudowski, co-founder of SubHub, a membership management company, knows the value of exporting his product. SubHub takes over the management of customisable subscription communities for associations, societies and other organisations, using their customer relations management system SubHub MemberCore.

"We market our services online through our website," he says. "We use digital marketing techniques to attract customers and we make online sign-up simple."

The same factors which make exporting the product easy also make it an attractive offer for overseas clients. With easy, accessible sign-up, SubHub and other digital services can offer a product which is just as simple to use overseas.

"The majority of our customers are in the US, but the majority of our staff and activities are based here in the UK," explains Rudowski. The ease with which his product is exported to foreign markets also provides a wider customer base with an easier product to use.

Power

The power to ship internationally, combined with instant digital transfer, makes for a very streamlined business, that non-digital companies can only ever dream of. Barriers on export simply don't exist for digital businesses.

SubHub has had to tweak some things though.

"We tend to communicate in US English as we find that Americans are more resistant to non-US spellings than Brits are to American spellings," says Rudowski.

"Similarly, we accept payment in both US dollars and sterling. We have a US postal address and phone number so that we can present a local presence."

These are small sacrifices when you consider the size of the potential market which will be encouraged by such small factors.

something special

Neil Cocker utilises the web to break down the boundaries of export too. Unlike SubHub, Cocker's Dizzyjam sells physical products. Cocker explains that "Dizzyjam.com is an ecommerce platform that makes it easy for anyone who makes or plays music to create and sell merchandise to their fans. We've also recently launched CottonCart.com, which does exactly the same for societies, charities and clubs.

"Dizzyjam currently exports a third of the merchandise that it sells on behalf of its users, with the majority going to North America, followed by Western Europe. We accept currency in both sterling and dollars, and plan to soon open it up for euros, too. Although we sell physical products, 100% of our revenue is collected online, and almost all of our promotion is done by the shopowners themselves."

By going digital, Dizzyjam has managed to export its services and name to a wider customer base, and then do the slightly more difficult task of exporting their physical products.

Cocker explains that technology has made this simple, too, though, and it means that the whole world becomes Dizzyjam's local market in effect.

"We dispatch directly from our base in Cardiff to the whole world (using Royal Mail and a number of other providers), but the nature of our business model, and ecommerce in general, means that our location is almost irrelevant," he says.

"We've had orders from Tokyo, Tijuana and Telford, and our processes in Cardiff always remain the same. It's brilliant to have a robust website and payment processing system that allows for orders to come in 24 hours a day, regardless of whether anyone's in the office or not."

Tradebox Media is an app development company, and founder Stephen Milburn has sought to take advantage of the easy export potential. The company's core product, the Trippa series of travel apps, has enjoyed international success with downloads all over the world.

Potential

Milburn said: "The export potential of our products is enormous because they are instantly available to worldwide markets. Apple in particular has made it very easy for developers to sell globally.

"The product is easy to localise and tailor to a specific market and when that is combined with making it instantly available to a worldwide market, you can see success very quickly.

"Apple take a large cut for providing this service, but it is more than worth it – they take so much hassle out of delivering the product around the world, and the payment systems are very straightforward. It may take a while for the profits to come through the system, but that is a minor inconvenience which is far outweighed by the benefits of selling through the App Store.

"The fact that the Android market is a little more fragmented, with a number of app stores selling Android apps makes it a little more complicated than Apple's single-source system, but even so, we can have an app live and have downloads nearly instantly. We could have a customer on the other side of the world get the app just as quickly as somebody in the office, and that's a very powerful way to do business."

Tradebox Media also produce apps for other clients, and they have seen international success there too.

"In terms of return of investment, our mobile affiliate marketing programmes have been very successful, and 80% of the revenue comes from overseas, with the Netherlands one of our largest markets at the moment," explains Milburn.

With instant product delivery, Tradebox Media and other digital businesses can deliver their products in the same time and at the same price as they would for a local client.

A global market may present currency conversion issues. However, Milburn explains that for Tradebox Media, and for most tech companies, small sales are very easily managed in multiple currencies and large transactions justify the effort needed to facilitate them.

"If you're selling digital products using in app purchases, the payment processor, Apple or Google for instance, takes care of the conversion. For smaller amounts, even PayPal takes care of the conversion," he says.

"For larger transactions, such as paying for an app development project, handling payments and currency conversions is more tricky, but still not too difficult, and such a large transaction is worth the little bit of hassle."

● ***If you'd like more information on Cardiff Start, visit cardiffstart.com/, call 07748411778 or email stephen@cardiffstart.com***

> "The nature of our business model, and ecommerce in general, means that our location is almost irrelevant"

Willing, but not always able

More Chamber members are exporting, but there's an alarming skills gap, reveals survey

To export or not to export: it's a tough question in the UK

A SURVEY of more than 4,500 businesses by the British Chambers of Commerce shows that the share of Chamber members which export continues to increase.

However, the findings also suggest that gaps surrounding the general know-how of how to take a product or service overseas are holding back firms from taking the initial step towards exporting.

In addition to this, there is a major shortfall in foreign language skills within the business community. Rebalancing the economy towards net exports is vital for the success of the UK economy, so the British Chambers of Commerce is calling for more support for firms looking to trade overseas, while encouraging the take-up of foreign languages – both in school and in the workplace.

Findings show that gaps in commercial knowledge, from finance to marketing and sales to negotiating the bureaucracy, continue to hold back businesses looking to export. The difficulties in sourcing market information tend to hold back manufacturers, micro and smaller firms from exporting more than other types of business.

Perception can act as a barrier. 58% of non-exporters reported that they feel they do not have a suitable product or service to export, and although down on the 76% reported last year, this still indicates that there is a lack of knowledge surrounding the opportunities that the global market can offer to business. Manufacturing, IT and media firms cited the largest skills shortages: 17% of non-exporting manufacturers cited a limited knowledge of the commercial aspects of the process of getting the product or service to markets overseas, and 13% of IT and media firms said the same.

The BCC believes that commercial export skills should be placed at the core of business education, so that entrepreneurs of the future will find it easier to understand the unique challenges involved in the end-to-end export process. This could include managing finances, using cross-border supply chains and understanding legal and bureaucratic requirements. Business degrees and further education qualifications must include compulsory modules on international trade and exports, to ensure that business people are 'export-ready' when entering the workplace.

Training is crucial, and the Chamber Network plays a leading role by offering an accredited training scheme across the country. However, it believes that the government should do more to encourage companies to take the initial step towards becoming an exporter.

This could be offering financial incentives for non-exporting businesses that train up existing staff on how to export, helping firms with their first trade mission or a reduced rate of tax on early exporting profits.

Knowledge of other languages is a critical skill for exporters. 62% of non-exporters that are likely to consider trading internationally in the future see proficiency in foreign languages – or lack thereof – as a barrier to do so. Even when business owners claim some language knowledge, very few speak well enough to conduct deals in their buyers' language, and this is doubly important when conducting business outside the largest cities and administrative centres. French remains the most commonly spoken language, with 71% of business owners claiming some knowledge. However, only five per cent are able to converse fluently enough in French to conduct business deals in that language.

When looking at other trading partners in the eurozone, 57% spoke no German, 65% no Spanish, and 76% no Italian.

Looking at faster-growing markets outside the eurozone, the problem is even more acute: 95% of business owners have no knowledge whatsoever of either Russian or Chinese, despite these two economies forecast by the IMF to grow by 3.4% and 7.75% respectively. Less than one per cent feel that they can converse fluently in either language. The BCC is calling for a fundamental change in approach to the importance of language learning, to ensure that the next generation of business owners are 'born global'.

The government should revise the national curriculum so that studying a foreign language is compulsory until AS Level. Incentivising language training for SMEs through financial incentives will also ensure a tailored approach for businesses, so that staff can learn the relevant languages they need for conducting business abroad.

Commenting on the findings, John Longworth, Director General of the BCC said: "We know that exporting is crucial for the success of the UK economy, so it is encouraging to see that the percentage of exporting businesses within our membership has increased.

"However more can and should be done to help businesses take the first step towards exporting their goods and services. Our message is always 'have a go', but we do believe there is more that the government can do to help get more businesses thinking globally. It is critical that firms understand the challenges and opportunities attached to the export market. Helping companies forge new connections, through trade promotions and incentives, will help companies to think internationally.

"Furthermore, a renewed focus on language skills at school and in the workplace will ensure that we continue to export the finest goods and services that Britain has to offer. To really secure Britain's future as a leading global exporter, we need to do all we can to encourage companies to take advantage of new markets. Giving businesses the opportunity to foster links with international firms, training employees, and educating the workforce of tomorrow will boost our export activity in both the short and long term, and help the UK win the 'economic war' that the Prime Minister has frequently spoken of."

British Chambers of Commerce
The Ultimate Business Network

On course for new markets

CHAMBER FOCUS: ESSEX

By David Burch

A MAJOR part of Essex Chambers' work on behalf of businesses is in processing documentation for exporting. With the UK's economy growing only slowly and the eurozone economies remaining in the doldrums, then exporting to the rest of the world is something that companies are looking at with interest.

However, the thought of doing so and knowing how to complete the right documentation is something that is potentially off-putting to any business thinking of going down the exporting path.

Help is at hand, though, from the Chambers through the wide range of training courses they run for both novice and experienced exporters.

One such course is "An introduction to export operations" being held in the autumn at the Chambers' offices in Colchester. This is an entry level course designed to provide an overview of the terminology, procedures and documentation used in the exporting process and to promote awareness of the responsibilities and obligations of all parties.

Attendees should gain an overview of the exporting process from first enquiry to arrival of the goods at destination, and the course will highlight the possible pitfalls that can await the unwary.

This seminar is designed for those new to the problems of exporting and for experienced exporters who need to update their knowledge. No prior knowledge of exporting is assumed. It is suitable for staff from both small and larger companies involved in shipping/dispatch, sales and customer service staff, finance and accounts staff, junior and senior management, freight forwards and trainees at all levels.

For those individuals with a bit more experience, we held an intermediate level course entitled "Exporting – understanding the paperwork" in July, designed to look at the problems associated with export documentation which will often lead to delays in getting goods to customers, increased costs and charges, and a breakdown of goodwill between seller and buyer.

Changes to regulations and requirements often pass unnoticed or are misunderstood. HM Revenue and Customs require exporters to demonstrate documentary compliance with security and customs regimes, even if they choose to outsource the shipping function to agents or forwarders or delegate logistics to the buyer under ex-works terms or similar.

Non-compliance risks delay in the supply chain and the possibility of financial penalty. This seminar addressed all these issues and more, examining all aspects of export documentation from first enquiry to arrival of the goods at destination, best practice, emphasising the need for a clear and coherent audit trail for each shipment to ensure customs compliance.

These are just two of the courses run by the Chambers each year to help work your way through the potential minefield of exporting. To find out more about them or book a place on them contact the Chambers' International Trade Manager, Debbie Joyce, on 01206 765277 or email debbiejoyce@essexchambers.co.uk Full details of all courses and Chambers events can be found at www.essexchambers.co.uk

NO.10 TALKS AND GIANT LEAPS FOR HURDLE'S FIRM

PRIOR to the Prime Minister's recent visit to Essex promoting business development overseas, Fläkt Woods UK managing director, Allan Hurdle, was invited to No.10 to meet David Cameron by the Essex Chambers of Commerce in May.

A diverse group, consisting of British Chambers of Commerce members from all over the UK, met with the Prime Minister to discuss their experiences trading across the globe.

The meeting started with the Chamber members presenting the issues faced by companies trying to break into new markets and a range of well-received ways on how the government could do more to help existing and potential exports. Fläkt Woods currently exports around half of its £55m turnover.

Working closely with the Essex Chambers of Commerce for support and advice, and despite the recession, Fläkt Woods has grown by 5% per annum since 2007, primarily due to its exports. Allan, ***pictured below at No.10***, said: "My experience has shown me that every business looking to export has different requirements. There is no one hat that fits all solutions. It is important that government and private sector support is tailored towards the needs of each business, with suitable customers and contacts identified in potential export markets.

"Organisations such as the ECC, BCC and UKTI help government understand the difficulties facing exporters and how to work with us in order to help reduce barriers to increase markets and develop future growth. This meeting was an excellent way to continue this progression."

Among BCC members 22% were exporting in 2011. This has grown to 39% in 2013.

Spices – to India!

SELLING snow to the Eskimos or sand to the Saudis? Well Jason Wouhra, boss of East End Foods in Aston, Birmingham, has gone one better.

His firm is exporting Indian spices – back to India. And that, along with the firm's other achievements, meant that it picked up the best business title at the inaugural British Indian Awards. Mr Wouhra said: "The fast-growing middle classes in India are prepared to pay for quality and spices, which are unadulterated.

"There is also considerable kudos among the better-off in Indian society in buying into Brand Britain. We have contracts worth more than £60,000 in places such as Delhi and the Punjab."

The sales deals were clinched by the firm during a British trade mission to India in February led by Prime Minister David Cameron. Two executives from the company travelled with the party to sign up contracts face-to-face.

East End Foods, which supplies 80 per cent of independently owned Indian food shops in Britain and most of the supermarket chains, was started in Wolverhampton 40 years ago by the Wouhra family, originally from New Delhi. The company has an annual turnover of £180m and employs more than 300 workers.

Of the British Indian Awards, Arbinder Chatwal, Head of India Advisory Services, BDO LLP, said: "It's important that we take the time to recognise the achievements of the Indian community in Britain today."

There were 18 awards presented on the night, including:

- Best in Medical: Bijayendra Singh (Medway Foundation NHS Trust)
- Best in Accountancy & Finance: Kamel Hothi (Lloyds Banking Group)
- Best in Legal Services: Mitesh Patel (Levenes Solicitors)
- Outstanding Achievement Award: Fauja Singh (centenarian marathon runner)
- Young Achiever of the Year: Dev Patel (British Indian actor)
- Best in Civil Service & Armed Forces: Keith Vaz MP
- Financial Director of the Year : Tarsem Dhaliwal (Iceland)
- Businesswoman of the Year: Shashi Gossain (Pharmaclinix)
- Businessman of the Year : Daksh Gupta (Marshall Motor Group)
- Business of the Year sponsored by BDO: East End Foods
- Entrepreneur of the Year: Deepak Kuntawala (DVK Group)

Code breaks North American market

POSTCODE Anywhere and Canada Post are launching a new web-based address validation service, AddressComplete, which also includes the newly released Point of Call (POC) property level address data.

Postcode Anywhere is one of the leading providers of address validation technology in the UK with over 8,000 customers including some of the largest ecommerce brands around the world, while Canada Post is a provider of business-to-consumer postal services reaching 15.1 million Canadian addresses every day.

The strategic relationship, announced in May, between the two organisations is set to deliver a range of commercial benefits to both parties. The Company worked with UKTI to enhance their presence in North America, and Postcode Anywhere Sales and Operations Director, Rachael Mackwell, ***pictured***, was a recipient of the UK Trade & Investment US Kellogg Scholarship back in 2008 and says the experience played a significant part in changing Postcode Anywhere's strategy for marketing into North America.

"I strongly recommend any SME wanting to expand into North America to speak to UKTI and see what help they can offer," says Mackwell. The UKTI US Scholarship Programme, Fundamentals for Success in The US Market, offers UK SMEs a unique opportunity to attend a prestigious course at one of the USA's most distinguished business management schools.

Successful applicants for the scholarships have their tuition fees and accommodation whilst at Kellogg paid for by the programme.

AddressComplete expands on the web-based "what's my postcode?" technology Postcode Anywhere pioneered over a decade ago, which made buying online easier at checkout and more reliable in the final mile of delivery.

Mackwell added: "Postcode Anywhere believe the address validation and auto-complete technology will "significantly change the way Canadians order goods online. The service allows ecommerce businesses to capture and validate customer addresses at the point of entry rather than verifying after the event which is the case with older addressing solutions. We are hugely excited about our collaboration with Canada Post as it marks a significant leap forward in our business. To account for the dual languages in Canada, AddressComplete enables users to type in any fragment of their address whether in French or English. The software suggests results as you type, eliminating the need for complicated forms."

AddressComplete is built on a pay-per-use subscription model making it affordable to businesses of all sizes and it can be added to a business' website in minutes.

It offers an intuitive address validation and completion experience, benefiting from the most accurate source of address data in the country.

Popping the corks on some

CANADA is famous for many things – Mounties, stunning nature and friendliness – but wines?

Vintages from the north American country are unfamiliar to most Brits, although they are lauded by critics and are popular across the Atlantic.

To try and correct that imbalance, though, over 100 wines from dozens of Canadian wineries were on display in London at a trade and media tasting at Canada House, Canada's High Commission in May. The wines did Canada proud, reported Canada's National Post.

Some of the top palates of London got to know more about what Canada is doing and most were enthusiastic and excited by the developments, progress and most importantly the quality of the wines we are making, said the report. The guest list for the Rediscover Canadian Wine event

Sophie Howe: an abundance of support

Call in the experts to export, say Comtec

BRITAIN'S businesses are being urged to take advantage of specialist export advice in light of the fact that 62% of companies in the UK are being held back from exporting by language barriers.

The rallying cry comes from Midlands-based language experts Comtec Translations off the back of figures released by the British Chambers of Commerce that show only five per cent of businesses in the UK speak enough French to do business in the country while 58% of companies are not confident they have a good enough product or service to market overseas.

The message from Comtec – which has over 30 years of experience in supporting UK exporters from key business sectors, meeting their requirements for fast, high quality translation and interpreting services in all major languages worldwide – is clear: take advantage of the extensive network of support available to successfully take your business overseas.

"There is an abundance of support available for businesses that need to take the first few steps to exporting. Organisations such as UKTI offer introductory services to overseas markets and specialist translation providers can provide support around handling communications material for overseas trade," says Sophie Howe, Managing Director, Comtec Translations, who was recently featured on national radio talking about the challenges the UK faces as an economy to develop the vital language skills businesses need to enter international markets.

Energy absorption experts Oleo International is a great example of a business taking full advantage of opportunities overseas and benefitting from support to take its products abroad. Today, it represents the 30,000 UK companies assisted by UKTI in 2012/13 – a number the government wants to grow to 100,000 in the next five years.

The UKTI team based at the Coventry Chamber of Commerce has been assisting Oleo since 2005 when Oleo commissioned some bespoke research on the Japanese rail sector.

Since then UKTI has supported Oleo in a number of ways including attending important overseas trade shows, researching various markets including China and India and facilitating introductions to market experts around the world. Oleo takes full advantage of export advice and recently launched its new innovative rail simulation software, Oleo 1D in China, with the support of Comtec.

Watch out for the new Chinese brands

CHINA is set to dominate emerging market attempts to break into international markets and establish global brands, according to new analysis by marketing experts Nirmalya Kumar and Jan-Benedict Steenkamp.

In their new book Brand Breakout – How emerging market brands will go global, Professors Kumar and Steenkamp, set out eight cutting-edge routes for emerging markets to establish successful global brands and show why the next Samsung could come from China.

Nirmalya Kumar, Professor of Marketing, London Business School, explains: "Many Chinese firms have started the same transformation that Japan and Korea went through. Soon we will be buying Chinese-branded products just as we are buying "Made in China" Western-branded products today.

"In 1990, emerging markets accounted for 20 per cent of global output. By 2010, the share of emerging markets had doubled to 40 per cent and this number is likely to surpass developed markets by the end of this decade."

China has already become "the world's factory", says Professor Kumar. It makes many of our best-loved products from Apple iPhones to Disney. Now it has overtaken Japan to become the world's second-largest economy, second only to the United States, which may lose its pole position to China before this decade ends.

But, the western, globally established brands are a tough act for an emerging market like China to follow. Even with China and its fellow emerging markets – Brazil, India, Malaysia and Russia – driving an unprecedented proportion of global trade, many people would still struggle to name one Chinese brand.

The authors advocate however that "brand breakout", is achievable. "There is no reason", says Professor Kumar, "Why Chinese brands cannot have the same impact in the US, as US brands have had in China."

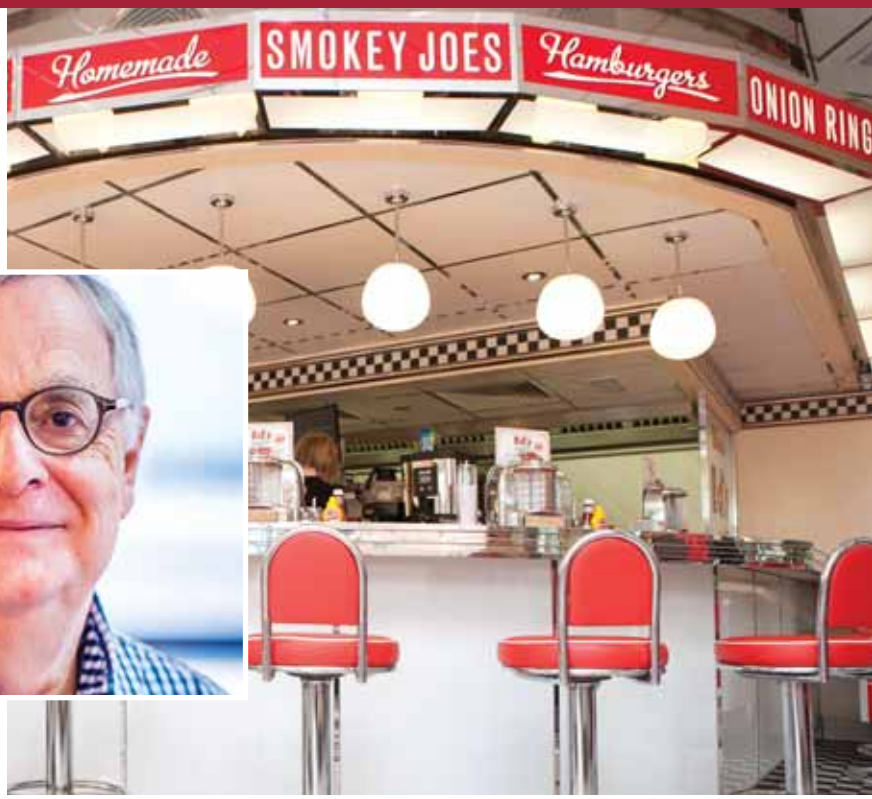
great Canadian vintages

included sommeliers from high profile London restaurants such as River Café, China Tang, The Cinnamon Club, Hakkasan and Manoir aux Quatre Saisons, buyers from The Wine Society, Marks & Spencer, Berry Brothers and Rudd, Harrods and Harvey Nichols, wine trade writers from business publications such as Drinks Business and Just Drinks, along with well-known wine writers such as Jancis Robinson, Steven Spurrier and Oz Clarke. The last time Canadian wines were featured in London was in 2010, when a group of Ontario wineries came to show off their "Cool Chardonnay" to rave reviews.

Writer Oz Clarke was very enthusiastic. He felt that Canadian wines had shown a massive improvement from the last tasting three years ago and the fizz was a "revelation" with real stylistic differences between the regions.

Andrew Guy

Andrew Guy is 65 years old and lives in Highgate, North London. He was born in Cardiff, and graduated from The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. His career has been spent in casual dining restaurants, and he has lived and worked in Texas and opened restaurants in many of Europe's major cities, as well as all over the UK. He is currently CEO of Ed's Easy Diner, an American-themed business that he and colleagues purchased in 2009 when there were three Diners in and close to London. Today there are 17 in the UK and two in Cape Town, with a further six openings in the UK during the rest of 2013



Dining, the American way at Ed's Easy Diner. Inset, Andrew Guy, and below, his business hero Abraham Lincoln

Andrew's Ed for business

My business philosophy
Give people the guidelines and then trust them to get on with their job. The best is "Always do what you think is right". People often surprise you, and rarely let you down.

My friends and family
My wife was a restaurant executive, and then had her own business for many years. She gives great feedback on Ed's – sometimes uncomfortable, always constructive (in the end!).

My ambitions
To create with Ed's Easy Diner a business that many people admire and to visit the eastern seaboard of Canada, Vietnam and South America.

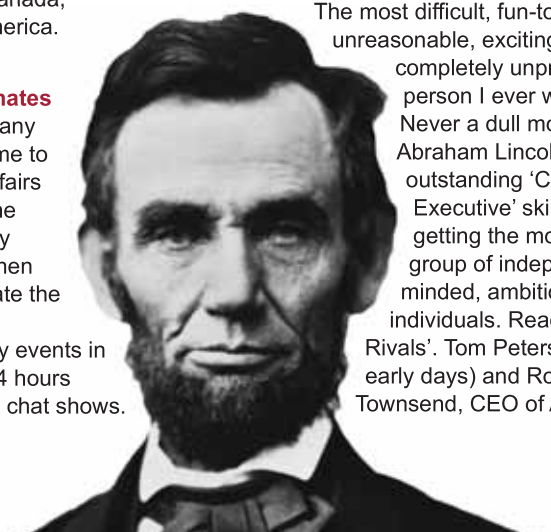
My media loves and hates
I love magazines on many subjects, and to find time to read serious current affairs weeklies, especially The Economist. And country music radio stations when driving in the USA. I hate the trivialisation and sensationalism of many events in newspapers, and on 24 hours news. And all phone-in chat shows.

My leisure
When the weather is nice, sailing our boat, which we keep at the Hamble, and travel, especially to visit our many friends in Texas (where we once lived), Chicago and Western Canada.

My working day
Extremely varied, which is why I've loved the restaurant business. Sometimes office, much of it planning our future growth, or working with/ developing my team. Otherwise, looking at new locations or visiting our Diners around the country.

My business heroes
The late Bob Payton, founder, chairman, of the My Kinda Town Restaurant Group. The most difficult, fun-to-be-with, unreasonable, exciting and completely unpredictable person I ever worked for. Never a dull moment.

Abraham Lincoln, who had outstanding 'Chief Executive' skills, in getting the most from a group of independent-minded, ambitious individuals. Read 'Team of Rivals'. Tom Peters (in his early days) and Robert Townsend, CEO of Avis and author of 'Up the Organisation'.



My sport
Rugby, particularly Welsh rugby.

My favourite TV show
The Simpsons. No explanation needed.

My favourite night out
Theatre, followed by dinner at a favourite restaurant, currently J Sheekey or Pollen Street Social.

My music
Varies according to mood – sometimes Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison or John Coltrane, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington or Mozart, Wagner, Ralph Vaughan Williams.

My happiest moment
Our wedding day lunch – 20 people, all from both families, at The Walnut Tree, Abergavenny, personally supervised by Franco Taruschio.

My most treasured possession
The inscribed Jaeger Le Coultre Reverso wristwatch my wife gave me nearly 25 years ago.

Your best route to the global marketplace

CHAMBERS of Commerce continue to provide a range of business services and independent representational support to UK companies and organisations and have done for over 200 years.

Almost every major town or city in the world has at the heart of its business community, a Chamber of Commerce, and strong trading links tie the movement together on a global scale.

The UK's Accredited and associate Chambers are part of an international network. They exist to develop and strengthen international trade links and to improve the competitiveness of their member businesses. They believe in two-way trade and are therefore approachable by any British business.

British Chambers overseas are bilateral organisations with membership open to any business, British or otherwise, interested in trading with Britain. They are found around the world, but are at their strongest in Europe. Invariably they have strong links with British embassies and their great strength is their ability to tap the knowledge and expertise of expatriate businesses.

The BCC and its Accredited Chambers have good relationships with overseas Chambers and trade agencies. Years of taking trade visits abroad, receiving delegations, signing protocols, and organising trade fairs have resulted in Chambers having a vast network of practical working relationships throughout the world.

The route into this is via an Accredited Chamber, which will also be able to provide details of trade visits organised by Chambers and other organisations.

International Trade Services

The BCC's Accredited Network provides numerous international trade services:

- Training in all aspects of world trade
- Export documentation services
- Market research and online intelligence
- Credit checks and letters
- Export planning
- Translation services and multilingual marketing material
- Inward / outward trade visits and fairs
- Export clubs and international networking
- Consultancy projects
- Tender advice and opportunities
- Specialist advisory service
- Letters of credit
- Credit checks
- Market focused programmes
- Events and seminars
- Introduction and contacts with local and central players in Government

Export Documentation

The BCC holds mandates from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and HM Revenue & Customs for the issue of export and import documentation. These movement certificates are readily available from issuing body Chambers across the UK and include:

- EU Certificates of Origin
- EUR1 Certificates
- A.TR Certificates
- Chamber Support

All BCC Accredited Chambers are equipped to provide professional advice to experienced and new exporters at every stage of the exporting process.

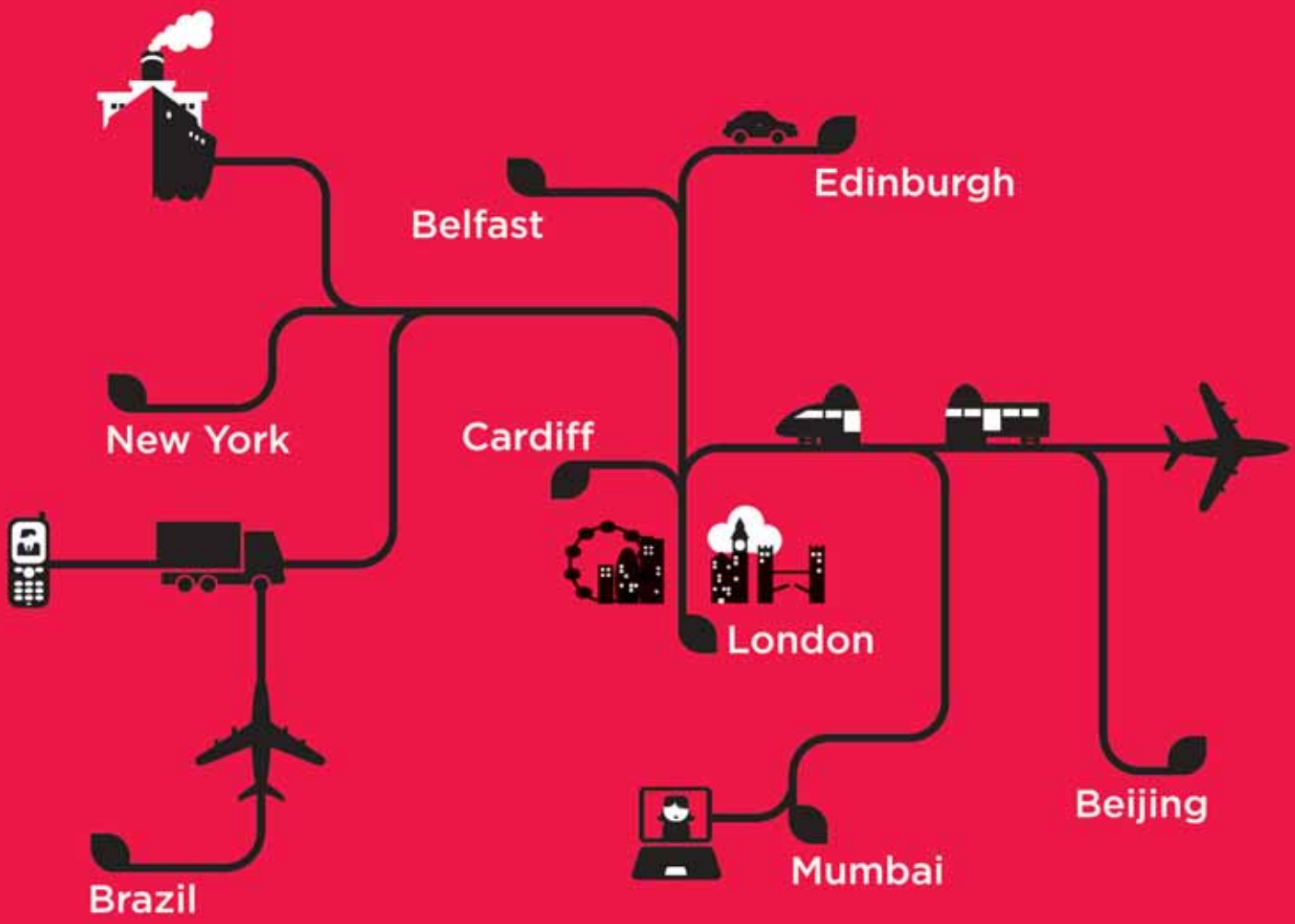
Visit www.britishchambers.org.uk to see how your local chamber can support you when trading internationally.

Visit the BCC website for up to the minute details of all Chamber of Commerce export initiatives and access to a wealth of international trade information.

www.britishchambers.org.uk

British Chambers of Commerce
The Ultimate Business Network

OUR NETWORK WILL GROW YOUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS



- Marketing Research
- Export Certification
- Documentation Services
- Export Training
- Outward & Inward Market Visits

British Chambers of Commerce
The Ultimate Business Network

For more information or to find your local Chamber visit www.britishchambers.org.uk