



REVIEW February 2005

Review of Chamber Meeting + News Update

**MEETING
DATES**

2005

(Second
Monday)

14 March

11 April

9 May

13 June

11 July

8 August

12 Sept

10 October

14 November

12 December

PROMOTING HARROGATE

- Excellent publications and PR work by HIC promoting leisure tourism
- Proposed Harrogate Tourism Forum to involve all interested businesses
- Brainstorming session generated numerous USP's and suggestions
- **Which of the many forward-looking ideas would YOU prioritise for action?**
- Do you agree Harrogate needs a stronger "branding"? **IDEAS PLEASE**

PUBLIC SERVICE UPS & DOWNS

- Royal Mail – local deliveries improved – but 1st Class Post rates going up
- Fire Authority bow to strong opposition to cuts in fire cover for Harrogate
- Yorkshire Water – digging up the town – and hiking up their charges
- Atkins "Integrated" Transport Study – reminder to respond to their survey
- Leeds/Bradford Airport – new services to the South West – but not LHR or LGW

PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES

- **NEW** – Harrogate's 1st Business Market – Monday 9th May at the Pavilions
- 5th Shared Business-to-Business mailing – reaches over 3,000 local businesses
- Theakston's Brewery Tour & Supper – informal networking – Friday 22nd April
- Harrogate International Centre – members' visit to the new Queens Suite.
- Many thanks to David Durrant of Shirley's Florists for their beautiful bouquet!

Next Meeting - 14th March 2005

Monday, 14th March 2005 - Hotel du Vin, Prospect Place, Harrogate

"Government Impact on Harrogate Business"

by Phil Willis MP for Harrogate & Knaresborough

Monday, 11th April 2005 - Old Swan Hotel, Swan Road, Harrogate

**"Yorkshire Forward & Sub-Regional Investment Planning
- Impact on Harrogate Business"**

by Ian Collins of Yorkshire Forward
and Nigel Avison of Harrogate Borough Council

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

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PROMOTING HARROGATE

Harrogate Tourism Forum ?

The majority of the February Meeting was taken up with the “brainstorming” session on ideas to promote Harrogate to visitors, both business and leisure, and to suggest **how the lulls in trade can be boosted**, to try to achieve steady business throughout the year.

Martin Wilks outlined the concept of a new **Tourism Forum**, in partnership with the Harrogate International Centre, which could involve all businesses involved with tourists including the Showground, hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers, taxis, buses, rail, etc., etc.

Martin stressed the importance of attracting people to come to Harrogate and stay overnight, not just for the day. **The target sector to concentrate on is Leisure Tourism**, not Conference Tourism, i.e. coach trips, day trippers and Christmas shoppers, etc. He asked all members for input from their personal business aspects. **Ideas to attract new interest groups to visit the town would also be welcomed.**

Hayley Gray, Tourism Promotion Manager of Harrogate International Centre gave a presentation of the work that HIC have done in the past, are currently doing and what they intend to do in the future. Hayley brought a supply of the new **“Harrogate and the Yorkshire Dales”** brochure which is their new promotional tool. A total of 50,000 copies have been printed for national and international distribution.

This new brochure has been backed up with a national advertising campaign, which has already generated 15,000 enquiries in January alone! There is also a new web site and an on-line booking facility

This promotion has reaped many rewards, including a spread in ‘The Lady’ magazine following their journalist’s visit and overnight stay in Harrogate. This was reflected by many other journalists who have visited the town, not only from the UK, but also from many other countries worldwide.

Hayley’s next project is a “Great Days Out” guide that will cover the three headings of “Treasures” (attractions), “Bags of Stylish Shopping” and “Simply Delicious” (food & drink). 100,000 of these 40-page, DL size guides will be printed and distributed by the end of February, targeted mainly at day visitors. She would also like to produce a special Christmas Shopping leaflet but HIC has no budget for it this year so they would need to work in partnership with others.

It is hoped these guides will give visitors informed advice on where they can spend their money in the town! Further suggestions along these lines will be most welcome.

To contact Hayley or ask for supplies of the brochure:
Hayley Gray, Tourism Promotion Manager
Harrogate International Centre
Tel: 01423 537275 Fax.01423 537270
E-mail: hayley.gray@harrogate.gov.uk
New website: www.enjoyharrogate.com

Strategy & Brainstorming

Following Hayley Gray’s excellent presentation, the meeting applauded all the good work being done by HIC, much of which we were not previously aware of.

Members and guests then put their heads together to come up with many diverse ideas, re-affirming the many positive and a few negative aspects of the town. They are summarised below and we would encourage all members to send in more ideas so we can pass this on to the Harrogate Tourism Forum and Harrogate International Centre:-

Promoting Harrogate strategy suggestions:

Aim is to target Leisure Tourism in Harrogate Town -

- Partnership with HIC, GYS, etc, etc
- Disparate support in the past
- Strategy needed - via Leisure Tourism Forum
- Opportunities – niches – group marketing
- Marketing initiatives – more publicity
- Global perspective via Chamber
- Embassies - Newsletter to Journalists
- Overseas Exhibitions - Joint North East
- Target “empty-nesters” – mature adults
- Conference Ladies Programmes
- Encourage visitors to ‘**Come Back Soon**’
- 3.5 million holiday and business visitors in 2003
- 360,000 people come to Conferences & Exhibitions
- Northern Way - ODPM Funding?
- Retailers promotional leaflets by sector

Establish a Harrogate “brand”:

Need common theme/image/logo to promote the town:

- Available for all to use
- Provides consistency
- Targets niches with a unified voice
- Needs funding
- As an example **“Royal Harrogate Spa”** ???

Positive Aspects of Harrogate – our USP’s:

- Gardens/Floral/Flower Shows/Harlow Carr
- The Stray, Valley Gardens and the Flower Beds
- Shopping - unique, local, independent
- Christmas shopping + Farmers’ Markets
- Food & Drink – Betty’s, wealth of restaurants and bars, etc
- Heritage Buildings - Royal Hall, Turkish Baths
- Springs; Wells; Spa town image
- Galleries, china, arts and crafts
- Sport - local Rugby, Football & Cricket teams
- Interior Design Centre
- Small town – easy to walk about
- Location - equidistant between London & Edinburgh
- Air Links - Amsterdam good hub for international connections to LBA

Negative Aspects of Harrogate:

- Need to compete with newly regenerated towns such as Bradford, Sheffield, and Hull.
- Lack of “joined-up” thinking

- Nationals vs Locals; Town vs District vs County
- Lack of sales clusters for individual Arts & Crafts producers
- The word 'District' - best to leave out of promotional literature - prefer 'Harrogate & Yorkshire Dales'
- Friday/Saturday night "binge drinking"
- Perceived as 'posh' and 'snooty' town - and expensive!
- Poor UK connections by road, rail and air

Questions to be addressed:

- When are the "quiet" periods in the conference and exhibition calendar that we need to fill?
- When are the busy periods in the leisure tourism trade that we should avoid promoting any further?
- How can we attract more weekend Conferences like Rotary - with partners who spend in the shops?
- How can we attract more coach parties in the quiet months?
- Are there any big events that could be attracted to the Showground - e.g. Dog Shows, Pigeon Shows
- What are the major weaknesses in the Harrogate "package" to rectify eg: transport links, parking, etc.
- Should we use the Chamber networking event in May to attract more businesses to Harrogate?

Individual Members' Suggestions:

- Use Royal Hall as a tourist attraction
- Need small workshops for crafts people and artists
- Craft Businesses could be offered a regular venue at a central church hall, which would be: Low Cost / Relatively Flexible / Centrally Located
- Use innovative architects to design new buildings - a named architect can draw massive crowds.
- Different emphasis for different groups - surely a combination of old and new is at the heart of who we are.
- Aspect of spirituality - there is a huge amount of interest in spiritual matters - maybe a shot of Christ Church on the Stray, or St Peter's in the town centre would include that aspect of our life.
- Many Harrogate postcards are old-fashioned! It would be good to have a choice of attractive postcards to further promote Harrogate itself.
- Evaluate type of shopping - e.g. Victoria Shopping Centre sends mixed messages
- Evaluate - target number of visitors by category
- Evaluate spending per visitor - by category
- Priorities to increase spend.
- Welcome signs more prominent on all access routes.
- Utilise the "Floral" aspect into approach road signage.
- Produce FREE CD-ROM of Harrogate logo + new pictures
- Promote Harrogate as a centre for interior design excellence (antique shops, tiles, materials, kitchens, etc - lots of individual shops, not all multi chains)
- Produce maps and guides to each interest group.

- Carry out a PR campaign promoting the town for these to the media, particularly lifestyle magazines.
- Get the retail groups together to offer a photo-shoot service to northern magazines - and national magazines if they are doing northern shoots.
- Get one or two spokespeople to become experts on daytime magazine TV type programmes.
- Focus far more on the flowers - Crocus "Barometer" - like they do in America with daily reports on how the fall is doing, i.e. bright red leaves on trees. The fact that the crocuses are so seasonal is a real opportunity - this year should be a story because they must be the earliest ever.
- Competitions to guess when the first 50 will open.
- Apparently we have crocus weekends, but when are they?
- Working more closely with RHS at Harlow Carr - national competitions, etc.

WHO? HOW? WHEN? Could we do all this?

As always, **your feedback is vital!** Please send in your comments, both positive and negative, to the Chamber Secretariat - info@harrogatechamber.org. Working together on this project will bring benefits for members in all types of businesses.

We hope to be able to report progress to the June Chamber Meeting with further discussion and action plans. However, to achieve that we need input and support from all types of businesses!

CHAMBER NEWS

Royal Mail - plus and minus!

Royal Mail has given notice of an increase in the cost of First Class Letter services with effect from 7th April 2005. **The basic rate of 28p goes up to 30p** (plus 7%); 42p goes up to 46p (plus 9.5%). All the other weight steps are increased by between 5% and 7%.

There is a new **discount for business customers** using franking machines and pre-printed envelopes, which will save 1p at the lower weight steps and 2p or more at the higher weights. For businesses posting substantial volumes of mail, this will effectively halve the increase, which would otherwise be incurred.

Royal Mail claims that their First Class Letter prices are still much lower than the rest of Europe. Full information on www.royalmail.com/newprices2005

Brian Dunsby reported a **general improvement in local delivery performance**, following all of the management changes during the past six months. Gary Abbott, the Royal Mail Delivery Office Manager, has advised that all business park mail should now be delivered between 07.00 and 09.00 and all town centre deliveries between 08.00 and 11.00. Several members confirmed the improvement in delivery services.

Any member still having problems should notify the Secretariat so we can take it up with Royal Mail.

Fight the Fire Cuts Campaign

Following the unanimous vote of members at our January Meeting, the Chamber's Chief Executive attended the recent NYCC Harrogate Area Committee meeting and spoke out passionately against the proposed cuts in fire service cover in Harrogate.

The local Councillors voted **unanimously to oppose** the cuts and the subsequent Fire Authority's meeting on 21st February **agreed to reject the cuts**. We acknowledge the good work of the Harrogate Advertiser's Campaign and the support of local Councillors and the current and prospective MPs.

Yorkshire Water problems

Harrogate businesses are facing two major problems from Yorkshire Water. Firstly the Chamber received advance notification of the sewer improvement works in Parliament Street, which necessitated re-direction of traffic in the surrounding area. This information was e-mailed to all members. Feedback on the commercial impact of this work would be appreciated.

Yorkshire Water has also just notified us of a forthcoming substantial increase in their prices for the period commencing 1st April. Their initial notification simply gave the new prices, but we requested a comparable schedule of previous prices and then we calculated the increases. This shows that the "average" increase is 8.5% across all charging elements - water, waste, domestic, business and trade. However, **most businesses will face a 9.4% increase in the cost of water used - and a further 9.5% increase in the cost of sewerage taken away!**

When challenged, Yorkshire Water claims that "*these increases are necessary to cover the investment requirements from the EU, operating efficiencies, strict regulatory targets for water quality and sewer flooding and investment in their infrastructure*". They say that their charges and their forward investment plans have all been approved by OFWAT.

Comments from members would be welcome. Further information on the new and old charges can be provided by e-mail on request.

**Further information from: -
Lindsey Kaye,
Account Manager & Trade Body Liaison
Yorkshire Water Tel: 01274 692749
E-mail: lindsey.kaye@yorkshirewater.co.uk**

Harrogate District Datafile 2004

Harrogate Borough Council has published a comprehensive 36-page brochure of statistical information about all aspects of life in the Harrogate District. This is a valuable reference source for local businesses, potential investors, organisations, administrators, residents and students, etc.

The Datafile covers demography, transport, economy, education, housing, land use, conservation, shopping, leisure and tourism, etc. It can be downloaded from the Council website: www.harrogate.gov.uk/planning/

Atkins Integrated Transport Study

Members should now have received a questionnaire from Atkins Travel that we would urge members to complete and return in order to have the business community's opinions heard on how best to solve Harrogate's **serious traffic congestion**.

Whilst Harrogate Chamber was "consulted" by the Atkins team, the many novel solutions proposed in our Traffic & Transport Action Plan have been largely rejected in favour of more bikes and more buses!

Please let the Consultants know what you think of their conclusions and recommendations. They are being paid a very large fee to advise NYCC and HBC. Copies to the Secretariat would be appreciated please.

Planning - Employment Implications

Out of 16 business planning applications submitted during December and January, six are for conversion of business premises to dwellings. This matter was discussed at the quarterly meeting of Chamber Officers with Harrogate Borough Council Economic Development Unit. It is recognized that **the District needs to identify new areas for development of Business Parks to meet growing demand.**

For members interested in more information, a copy of the Economic Development Unit Business Plan for 2005/06 can be obtained from the Secretariat.

New Destinations from Leeds Bradford!

Leeds Bradford International Airport is adding some new destinations to their existing wide selection of flight operations. Flybe will service Exeter and Southampton and Air Southwest will service Bristol, Newquay and Plymouth. Further details available at: www.flybe.com or www.airsouthwest.com

Regrettably, however, there is no increase in the frequency of services to and from London Heathrow - and still nothing to Gatwick after BA withdrew in 2003.

SCAM UPDATE

The Chamber Secretariat and several members have reported an increasing volume of scams recently, mostly by e-mail, but some by post and telephone.

The Office of Fair Trading have recently published a list of the **top ten scams** targeted at UK businesses and consumers to alert people to the swindles that may part them from their money! These include:-

- Telephone Lottery Scams
- Price Draw, Sweepstakes and Foreign Lotteries
- Premium Rate Telephone Number Scams
- Investment Related Scams
- Nigerian Advance Fee Frauds
- Pyramid Schemes and Matrix Schemes
- Credit Scams and Bank Account Scams
- Property Investment Schemes
- Work at Home and Business Opportunities

Further details can be obtained from the OFT website: www.of.gov.uk/news/press+releases/2005/18-05.htm

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Principal for Harrogate College

Following John Dishman's new role as Dean of Yorkshire First, Julie Hudson has taken over the role of Principal of Harrogate College. She was previously Deputy Principal.

John Dishman's focus will now be on realising Leeds Metropolitan University's ambitions to become a regional university.

Further information at www.harrogate.ac.uk

FUTURE LOCAL EVENTS

Members may be interested in the following events being organised locally:-

11th March - E-business Unlimited and Innovation Promoters - Business Link Tel: 01904 686000

15th March - Change Workshop - Trinity Foundation Tel: 01423 566522

16th March - Overview of IT and the Law - Berwins/Business Link Tel: 01904 686000

24th March - Changing Lives Showcase - Carers Resource Tel: 01423 500555

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Shared Mailing Opportunity

The next Business-to-Business Shared Mailing Opportunity is being planned for early April. See the enclosed faxback booking form for full details and to secure a slot for your insert. Space is limited.

This offers a very cost-effective way to promote your business to over 3,100 local businesses - for £250.

As usual, the prices are discounted for members!

Theakston's Brewery Tour & Supper

The date for the Chamber's group visit to **Theakston's Brewery** in Masham is **Friday, 22nd April**.

A private hire coach has been arranged, which will leave Harrogate at around 6.30pm, returning about 10.00pm, following a tour of the brewery and supper.

The cost will be £19.50 per person, which includes transport, the tour, supper and "all the beer you can drink!" An e-mail with more details and a booking form will be sent to members shortly. You are welcome to bring along a partner, colleague or friend if you wish.

Numbers will be limited, so please send an e-mail or fax NOW to the Secretariat to reserve places.

Harrogate International Centre visit

HIC have agreed to a private tour of their new Queens Suite Breakout facilities for a small group of Chamber Members one lunch-time early in April. **Members interested in joining this group should notify the Secretariat so we can finalise numbers and date.**

HARROGATE'S 1st BUSINESS MARKET

On 9th May we are offering Chamber Members a new unique opportunity to promote their company, not only to other members, but also to businesses throughout the Harrogate District at '**Harrogate's 1st Business Market**' at Pavilions of Harrogate.

As mentioned in earlier editions of REVIEW, the May meeting has been expanded to incorporate this indoor market-style event offering FREE space for members.

It is hoped to attract several hundred business representative plus local dignitaries and the press. At the time of going to press, the timing of this event will be 16.00 - 19.30, followed by a buffet until 20.00 when the Chamber's AGM will take place (Members only).

The exhibition space will consist of a small table-top display and room for a pop-up banner or similar, if preferred. Business-to-Business networking will be facilitated with FREE tea, coffee and biscuits and FREE admission to all local businesses.

Colour-it-in are donating a prize of Exhibition Display system to the value of £500 in a business card draw.

Invitations will be sent to our comprehensive database of over 3,000 companies in the District.

If you know of any companies you deal with who may be interested in attending this event then please send their full contact details to the Secretariat to ensure they are sent information.

Membership Renewal

Chamber Membership Subscription Renewal Invoices will be issued shortly for payment by 1st April. Please notify the Secretariat if you require a Purchase Order to be quoted on your Subscription Invoice.

NEW MEMBERS

DriveStyle Convertibles (Specialist Motor Retailers)

Steve Williams, Managing Director
The Lenz, Hornbeam Park, HARROGATE, HG2 8QT
Tel: 01423 871863 **Fax:** 01423 815987
E-mail: SAW@drivestyleconvertibles.co.uk
Web site: www.drivestyleconvertibles.co.uk

The Elite Print Group Ltd (Print & Design)

Dennis Watts, Managing Director
19 Low Green, Darley, HARROGATE, HG3 2QA
Tel: 01423 781133 **Fax:** 01423 781144
E-mail: info@eliteprintgroup.co.uk
Web site: www.eliteprintgroup.co.uk

Tyro Training (Training, Research, Consultancy)

Alison Stone, Operations Manager
Crescent House, Keighley Road, SKIPTON, BD23 2LP
Tel: 01756 797266 **Fax:** 01756 701161
E-mail: astone@craven-college.ac.uk
Web site: www.tyrotraining.co.uk

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Food Retailers hit by Sudan 1 scare

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has issued a recall of over 350 food products after it was discovered that they had been contaminated by an illegal dye used in food colouring, Sudan 1. Retailers stocking the products must withdraw them from sale, but small, independent retailers say they are having problems getting help and advice what to do.

The FSA has published a list of the food products affected:

www.food.gov.uk/safereating/sudani/sudanlist

The Association of Convenience Stores has guidance for retailers at:

www.thelocalshop.com/default.asp?Call=Article&ID=3777

Fake Companies House Records

Warnings have been issued about a new scam involving records held at Companies House. Security Firm Early Warning explains that fraudsters can easily write and change a company's official address and have taken advantage of the opportunity to receive official mail and to pose as a representative of the company to set up fake bank accounts and other scams.

See Companies House statement at:

www.companieshouse.gov.uk/pressDesk/archive/recent8.shtml

Early Warning also says that it will highlight the dangers of "chargeback fraud". Recipients of goods are finding it easier to claim their purchases never arrived even when they did and are claiming the payments back with the support of the credit card providers or simply by complaining to the innocent supplier. The scam is not new, but is increasing thanks to the growth in mail order buying.

See Early Warning's Press Release at:

<https://early-warning.org/viewnews.php4?id=40>

£2,000 Penalty for employers of illegal immigrants

The Government will introduce a mandatory fixed fine of £2,000 for any business that employs illegal workers. The minimum fixed penalty will be multiplied depending on the number of illegal workers employed. The new rules form part of the Government's crackdown on illegal immigration. Only skilled workers will be allowed to settle long-term in the UK and will need to be competent English speakers.

Read more about the proposals at:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=1234

Transport Directive coming into force

23rd March will see the Road Transport Directive start to apply to most mobile workers in the distribution industry. The law will forbid working more than an average of 48 hours per week over a 4-6 month period, night shifts will be limited to 10 hours, and drivers will have to keep a record of their hours worked. The Directive also introduces a tighter definition of who is and who is not a self-employed worker and may exclude some of those who were previously registered as self-employed.

Details available at:

www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_freight/documents/page/dft_freight_022954.hcsp

Congestion Charge fails to deliver

90% of retailers located in the central London congestion charge zone say their businesses have been adversely affected since the introduction of the charge, according to a report by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Small retailers were among the worst affected and among specific issues they had to contend with, cited problems with receiving and making deliveries, as well as a fall in shopper numbers.

For more see:

www.rics.org.uk/Property/Infrastructure/congestion%20charge%20hits%20retailers.html

Gauge your Health & Safety

The Health & Safety Executive have launched a web-based tool to help small businesses gauge their health and safety performance. The Health and Safety Performance Indicator was developed with the input of other key small business representatives, including the SBS and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). It aims to help small firms give insurance firms an accurate assessment of their health and safety performance.

Access the tool at: www.hspi.info-exchange.com

New Government measures to boost business

Chancellor Gordon Brown has announced a new initiative to provide local authorities with the resources to develop new business in their communities. Under the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives scheme, due to start this April, local councils will receive a proportion of increases in local business rates revenues to invest in new business creation. As more businesses are created, councils stand to receive a greater proportion of business rates.

For full details of the Chancellor's speech go to:

www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/page/odpm_about_032072.hcsp?s=1

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