

# Business Cornwall

Issue 48

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March 2011

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# Cornwall – a good place for business?

According to the findings of a survey conducted for **Business Cornwall** magazine by accountancy firm Bishop Fleming, Cornwall is facing something of an identity problem

**We asked businesses for their views on Cornwall being a good place to run a business, and more than half (52%) said they would choose the Duchy as the ideal base if they were starting all over again.**

However, 38% conceded that it might be easier to locate a start-up business somewhere else, while less than 10% said that they would choose somewhere else if they were starting their business again.

We also canvassed business opinions on the effect they thought the recent unitary status would have, and the likely impact of the forthcoming Local Enterprise Partnership.

Less than 15% of respondents believed they will transform Cornwall's standing as a business location, while most (57%) thought that it will take at least six months to see the effectiveness of these two bodies.

According to Ian Fraser, partner in charge of Bishop Fleming's Truro office: "More significant, perhaps, is that more than a quarter of our respondents (28.5%) said that most people still seem to believe that Cornwall's focus should be on holidaymakers, rather than on being a home for ambitious businesses.



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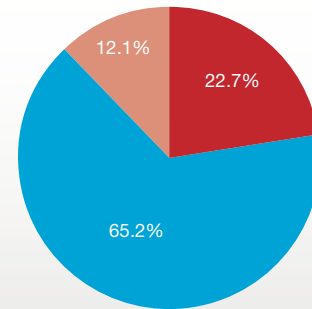
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### Would you recommend Cornwall as the location for a start-up business?



- Yes:** Cornwall ticks all the boxes for a new business.
- Maybe:** It's a great place to live and work, but there are some real problems about transport, image, and accessibility.
- No:** Most start-up businesses need things that cannot be delivered in Cornwall – like easy access to your market.

Source: Bishop Fleming

"Cornwall clearly has an image challenge: of course we want to sustain its reputation as a superb holiday destination – but our economy demands that we command the attention we deserve as a serious location for serious business."

Almost half (42.5%) were adamant that Cornwall is good for business, despite being one of Britain's most remote locations, thanks to low staff costs, great quality of life, and the benefits expected from the LEP and broadband plans. For slightly more respondents (45.5%), the jury is still out.

Crucially, perhaps, just 23% would recommend Cornwall as the location for a new start-up company, with 65% saying they would hesitate to recommend Cornwall as the place to start a business.

One respondent said: "Having spent the last six years trying to make my business work in Cornwall, I've reluctantly decided that I must make the move back to central England.

"People outside Cornwall see it as a holiday destination – because that really is what it is best at. As soon as potential clients are told that "We're based in Cornwall" a barrier goes up."

Another said: "The whole economy in Cornwall is dominated by the public sector. Everything from recruitment, exporting to finding premises entails having to endure a platoon of Convergence funded bureaucrats. Sweep all this aside and let us get on with creating wealth."

Broadband issues also remain: "Despite broadband priority, at our location we only receive a minimal signal, just enough to elevate us out of dial up. It's frustrating and annoying, and slows things up."

It was by no means all negative, however, with one respondent set to expand: "Cornwall is excellent for business," they said, "and we are just about to launch our second one so it's a great place to be." ❖



## Fuelling discontent

**Cast your minds back 11 years to the fuel protests that brought much of the UK to a grinding halt.**

The spectre of having to pay 80p a litre provoked widespread civil action, yet today as fuel hits record highs of £1.30+, there are few signs of repeat scenes.

This is not to say there aren't growing feelings of discontent and unhappiness at the situation, however. There have been increased calls from many quarters for a fuel duty stabiliser to be brought in to help rural areas, as pledged by the Conservative Party in its manifesto.

While a 5p a litre discount scheme is being trialled, it is only being done so

on the Isles of Scilly and other islands off the Scottish mainland.

Meanwhile, hopes for duty stabiliser are appearing to be downplayed by the Government, which fears that it is simply too complicated and unworkable, with many lengthy European hurdles standing in the way.

The scrapping of a further 1p duty rise in April seems a more likely bet, but exactly why UK fuel prices continue to head north is something of a mystery.

In Europe prices saw a 4.3% drop between the middle and end of January reflecting a 4% drop in NW Europe wholesale costs in the same period. Retailers in the UK, however, have not passed these savings on.



The UK currently has the eighth highest unleaded price in Europe and the second highest diesel price. While the UK average diesel price in February was £1.34 a litre, across the channel in France it was £1.18.

And to make you feel even better, in America the average cost of a litre of diesel is just 57 pence.

Some things just aren't fair! ◀

**Nick Eyriey**

## Digestgeneral

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## Government calls for FiT review

**The Government is looking to put the brakes on in Cornwall on the scramble for solar power farms.**

Planning permission was granted last October for the UK's first power farm, near Bodmin, and the Council has said that more than 60 companies have expressed an interest in setting up solar farms in the county.

However, there are fears that the commercial sector could eat up too much of the money set aside to fund the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) scheme, which was initially devised with homes and small businesses in mind.

And now the Government has called for a "comprehensive" review.

Energy secretary Chris Huhne said: "Because of the risk of an increasing number of large scale solar farms which could push feed-in tariffs off track, and the need to give industry added certainty to invest, the coalition is announcing a comprehensive review into the scheme.

"Large scale solar installations weren't anticipated under the FITs scheme we inherited and I'm concerned this could mean that money meant for people who want to produce their own green electricity has the potential to be



▶ Sunny side: Solar fears

directed towards large scale commercial solar projects."

Cornish heating and eco energy installer, Govan Ltd, has backed the Government's announcement.

MD, Daryl Govan, said: "We are not against large scale solar developments; we think they provide a major contribution to our sustainable electricity generation targets. However, the FIT incentive was originally intended for the support of micro-generation technologies – the clue is in the name – so the Government's review simply serves to put the incentive back on track."

It is unlikely that the Government review will halt the building of large scale solar developments, but will rather look to prevent such developments from being eligible for the FIT tariff. ▶

## Confusion strikes GBI

**There was fresh confusion last month over the future of a funding stream through the ERDF Convergence Programme.**

While the Government quietly announced last year in its Spending Review that it was closing the capital grant scheme – Grant for Business Investment (GBI) – it was expected to continue in Cornwall through the Convergence programme, as it requires no Government match funding.

However, the South West RDA called a temporary halt to new applications in Cornwall last month, amid concerns that the Government had issued a blanket moratorium.

Thankfully, the confusion has now been cleared up and the RDA is again taking GBI applications, although the use of the phrase "for the time being" should be perhaps be noted. ▶

## Top award in China's hands

**China Fleet Country Club, Lost Gardens of Heligan and Cornish Cottages were among the winners at the 2011 Excellence in Business Training Awards.**

China Fleet won the Training Programme of the Year Award and was also crowned ultimate winner of the night when it collected the Business Excellence Award.

The annual Excellence in Business Training Awards, hosted by Cornwall College Business, recognises exceptional

training and development in organisations across the south west.

The Lost Gardens of Heligan was crowned winner of the outstanding commitment to training (SME) award for its continued investment in developing their staff and business. Cornish Cottages won the outstanding commitment to graduate development award for its work with Unlocking Cornish Potential. ▶



▶ Winner of winners: China Fleet

## New MoD deal for airport

Newquay Cornwall Airport has begun a first in the country deal with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for a two and a half month flight training scheme.

The agreement, made between Cornwall Airport Limited and the MoD, sees the RAF and Naval bases around the UK to undertake their flight training requirements at the airport and the skies above, until the end of April.

Airport MD Al Titterton said: "The use of the airport for flight training makes

sense as the long runway and uncongested airspace is ideal for this type of activity. The strong relationship between the Airport and the MoD has been maintained and hopefully this agreement will create further opportunities for military flight operations at Newquay."

The agreement between the MoD and Newquay Cornwall Airport will run until April 30. ▶

## Manufacturing optimism

**The latest quarterly South West Manufacturing Barometer has revealed that the region's manufacturers continue to record increased turnover levels.**

According to the survey, which was commissioned by the Manufacturing Advisory Service in the South West (MAS-SW), 64% of manufacturers reported an increase in sales turnover in the last quarter of 2010, an increase of 11% from the previous quarter, and 18% up on Q4 2009.

Orders were also up, with 54% reporting an increase from October to December, similar to the response in the previous quarter. Overall, 2010 showed an increased level of orders compared with 2009. ▶

## Pop guru to present awards



▶ Pete Waterman: Back to the 80s

**Music industry supremo Pete Waterman has been confirmed as the celebrity speaker at this year's Cornwall Business Awards.**

In a career spanning some 40 years, Waterman has sold in excess of 500 million records worldwide and been instrumental in the development of dozens of 1980s pop superstars such as Kylie Minogue, Rick Astley and Bananarama.

Last year, Waterman penned Britain's Eurovision entry – That Sounds Good to Me. Unfortunately, however, it didn't sound good to many others, as it finished bottom.

Around 300 business leaders are expected to attend the awards dinner at St Mellion International Resort on May 19.

(www.cornwallbusinessawards.co.uk) ▶

## Cornish Open Day

Cornish brands will be converging on London later this month for the second annual Cornish Press Open Day.

The event, which will be held in fashionable Soho on March 22, will showcase a range of creative Cornish lifestyle brands to the London-based national media.

Among the brands showcasing themselves this year will be 100% Organics Skincare, Blacker Designs, B Skincare,

Mirri Damer Jewellery, Poppy Treffry, Rick Stein, Scilly Flowers, Seasalt Clothing, St Eval Candles, The Eden Project, Trevarno Skincare and VisitCornwall.

The event was created by Lucy Jenner-Brown of Newquay-based PR agency Minky Publicity. She explained: "The brands showing lead the way in style and design, fully deserving the media attention this showcase brings and is why this event is so well supported by the press." ▶

## New office showroom

**Redruth-based interiors specialist, Office SMART, has opened a furniture showroom within the Pool Innovation Centre (PIC).**

The showroom, which is located on the ground floor, showcases a selection of furniture ranges, including office furniture.

Managing director Barry Wilkinson said: "Office SMART worked closely with the team at PIC to furnish many of the offices, including the meeting rooms and public areas, so we are really pleased we now have a dedicated space where we can display more of the exclusive ranges we are able to supply to businesses and hotels." ▶

# Flybe. A better business case from Newquay.



**flybe.com**

Keeping Business on the move



## Datasharp set for best year

**A leading UK telecoms and photocopier solutions company is predicting its best year ever, as it enters its fourth decade as a leading employer in the city.**

Datasharp has its head office in Truro Business Park and supports a growing network of regional offices across the UK.

And it is poised for expansion with new products and services that are expected to deliver the company's most successful financial year to date.

This includes its Optimum Connect superfast broadband package, which provides fibre-optic and high-speed Ethernet first-mile technology to give clients the fastest and most reliable telephone and internet connectivity.

CEO Paul McIntosh said: "Datasharp has shown that it's not all doom and gloom in business and that we – and Cornwall – have a great deal in the future to be excited about.

"We believe there are exciting times



▶ Directors (l-r): Allan Williams, Paul McIntosh and Jane Cockcroft

ahead and even in this challenging economic climate we are forecast to have our best financial year yet." ▶

## An Absolute reorganisation

Falmouth-based design agency Absolute Design (Cornwall) Ltd has gone into liquidation.

Following the company entering a Voluntary Creditors Liquidation last month, the majority of the staff, including founder Helen Blake, have been retained to work for two new companies that have been formed as result of the liquidation, Absolute Graphics (Cornwall) Ltd and Absolute Interiors (Cornwall) Ltd.

In a statement, the company said: "The reason for the fully planned 'birth' is to separate the two main functions of

the Absolute business and allow both to flourish in their own right. Given the current economic climate, the new Absolute structures allow the operation a crucial opportunity to write off a number of significant bad debts and realise a range of effective financial benefits.

"The alterations have also allowed the injection of vital fresh investment and a new director for both companies, allowing Helen Blake to once again become much more involved in the creative direction and delivery of all work." ▶

## Suzie goes solo

**Local journalist and PR executive Suzie Smith has set up her own consultancy.**

As well as offering the standard retained PR packages, Suzie Smith

Media Consultancy also offers to work for clients from their own premises. "I think it offers a more personal touch," Smith said. ▶

## People's Champ from Falmouth

**A Falmouth-based freelance digital designer has won an international design award for his work designing and building the website Club of the Waves.**

Andrew Couldwell won the People's Champ Award at the Pixel Awards in the Art Category. Each category has two winners, a panel of judges decides one winner, and the second winner is decided by a public vote. The combined number of votes for all of the People's Champ winners was over 35,000.

The Pixel Awards annually honours compelling sites that have shown excellence in web design and development. They are based in California and feature entries from all over the world including the UK, Canada, North America,



▶ Splash: Club of the Waves website

Belarus, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. ▶

## Creating an impression

**It's not what you say, it's the way you say it – that's the message from Cornish voice coaching expert Matthew Clarke.**

According to a leading theory, 55% of human communication is with body language, just 7% on content and a whopping 38% on what you sound like.

And Clarke, who has worked as a broadcast journalist for nearly 20 years, has embarked on a mission to not only get the Duchy's business people heard, but also listened to.

He said: "When launching Kernowpods.com, I was thinking what other broadcast skills would be useful, and everyone uses their voice for business. It's the oldest method of communication, yet if we all use it so much, why aren't businesses doing more to improve it and use their skills?"

"When face to face networking, you want to make sure people remember the most important things you say, because that means money to you. You've got to use your voice to make that 7% count."

Tel: 01209 610890 ▶

## Radix sales rise

**Penryn-based copywriting agency Radix Communications has reported a 31% rise in turnover.**

In its third year of trading, ended November 30, the company saw revenues lift to £103k.

In the early part of the financial year, Radix also expanded its team with the appointment of Matt Godfrey as account manager. It now has two full-time employees and one part-time project manager. ▶



## Lavery at Marine School

**Cornwall Council chief executive Kevin Lavery visited Falmouth Marine School last month to learn how the courses are boosting employment in the marine industry.**

Lavery was given a tour of the woodwork workshop at Ponshardon to meet students on the Yacht Fitting & Composites C&G Level 3 course.

He was also given a demonstration of resin infusion; a technology that is taught to the students and local businesses through the Marine Innovation Service.

Lavery said: "I was delighted to see at first hand the latest innovations being taught to the students and offered to local businesses. This is an example of how Falmouth Marine School is bringing leading edge boatbuilding practice to Cornwall, thereby ensuring our county's firms are well positioned to compete in the global marketplace."

Lavery also visited the main site on Killigrew Street and toured the Marine Engineering workshop and Science laboratory." ◀



▶ Attention: Kevin Lavery at the Marine School

## MP speaks out over coastguard cuts

The MP for St Austell & Newquay, Stephen Gilbert, has spoken out in Parliament against the potential cut in coastguard services affecting Cornwall.

The Government is currently consulting over a reduction in the number of coastguard control centres from 18 to three with five sub centres operating during daylight hours only.

This would see the closure of the Brixham control centre and the downgrading of Falmouth, having an impact on both the north and south coasts of the MP's constituency.

In the debate, he said: "Falmouth is already a centre of excellence for what it does; it is the place the rest of the world looks to learn how to do such things. It concerns me greatly that the Government



▶ Stephen Gilbert: "Concerns"

choose, outside of anything mentioned in the coalition agreement, to consider the reforms." ◀

## Setback for harbour plans

**Plans to dredge the entrance of Falmouth harbour to attract larger cruise liners to the town have suffered a setback amid environmental fears.**

The Government's Marine Management Organisation said dredging could harm maerl beds which act as a nursery for commercial fish stocks.

Maerl is a hard, red algae that only exists in a handful of areas around the coast and can take up to 8,000 years to form.

However, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners (FHC) and A&P Falmouth, who are behind the scheme to dredge the harbour, insist this is not the end of their ambitions, and further work will be put into the application. ▶

## New training facility at A&P



▶ Deal: Commodore Preston with Tom Simpson

**A state-of-the-art training facility – the first of its kind for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) – has opened at A&P Falmouth.**

The training room, which simulates the computerised working system of the RFA's Bay-class ships, is part of the

successful Cluster programme between A&P and the MoD.

It will be used to train RFA staff in trials, tests and fault-finding – without the risk of damage on board a ship.

Commodore David Preston, the RFA's head of afloat support said: "This will bring great efficiencies in the way we do our training and the ships' companies will derive an awful lot of benefit from it. The possibilities are endless."

Tom Simpson, MD of Imtech Marine and Offshore Ltd, which built the system, said: "I've been fortunate enough to follow this project from its inception and this facility is the natural progression in Imtech's commitment to the through life support of the vessels. I'm delighted to see it operational." ▶

## Crabbers in Europe

**Rock-based boat builder Cornish Crabbers has been busily expanding its business on the continent.**

The company displayed one of its famous Cornish Shrimpers at the recent Dusseldorf Boat Show, and came away with two new distributors in Germany and the Netherlands.

MD Peter Thomas said: "We're really pleased with what we have achieved at Dusseldorf boat show. We aimed to raise awareness and sales of our brand for export and now have two new distributors taking the Cornish Shrimper on a tour of the major boat shows throughout Germany and the Netherlands, putting Cornish Crabbers firmly on the map." ▶



## Haven sent investment

**Haven Holidays has launched its biggest-ever recruitment drive for its two Cornish holiday parks as it invests £1.7 million at the resorts.**

It is hiring 300 people at Haven's Perran Sands Holiday Park near Perranporth and Riviere Sands Holiday Park near Hayle, an increase of 10% on last year's recruitment.

It comes as Haven continues its investment programme, with the swimming pool at Riviere Sands is being given a £550k refurbishment.

Meanwhile at Perran Sands, 32 old-style chalets the entertainment venue is being given a £700k upgrade, with further plans to provide a climbing wall. ▶



▶ Haven Holidays: Perran Sands

## Gardens? What gardens?

Recent market research of people's perceptions of Cornwall has thrown up some intriguing results.

VisitCornwall wanted to understand from people who had never visited Cornwall before, what they would be looking for from a holiday in the Duchy, and discovered some of its greatest assets don't appear on the radar of many.

Once here, people enjoy Cornwall's gardens, arts and culture and industrial heritage and return for these reasons, but the survey discovered a low level of recognition

of these sort attractions among people who had never visited before.

VisitCornwall chief Malcolm Bell said the findings showed Cornwall needs to look closely at how its markets itself to the rest of the country. He said: "People who love gardens, for instance, know about Cornwall, but we need to sell it to people who are not necessarily garden fanatics."

To listen to the full exclusive interview with Bell, go to the Audio Blogs section on the Business Cornwall website. ▶

## Blue Chip boom

**Self catering holiday homes specialist Blue Chip Holidays is reporting bookings up by 86% compared to the same time last year.**

The company has 800 holiday homes across the south west, Wales and the Isle of Wight, 40% of which are in Cornwall.

Bookings in Newquay, where the company has over 160 properties, have risen 158%, while business is also growing rapidly in St Ives and Looe, with figures up 231% and 161% respectively. ▶

## Cornwall's hotel secret



▶ Mount Haven Hotel: A top secret

**The Mount Haven Hotel & Restaurant in Marazion has been named as one of the top nine secret hotels in the world by travel website budgettravel.com**

The only hotel in the UK to appear in the list, Mount Haven Hotel & Restaurant features alongside hotels from Jamaica, Italy and the French Riviera, amongst others.

Each year, Budget Travel scouts out undiscovered hotels in popular destinations and selects what they deem to be the best and cost less than \$210 (£132) a night. ▶

## New eco retreat opens

A luxury holiday retreat, believed to be one of the most ecologically friendly in the country, has opened in Carnmenellis, near Stithians.

Little White Alice is a £1.25 million project devised by entrepreneur Simon Toft and artist Rosie Hadden, comprising six holiday homes in 25 acres of land and offers quality carbon-free holidays.

The holiday homes are self-sufficient in energy and water and boast ground source heating, a wind turbine and a fresh



▶ Little White Alice: Fresh water pool

water natural swimming pool filtered using a reed bed system. ▶

## Different Aspects

A new website offering the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of Cornish activities and experiences has been launched by self-catering holiday specialist Aspects Holidays.

The experiencecornwall.com website provides visitors access to a range of fully organised experiences – from surf lessons to llama trekking.

Aspects' business development manager Damian Sargent, Experience Cornwall is a direct result of recognising changing visitor needs after several busy years. ▶

## Greenbank Fal River Festival

**The Greenbank Hotel has been unveiled as title sponsor for this year's Fal River Festival.**

Growing year on year, this is the first time that the event has presented the opportunity for a single title sponsor.

Celebrating life on and around the River Fal, the Greenbank Fal River Festival, as it will be known this year, takes place from May 27 - June 5. ▶

## Return to Portloe

**Cornish specialist design and build company Ecohouse has started work on a new project in Portloe.**

It is familiar territory for the company, as it project managed the build of the original home two years ago, and has returned to add stunning studio space and a car port.

The planning design was carried out by the award-winning Derbyshire based architects Evans Vettori, who also designed the home.

Ecohouse director Robin van der Bij said: "It is such a glorious spot and such an amazing home. We are really proud to have been offered the contract for the studio and carport project. It has been great working with Evans Vettori and we are thrilled to be working with such great clients again."

The studio will be a 40sqm space with a flat roof extending to form a car port for two vehicles. The work should be completed by early summer. ▶



▶ Home comfort: Ecohouse's Portloe

## Strong start for Laurence Associates

Turo-based planning and architects consultancy, Laurence Associates, has restructured following the departure of a director in the New Year.

MD Laurence Osborne, together with

planning director, Richard Marsden and design director, Jason Pledger are looking forward to reinforcing and expanding their well-established client base, and continuing to provide a quality professional service.

Osborne commented: "We have made a strong start into the New Year, with significant contacts from both existing and new prospective clients, together with a good number of new instructions." ▶

## Housing market sluggish



▶ Unsold: Slow demand

**The housing market in the south west remained sluggish during January, due to continued lack of buyer demand**

**and low levels of supply, says the latest RICS UK Housing Market survey.**

3% more surveyors in the region reported that demand for property fell rather than rose (from -7 in December), indicating potential purchasers remain cautious about the outlook for the economy.

New instructions, which indicate supply levels to the market, were much more positive, however, with 21% more surveyors reporting instructions rose rather than fell, a significant improvement from -14% in December.

Meanwhile, 28% more surveyors in

the region reported house prices fell rather than rose in January.

Commenting on the situation here in Cornwall, Jeff Cole of Wadebridge-based Cole Rayment & Whŷite, said: "A very quiet start to the year although it was busier later in the month with a few good sales being agreed. There are some good buyers but they want 'value for money'." ▶

## Spiral pedal power

**Staff from Helston-based Spiral Construction have raised more than £2k for charity.**

Marking the company's 25th anniversary, ten workers spent two days cycling some 80 miles around Cornwall to raise money for the Precious Lives Appeal, Help for Heroes and Leukaemia Research.

The event was organised by Spiral's purchasing manager Pete Bell, who commented: "We felt it was a good idea to mark the company's anniversary with something involving our team and also to raise some money for some very worthwhile causes." ▶

## New Lighthouse for Newquay

Newquay's forthcoming new four-screen cinema complex has officially been named.

Lighthouse Cinema, Newquay, is due to open in the late spring and will generate 25 new jobs in the town.

It will be the first purpose-built fully-digital cinema in the south west and will seat more than 650 people.

Mark Williams from WTW Cinemas said: "With the external appearance of the building, we felt that Lighthouse Cinema represented a good name for Newquay."

The amenity was designed by NBDA Architects. ISG Pearce was appointed as the main contractor. ▶

## Falmouth office space a Priority

**Developer Priority Sites has signed three new deals on its £4.8 million Falmouth Business Park office development, which means just one unit from the original ten remains available.**

Cornwall Marine Network, which supports the development of Cornwall's marine industry sector, has expanded from its existing 1,861 sq ft unit on the park into an identical neighbouring unit on a 15-year lease.

Cornish fashion brand Seasalt, which already occupies two two-storey office units on the park totaling 7,120 sq ft, has bought a third single story office of 950 sq ft to cater for its continued growth. And email marketing company Jarrang has taken a 950 sq ft single-story office on a six-year lease. ▶



## Sharp's sold for £20M

**Rock-based Sharp's Brewery Ltd has been sold to global brewing giant Molson Coors in a deal worth £20 million.**

With former owners Nick Baker and Joe Keohane having both left the business, the deal will inevitably lead to fears that Sharp's will lose some of the identity that has made it and its flagship beer Doom Bar so popular in recent years.

However, Molson has moved quickly to allay such concerns. Martyn Cozens,

sales managing director (Wales and West) for Molson Coors, said: "We are 100% committed to this brewery at Rock and we are going to invest.

"There are 70 people in the Sharp's business and we have no intention of making any changes. We see it as important to protect and maintain the uniqueness and distinctiveness of this business."

Baker also insists his old company is in safe hands. He said: "We have worked exceptionally well with Molson Coors for many years and they have played

an important part in the growth of Sharp's Brewery.

"It was, and is, important to us to know how Molson Coors will manage Sharp's and their plan to invest in developing the brewery at Rock and the Doom Bar brand is spot on."

Emma Bebbington, who was previously Molson Coors' regional director of free trade in the Midlands, has been named general manager at Sharp's. ▶



## Skidders expands warehouse

Skidders Brewery has expanded again with the acquisition of a further 10,000 square feet of storage and distribution space adjacent to its headquarters at Newham, Truro.

The company has taken over the premises previously occupied by Truro Farm Machinery, which has moved to Mitchell.

As a result, Skidders is no longer operating its 'satellite' locations at Chacewater and Devoran, and the move means a net increase of 50% in storage capacity.

Chief executive Steve Skinner said: "We were bursting at the seams at Newham, and the development has not only streamlined our operation but also doubled our storage capacity here.

"It will be particularly useful in helping us handle our increased bottle sales, which have been boosted by the big success of our national sales through Waitrose."

The brewery has invested £50k in adapting its newly-acquired facility for its own needs, including the installation of chilled areas to store ales at the correct temperatures. ▶

## Law firm takes to food & drink

**A new team of specialist lawyers is being set up to service the legal needs of Cornwall's food and drink industry.**

Cornish firm Stephens Scown has taken the step of creating the sector-specific group to improve the level of service for clients by sharing knowledge, connections and experience across its offices in Truro and St Austell.

The team will be headed up by Associate Simon Gawler and will give legal advice on a range of business and personal matters. This includes setting up business structures, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, as well as dealing with commercial contracts,



disputes, debt recovery, employment law, immigration, insolvency, property and planning. ▶

## Baker competing with the 'big boys'

**Scorrier-based bakery Prima Bakeries is bucking the trend towards large-scale distribution of factory-made products to limited outlets.**

Prima, which has launched six new Cornish sliced bread lines, believes it has notched up a first as the only Cornish producer and distributor of Cornish sliced loaves to retail customers big and small, right across the county.

All the bread is handmade and the

firm is anticipating recruiting more bakers to cope with demand if the early response is maintained.

MD Mark Norton said: "We are doing something genuinely very different and beneficial on a number of fronts, supporting Cornish jobs, increasing customer choice locally and definitely competing with the 'big boys' in the process." ▶

## Mead makeover

**The Cornish Mead Company has had a makeover for the first time in 50 years by Falmouth-based agency, Gendall.**

Gendall secured the contract in November and was asked to refresh the brand and make it appeal to a new audience of Mead drinkers.

Gendall used many of the elements of the previous packaging and blended these with illustrations including tattoo designs for the mead products, which were inspired by the company's location and Cornwall's nautical heritage.

Gendall only had a six-week turnaround period from brief to delivery – the first lines hitting the shelves of regional Tesco's, Morrison's and numerous independent stores in early February.

Based in Penzance, The Cornish Mead Company owns four meaderies in Cornwall and has been producing mead since 1951. ▶



## Classic Cottages names new MD

Cornish holiday lettings company Classic Cottages has appointed a new managing director to succeed Simon Tregoning.

Anthony Skitt has joined the Helston-based company, while Tregoning moves from his current role to become chairman.

Skitt, who has relocated from Cambridge to Falmouth, will take responsibility for developing the strategy and direction of Classic Cottages; lead the staff and senior management team, as well as the financial management and profitability of the business.

He joins Classic from online retailer and nursery goods store Babyboodle.com where he was director. He has also held director-level posts at book retailer The Works Stores Ltd and entertainment distribution companies Choices UK



▶ Anthony Skitt

and Warner Home Video in the UK and Ireland.

He said: "I am very much looking forward to working with Simon and the whole team to contribute to the future success of Classic Cottages." ▶

## In-house Gems

Holiday lettings specialist Cornish Gems has appointed two new members to the team to help launch its housekeeping division.

Jayne Brunges and Stella Foley will lead a housekeeping team of up to 20 staff which is currently being recruited to manage and service the holiday properties.

Co-owner of Cornish Gems Julianne Shelton explained: "Until now we provided a fully managed housekeeping service via third party contractors. By pulling this in-house we can continue to deliver excellent service standards whilst importantly keeping costs competitive." ▶

## Space to grow

Watson French, the Truro-based independent financial planning and investment management company, has moved to larger offices to cater for future growth.

The firm has moved from the ground floor of Courtleigh House on Lemon Street to the top floor, more than doubling its floorspace.

MD Stephen Watson said: "Over the next two years we are planning to recruit five highly-qualified financial planners and more support staff, so space will be essential." ▶

## Top Boast for HfC

Hall for Cornwall (HfC) has unveiled Julien Boast as its new director.

A well known figure in the arts industry, Boast is an experienced arts leader with over 20 years' experience in the commercial and subsidised sector.

He was formerly chief executive of the award winning ATG theatres, Theatre Royal Brighton and the Churchill Theatre Bromley.

Boast, who took up his new position on March 1, replaces Tim Brinkman, who has departed to take up a new challenge down under as executive of performing arts at the Arts Centre in Melbourne. ▶



▶ Stephen Watson (r) with fellow director Nicholas Woods

## Hotel's new business focus

Falmouth-based hotel, St Michael's Hotel & Spa, has appointed Karenza Hadfield to the newly-created role of business development manager.

Hadfield, who joins St Michael's from The Linney Group, will be responsible for developing relationships with key local businesses and users of the hotel's facilities.

Hotel proprietor Nigel Carpenter said: "This is an exciting time for the hotel: over the past six months we have successfully revamped the bar, restaurant, lounge, and conference facilities, including a new nautical inspired library room, perfect for a unique business meeting." ▶



▶ Karenza Hadfield

## Ripley back with Stein

Michelin-starred chef Paul Ripley has rejoined the Rick Stein empire as new head chef of the Seafood Bar in Falmouth.

Ripley first worked for Rick and Jill Stein 20 years ago as head chef of the Seafood Restaurant in Padstow, before leaving to open his own restaurant, Ripley's in St Merryn, where he achieved a Michelin star.

He then became chef and landlord of the St Kew Inn in 2008, a St Austell Brewery pub in Wadebridge, and has now returned to work for the Steins, as head chef at their Seafood Bar in Falmouth. ▶