



REVIEW September 2007

FUTURE MEETINGS

17.30 for
18.00 start

8 October
Cedar Court

12 November
Crown Hotel

10 December
Safari
Holiday Inn

2008

14 January

11 February

Review of Chamber Meeting + News Update

EMPLOYMENT LAW – BEWARE OF PITFALLS

- Recruiting staff – things to consider before you recruit an employee
- Alternative ways to recruit employees – advertising, contacts, agencies
- Recruitment law & how to mitigate some of the risks – interviews, etc.
- Termination of Employment - summary of potential claims + how to avoid them
- Dismissal Procedures – what is unfair, what is fair and what are the risks?
- Impact of Age Discrimination legislation – duty to consider not retiring

HARROGATE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

- Chamber Management Group meets Harrogate Borough Council Leaders
- Local Development Framework – consultation in progress – views needed
- Car parking policy – Chamber challenges charges for evening and weekend
- North Yorkshire Fire Service Update – reduced cover for automatic fire alarms!

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES & NEWS

- Membership Directory update now available plus promotion opportunities
- FREE Seminars offered by several Chamber Members to help all members
- Re-vamps for Lords Restaurant, Cicada, Nidd Vale and Bentley Jennison
- Christmas Lights switch-on set for 22nd November at Victoria Shopping Centre
- Ripon Enterprise Show – Tuesday 2nd October at Ripon Racecourse FREE
- Yorkshire Business Market 28th April 2008 – advance information for members

Future Meetings

Monday 8th October - at Cedar Court Hotel, Park Parade, Harrogate, HG1 5AH
“Finance for Business Growth - and how to get it “
by Brian Coghlan, Senior Business Manager, NatWest Bank Harrogate
and Peter Wells, Chairman, Yorkshire Association of Business Angels

Monday 12th November - at Crown Hotel, Crown Place, Harrogate HG1 2RZ
“Coaching & Mentoring - growing your business with the benefit of experience”
by Stuart Pearson of The Trinity Foundation
and Steve Phillip of Empowering Women at Work

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce, PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8XB

Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025 E-mail: info@harrogatechamber.org Website: harrogatechamber.org

EMPLOYMENT LAW

- protecting your business

As our President was on holiday, Vice-President, Stuart Pearson of The Trinity Foundation took the chair. He highlighted the importance of correct "hiring and firing" of employees as a business grows or shrinks, although personally he preferred self-employment!

Recruiting staff successfully

- avoiding the pitfalls

Ron Napper, Director of Human Resources of Brook Street (UK) Ltd covered the following topics in detail:

Things to consider before you recruit:

- Do you need to fill the role?
- How accessible are the skills required in the area?
- How soon do I need a replacement?
- What salary should I pay?
- Have I the time to do it?
- Where do I recruit?
- How do I get evidence of training and experience or reliable references?
- What employment laws relate to recruitment?
- Recruitment law & how to mitigate some of the risks
- Discrimination - of any kind
- Advertising / application forms/ CVs

Alternative ways to recruit employees

1. Advertise in the local press
2. Advertise on the Internet
3. Use the local Job Centre
4. Approach local colleges
5. Ask existing employees for recommendations
6. Have an open day
7. Advertise outside the factory / office
8. Use a professional employment agency

Recruitment law & how to mitigate some of the risks

- *Interview procedures*
 - Written job description
 - Your questions are based on the job description
 - You adhere to interview structures
 - You are objective and tests are based on their ability to show capability in performing the job
 - Look for the most qualified person to fill position.
 - Take notes and keep them
- *Offer letters and contracts*
- *References - be careful!*
- *"A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on"*

Why use an agency?

- *CIPD research shows average cost of recruitment is:*
 - £10,000 for senior personnel
 - £5,000 for managers and professionals
 - £2,500 for admin and technical staff
 - £900 for manual workers
- *Cost of an average advert*
 - The Guardian 10x3 ad = £1590
 - Yorkshire Evening Post 10x3 ad = £1620
 - Harrogate Advertiser 10x3 ad = £675
 - Deadlines and no guarantees
- *Mitigate risks through expertise*

- *Give anonymity*
- *No costs incurred until you recruit that candidate*

The Current Market

- Top 15 high street agencies = less than 20% market
- Approx 75 employment agencies in Harrogate.
- 6% of UK workers are temporary, 1.6% up on 2006
- 1.2m temporary workers on assignments in any week
- 700,000 candidates in permanent work each year
- Quality candidates in high demand
- Monitored by DTI (Employment Agency Standards)
- Unregulated market

What do agencies offer?

Temporary/contract staff:

In an ever-changing market - temporary staff can help

- to adapt to organisation changes
- to meet seasonal demand
- to cover for busy periods/staff absences/projects
- to fulfil short or medium term needs

Permanent staff:

Longer term business solutions

- Growing business/expanding team
- Specialist skills needed

Temporary to Permanent staff:

- Try before you buy
- Budget agreement

How agencies work

- Understanding your operational demands
- Recruiting quicker than in-house
- Large pool of quality candidates to help with seasonal and other demands
- Pre-screening, competency interviews and assessments
- Fully vetted, compliant and referenced candidates

What can an agency do for you?

- Skill benchmarking to salary
- Shortlisting candidates
- Managing bulk applications
- Providing feedback to candidates
- Advertising vacancies inc. online
- Ease administrative burden, free up time
- Ongoing review of service
- Guarantee periods

Recruitment and Employment Confederation

- Brook Street Bureau plc founder members of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC)
- On Advisory Council & Employment Policy Committee
- REC is raising standards through Code of Practice
- REC members are updated on relevant legislation
- Regular 360 degree surveys to understand changes in the industry

Agencies offer value for money, save you time and help you to avoid pitfalls.

Further information from:

Nadene Lennon, Branch Manager, Brook Street (UK)

Tel: 01423 701065 Fax: 701726 www.brookstreet.co.uk

Terminating Employment Legally - beware the pitfalls

Justin Marks, Head of Employment Law at Berwins LLP covered the following topics in detail:

Termination of Employment - Summary of Potential Claims

- Breach of Contract
 - wrongful dismissal
 - constructive dismissal
- Unfair Dismissal
- Unlawful Discrimination

Breach of Contract

- By employer
 - wrongful dismissal
 - constructive dismissal
- Compensation
 - notice period
 - mitigation
- Claim in court or employment tribunal

Unfair Dismissal

- Who "qualifies" to claim?
- Must be a Dismissal
- Dismissal must be Unfair

What Constitutes a Dismissal?

- Termination of Employment by Employer
 - On notice
 - Without notice
 - Expiry of fixed term contractAll are Dismissals
- Termination of Employment by Employee
 - On notice
 - Without notice
- Resignation
- Constructive Dismissal

Unfair Dismissal – Avoiding Unfairness

- The potentially fair reasons
 - conduct
 - capability
 - redundancy
 - contravention of statute
 - some other substantial reason
 - retirement
- Follow a Fair Procedure – Essential for Fair Dismissal
 - The Statutory Minimum Procedures
 - Procedure also must be Reasonable
 - Retirement – the Duty to Consider Procedure

The Statutory Minimum Procedures

- Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedures
- Grievance Procedures
- The Standard Procedure
- The Modified Procedure

Reasonable Procedure

- Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedures

- Grievance Procedures
- ACAS Code of Practice
- Redundancy Procedures

The Impact of the Age Discrimination Legislation

- Retirement and unfair dismissal
- No "upper age limit" on unfair dismissal
- Requests to work beyond Retirement Age
- Employer's Duty to Consider Requests
- Where retirement = deemed reason for dismissal
 - + Duty to Consider procedure followed
 - then dismissal will be fair

Dismissal and Discrimination

- Dismissal can also be Discrimination
- Types of Unlawful Discrimination
 - sex
 - race
 - disability
 - sexual orientation
 - religious belief
 - age

Further information from:

Justin Marks, Berwins LLP, Solicitors

Tel: 01423 722 568 Fax: 01423 504 706

E-mail: JustinMarks@berwin.co.uk; www.berwin.co.uk

QUESTION TIME

Brian Haines of the Esource Group Ltd asked Justin Marks if being an LLP had any impact on your position as an employer. Justin replied that as an LLP he would be just as much an employer as being a partnership. Depending on how the LLP is set up, the employees transfer over to the LLP on the same terms and conditions they had as employees of the Partnership. Therefore you are in exactly the same position as an employer. Brian also asked if joining an LLP would affect redundancy rights. Justin said an officer or a partner would potentially lose employment relations rights, but not as an employee.

Elaine Speight of Harewood House asked if an established employment contract could be changed if it suits your businesses purposes, and can the employer object? Ron Napper said the answer is yes on both counts, but recommended a consultation period with the employer to set out the reasons and benefits. If an employee then fails to sign the new contract it could be construed as grounds for dismissal.

Justin added that the potential termination of contract scenario will fall under the heading of a potentially fair reason for dismissal; however the usual dismissal procedures of warning and consultation must be followed to avoid unfair dismissal.

Jenny Purdy of DSC asked whether a change of company name going from a Partnership to a LLP, would require new contracts of employment to be drawn up. Justin answered that within two months of any change of certain particulars of employment, you have to at least notify the employees concerned of the change

in that particular. Changing the company name doesn't change the legal entity of the employers, so no new contract is required, but you do need to let employees have a written notice to the effect that you have changed the company name.

Carole Reid of Yorkshire & Humberside Assessment Ltd asked what the statutory requirement was on an ex-employer to provide a reference for an ex-employee. Justin said there is no statutory requirement as such, but there are various industry sectors where particular legislation means you have to provide a reference of some sort, for example Financial Services. If you do provide a reference you are under a legal obligation to ensure it is true, fair and accurate and that it doesn't mislead any potential employer.

Carole further asked if an ex-employer had refused to give a reference would they be open to a claim from the ex-employee. Justin briefly replied that if you were not in a sector where there is no obligation, then no. Ron Napper added that in dealings with Government Departments they require very detailed references, but when asked to provide a reference themselves, they only provide confirmation of the dates of employment.

Vice-President Stuart Pearson thanked the speakers for clearly illustrating the benefits of professional expertise.

HARROGATE DISTRICT NEWS

Meeting with Council Leaders

The Chamber Management Group met the Harrogate Borough Council Leader, Councillor Dr Mike Gardner together with Councillor Don Mackenzie, Cabinet Member for Planning & Transport and Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for Resources.

A useful and frank off the record discussion took place covering what is going on in Harrogate and the future of the town. Two issues emerged on which Chamber President, Granville Simpson, is leading campaigns. Firstly, improved signposting for visitors to find their way around the town centre, which is making some progress.

Secondly to compound the problem for visitors, the Council's Department for Development Services have introduced a change of policy to ban temporary signage to exhibitions, conferences, art galleries, musical festivals, etc. Harrogate International Centre and Pavilions of Harrogate are supporting Harrogate Chamber's objection to this change in policy.

Local Development Framework

Brian Dunsby advised members that the latest round of consultation was underway. Full details can be found on the Harrogate Borough Council website at: <http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-2307>

The Chamber would like to hear your views on this important subject outlining the future plans for the town in terms of housing, business parks, roads, etc.

Detailed plans for two specific planning applications were available for members to study following the meeting, namely the proposed Tesco Supermarket site

and the Yorkshire Agricultural Society's proposed Regional Agricultural Centre on the Showground.

Again, members' views are needed to add to the consultation process for these proposals.

Car Parking Policy

The Council's car parking charging policy, particularly with respect to evening parking, is being challenged by the Chamber. Charges are made for parking in open car parks like the Odeon and Tower Street, when nearby on-street parking is free. Visitors are frequently being caught out with parking penalty tickets in these areas.

We have asked the Council for details of ALL car parks that impose evening and weekend charges, what they are and why they are made. Also how many penalty tickets have been issued, how much money is being collected and how that compares with the cost of the attendants that are employed on weekend and evening rates to monitor these car parks.

Members experiencing problems relating to this policy should contact the Secretariat with details.

Harrogate Fire Service Update

Nigel Phillips, Group Manager of Harrogate and District Fire Service, brought booklets on the Service's 2007/08 Corporate Plan including proposed Integrated Risk Management Plans which impact on local communities affecting the response times of fire units.

Nigel said that more than half of Harrogate Fire Service's call-outs are responding to automatic fire alarms. In an attempt to reduce this problem the Fire Service is offering to work with businesses to improve alarm systems, offer better fire safety advice, update equipment, etc., which can reduce call-outs dramatically.

The Fire Service is currently hoping to improve their recruitment of part-time fire-fighters to help cover rural areas. Again, working with local businesses and industry to help in this recruitment would be advantageous.

Booklets were distributed at the meeting, with full information available at: www.northyorksfire.gov.uk

Brian Dunsby reiterated Harrogate Chamber's past comments about automatic fire alarms - it has to be ensured that there is an instant response to any fire alarm at a busy hotel in the centre of Harrogate.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Printed Membership Directory

A printed Membership Directory is available for members on request - with a reminder that it is intended for one-to-one contact and NOT for telephone, fax or e-mail campaigns. An up-to-date Membership Directory is always available on the website by clicking on the "Directory" link on the right hand side of every page.

If members wish to contact other members there are various opportunities to do this via the Chamber Secretariat. Full details are available on the website at www.harrogatechamber.org/promotion.htm

MEMBERS' NEWS & OFFERS

Special Offer for other Members?

Stuart Pearson reminded members of the opportunity to provide fellow Chamber Members with discounts for products and/or services. Leaflets can be distributed in REVIEW or brought along to meetings. Stuart himself is offering a generous 50% discount to members on some of The Trinity Foundation events.

Visit www.thetrinityfoundation.co.uk for information.

Berwins FREE Seminars

Justin Marks invited members to a FREE HR Forum: "The Statutory Dispute Resolution Procedures - Back to Square One?" This is the first in a series of HR Forums for employers, HR managers and consultants.

It will focus on the present statutory procedures, difficulties and issues in applying them in practice and proposals for repeal/reform, followed by an "open floor" discussion and question session enabling delegates to air their views and questions on this vexed area of law.

We are holding this Forum at: The Cairn Hotel, Harrogate on 25 October 2007 and at The Bridge, Walshford, Wetherby on 30 October 2007.

For both, registration is from 8.00am for an 8.30am start and finish at approximately 9.30am. Ring Berwins on 01423 509000 or e-mail: JustinMarks@berwin.co.uk

DSC FREE Breakfast Seminars

Jenny Purdy invited members to DSC's FREE breakfast seminars in September - the next meetings take place in November. For details of future events contact Jenny Purdy 01423 560547 or e-mail: j.purdy@dsc.ca.com

Binns-Tomlinson FREE Seminar

Binns-Tomlinson Safety Training Services Ltd offered members a FREE Seminar from 18.00 to 20.00 on Thursday, 4th October. The event will be covering how to prepare your business to cope in an emergency. See leaflet enclosed for further details.

Visit www.safetytrainingservicesltd.co.uk or ring Rachel Binns on 01423 551818

Simple Quality Solutions FREE Seminar

John Gibson of Simple Quality Solutions offered a FREE lunchtime seminar on 10th October for Leeds Chamber on "How to Satisfy Customer Needs More Profitably".

To book go to: www.leedschamber.co.uk/events_detail1.asp?EventID=1108

Supporting Henshaws College

The final stage of Henshaws Living Life Campaign is Buy a Brick for Henshaws. Full details on enclosed leaflet or visit www.buyabrickforhenshaws.co.uk

Nick Lawson, General Manager of Hotel du Vin has volunteered to participate in this year's Great North Run in Newcastle on September 30th in aid of Henshaws College. Please call in for a sponsorship form or visit this website to donate: www.justgiving.com/nicklawson

New Look for Lords Restaurant

Martin Wilks was pleased to invite members at the meeting to two open evenings to see the recently refurbished Lords Restaurant, which has been given a more contemporary look including new leather seating.

Unfortunately these two events, which included FREE wine and canapés, took place before this edition of REVIEW went to press, so members not at the meeting have missed out on that invitation. However, you could still book a table to enjoy the delicious food and checkout the improved decor!

Maybe if you take this copy of REVIEW Martin will offer you a free glass of wine in return?? Tel: 01423 508762

Cicada Re-launch

Cicada have re-launched as **Cicada Communications Limited**, due to the increased demand for them to work across the board in all areas of communication.

The new name reflects their established expertise in areas such as media relations, direct marketing, brand management, training, new media, internal communications and event management.

Visit their new website at www.cicada-comms.com

Nidd Vale management buy-out

Nigel Pullan has taken over as Group Chief Executive following the recent management buy-out of the Nidd Vale Group car dealership. Former Chairman and Chief Executive, Colin Hainstock has now retired.

Visit www.niddvale.co.uk

RSM Bentley Jennison

Bentley Jennison has recently joined forces with RSM International to become RSM Bentley Jennison making them a major player in the RSM International network, spanning 40 key business centres worldwide.

Membership of this global network will bring huge benefits to Bentley Jennison and their clients. The name change does not affect the ownership of the practice, which will remain wholly owned and controlled by its partners. Visit www.rsmbentleyjennison.com

Carnival Messiah at Harewood

Elaine Speight brought leaflets for the Carnival Messiah at Harewood event where members can benefit from a £5 discount on tickets by quoting 'Yorkshire Post'.

The event takes place in a 'Big Top' marquee with a diverse range of music being performed. For more details visit www.harewood.org or ring 0113 218 1000.

Professional Presentation Skills

Mike Smith of Ripley Training Ltd is running two courses on Professional Presentation Skills, which will examine, analyse and improve upon the communication of information from a presenter to an audience.

These will be on 2nd October in York and on 4th March 2008 in Leeds. Details at www.ripleytraining.co.uk

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Christmas Lights

Martin Wilks represents Harrogate Chamber on the Soroptomists-led group that help to provide the town's invigorated Christmas Lights. The switch on this year will be on Thursday, 22nd November outside the Victoria Shopping Centre on Station Parade.

Martin said the signs are that the Retailers are beginning to work together more closely with Debenhams, Marks & Spencer and the Victoria Shopping Centre, amongst others, working together on the project.

Opportunities are still available for businesses to have their name in lights and company name listed in the roll of honour. Interested companies should contact Martin Wilks by e-mail martinwilks@btconnect.com or phone on 07984 426243; or Angela Humphreys, the Harrogate at Christmas Event Manager on 885266 or 07932 046677

The Ripon Enterprise Show Tuesday, 2nd October

Members have the opportunity to attend Ripon's first Enterprise Show on Tuesday, 2nd October at Ripon Racecourse from 14.00 - 20.00. Admission is FREE to visitors and all businesses are welcome.

The event is organised by the Ripon Area Business Association (RABA) who, along with their members, have supported our Business Market in the past.

There will be over 100 stands together with free business coaching seminars throughout the day. Please see enclosed leaflet. We hope you will be able to take the time to support this event which is mutually beneficial for exhibitors and visitors alike.

Community & Police Group Meeting

Vice-President, Robert Whiteley, reported on a recent CAP Tier 1 meeting where it was confirmed that there would be no Police coverage of the Starbeck Gala parade. This could potentially affect many events in Harrogate, such as the Easter Youth Band marches and Knaresborough Bed Race, which are in danger because the Police will not provide any cover for them.

Harrogate Street Pastors

Robert also told members about the volunteer Harrogate Street Pastors, who have been working in Harrogate since last December every Friday night with the aim of preventing vulnerable people becoming statistics. This project is supported by many of the Churches and the Salvation Army. Although the Pastors act independently, both the Council and the Police have welcomed the positive impact the Pastors' presence has had on reducing the incidences of violence.

New members are always welcome and it is hoped to extend the scheme to Saturday nights as well. Anyone who is interested in joining or supporting the scheme in any way should contact Robert on 01423 544544 or e-mail robertw@pavilionsofharrogate.com

If you have any young people who are likely to be out in town on a Friday night, do make them aware that the Pastors are there to help if needed.

Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly is a voluntary "Council" of the leaders of the elected Councils of Yorkshire and Humber. They are responsible for the Regional Spatial Strategy, which is suggesting 400 houses a year need to be put into the Harrogate District.

More details at www.yhassembly.gov.uk

NYCC School Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a School Governor, North Yorkshire County Council has sent the Chamber information on how you can do this and what the necessary qualifications are. Further details available from Mrs Phyl Grant at phyl.grant@northyorks.gov.uk

Bradford University School of Management

FREE events for Yorkshire businesses are being offered by the Bradford University School of Management. The school is ranked the second top business school in the UK, by the Financial Times, so local businesses can have access to the latest business teaching and thinking, says Harrogate Chamber Member, Victoria Tomlinson of Northern Lights PR Agency.

You may still be in time to book for the event on **Tuesday 2 October**, when the School starts the latest programme of their SME Knowledge Network.

Each monthly event starts at 5pm with an academic giving the latest cutting edge thinking on subjects such as managerial leadership, training in team leadership, employment law, human resources, marketing and strategy. A business leader then shares their own experiences and tips. This is followed by a free buffet, networking and then clinics where businesses can discuss specific issues with an expert and their peers and be helped to produce an action plan.

For more information on this and future events contact Clare Haynes at the School on 01274 236679 or go to www.brad.ac.uk/acad/management/external/newsandevents.php

MEMBERS' FORUM

Concerns over rail service to London

Carole Reid of Yorkshire & Humberside Assessment expressed concern that the rail service from Harrogate to London will deteriorate following GNER losing the franchise for this line. A recent journey had reduced to no buffet or trolley service and dirty carriages.

Brian Dunsby undertook to contact GNER to enquire about the situation and future expectations.

THANKS TO THE CAIRN HOTEL

Many thanks to Sue Romao, General Manager, and the staff at the Cairn Hotel for hosting a Chamber meeting for the first time. We also welcome them as new members this month.

For further information contact:

**Sue Romao, General Manager
or Karen Wilson, Events Planner**

Tel: 01423 504005

E-mail: cairnevents@strathmorehotels.com

Website: www.strathmorehotels.com

FOCUS GROUPS

Business Promotion

Stuart Pearson told members that information on next year's 'Yorkshire Business Market' on 28th April 2008 would be sent to members with special reduced rates for Harrogate Chamber members in advance of spaces being released to the business community at large.

As in previous years, The Ackrill Media Group are supporting the event, which will fill all four event rooms at Pavilions of Harrogate. Anna Kendal-Greene of Ackrills told members of the excellent rates that will be offered to members who advertise in an extended eight-page 'Yorkshire Business Market' supplement that will be available prior to the event throughout the Ackrill Series of papers and will also be published on their website. A list of all exhibitors will be included with a link to their website. The various advertising packages will range from just £30. Please call Anna on 01423 707426 or E-mail: enquiries@yorkshirebusinessmarket.org

Promoting Harrogate

Martin Wilks reported that the next Promoting Harrogate meeting would take place on 26th September at the Paramount Majestic Hotel. The main purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the S.W.O.T. analysis compiled from members' ideas at the recent Business Networking Safari to compile a business plan for 2008. It is hoped to have some objectives and targets to work towards over the next 18 months.

Last month Chamber officers met with Stuart Quin, Director of Harrogate International Centre, to encourage him to become more involved with the Promoting Harrogate group and to explain the group is intended to support HIC's activities, not conflict with them.

Traffic & Transport

Brian Dunsby reported that it was hoped that a detailed planning application would be submitted early in 2008 for the proposed Transport Interchange at the Bus/Railway Stations, incorporating new retail premises and office accommodation. Harrogate Chamber is being consulted on the implications for town centre traffic, so members who would like to make any proposals and submit comments should contact the Secretariat.

Leeds Bradford International Airport (LBIA) has appointed John Parkin ex-Newcastle Airport as the new Chief Executive following the recent sale and retirement of the former Managing Director, Ed Anderson. Several additional flights have been announced by Jet2.com

Following indications that the Leeds Bradford to London Heathrow air service was under threat, Harrogate Chamber joined lobbying to the CAA and BMI to object to the proposals to stop this service due to the high costs, security restrictions, slot restrictions, etc.

Harrogate & District Travel are now actively looking at ways of improving the 767 Bus Service to LBIA from Harrogate, particularly at peak periods, with the funding from North Yorkshire County Council and the Airport.

SCAMS & SPAMS

Tax scam warning

Taxpayers who use self-assessment are being warned to beware of a new scam to steal their financial details.

Fraudsters are sending out letters and e-mails claiming to be from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) ahead of the 30 September deadline for having their tax calculated.

The fraudulent correspondence claims the recipient either has outstanding tax to pay or is owed money by HMRC. In both cases, it requests bank card details from the recipient. **DO NOT FALL FOR THIS SCAM!**

Read more on this story at:

<http://www.freelanceuk.com/news/2489.shtml>

You can view the latest known fraudulent threats at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/security/fraud-attempts.htm>

Internet crime becomes big business

Internet crime is no longer the domain of the amateur hacker but has become big business, according to a computer security firm. Symantec says cyber criminals are now auctioning stolen bank details and selling on commercial software used to attack websites.

Criminals can buy phishing kits, which allow them to set up fraudulent banking websites to steal financial details. Social networking websites like MySpace and Facebook are also being used to launch attacks on websites.

If you get a suspicious e-mail, just hover your mouse over the web link to see whether it is genuine or not.

Read more on this story at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6998068.stm>

NEW MEMBERS

2Inspire (*Development and Training*)

Rob Northfield, Managing Director
The Exchange, Station Parade, Harrogate, HG1 1TS
Tel: 0845 223 4423 **Fax:** 0845 456 5253
E-mail: bmccconnell@2-inspire.co.uk
Web site: www.2-inspire.co.uk

Cairn Hotel (*Hotel*)

Susan Romao, Executive Manager
Ripon Road, Harrogate, HG1 2JD
Tel: 01423 504005 **Fax:** 01423 500056
E-mail: sueromao@talk21.com
Web site: www.strathmorehotels.com

Scanners GB Ltd (*Document Management Bureau*)

Philip Bond, Managing Director
Harrogate Business Centre, Hookstone Avenue,
Harrogate, HG2 8ER
Tel: 01423 810080 **Fax:** 01423 873999
E-mail: pbond@scanners-gb.co.uk
Web site: www.scanners-gb.co.uk

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Summary of 1st October new regulations

The following summary of regulations expected to come into force on 1st October. It is by no means a full and complete list but highlights of some important changes:

Taxes & Finance:

- Private companies can expect a range of new measures under the Companies Act 2006, including:
 - A new statutory statement setting out directors' duties and responsibilities
 - Removal of the requirement to have a company secretary or hold annual general meetings unless you decide to do so
 - Easier decision making by written resolution of the company's shareholders

Employment:

- There will be increases in national minimum wage rates.
- If you provide all your workers an annual leave entitlement of 5.6 weeks, you do not have to make any changes. However, if your workers do not yet receive a holiday entitlement of 28 days per year - which can include bank and public holidays - your business will have to change its holiday entitlement policy and related outgoings. This is a two-phased process - four additional days apply as of October 2007 and the final four days of April 2009.
- The right of private foster carers and people with residence orders to request flexible working will apply to very few individuals and to even fewer businesses.

Other:

- Anyone in the retail sector that sells cigarettes, cigarette papers or any other tobacco products must cease to sell them to anyone younger than 18. To fully comply with the law, all your signs and vending machine displays must clearly show the new minimum age.
- All trade mark holders and applicants will find changes in the process for examining new trade mark applications and for opposing them. Briefly, this means that new trade mark applications will no longer be automatically blocked if there is an earlier conflicting mark.

Reduce Red Tape

The European Commission have launched a new website to enable entrepreneurs to suggest ideas for how to reduce the administrative burdens they face. Visit <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction>

Business should have regeneration role

Businesses should have a formal role in the regeneration of Britain's cities, the British Chambers of Commerce says. The report, *A Tale of the Cities: the best of times?* Considers nine cities and gives examples of how businesses and local councils have worked together to regenerate urban areas.

The report calls for such partnerships to be put on to a formal footing so councils and businesses can work together on key issues such as training and developing transport infrastructure. (*Hear, hear! Ed.*)

Read more at www.chamberonline.co.uk/Ye1UiEE.html

Data Protection Act changes ahead

Firms face being fined if they fail to ready themselves for forthcoming changes to the Data Protection Act. From 24th October 2007 businesses must be able to retrieve any information held about individuals within 40 days of a request being made.

Previously this applied only to data held on computers of networks, but from next month, it will also apply to information on non-electronic formats, such as paper.

Read more at www.freelanceuk.com/news/2487.shtml

Online tool for business basics

Small enterprises are being offered access to a free tool to help them manage the daily elements of their business. The online BT Business Builder includes a business planner, bookkeeping, payroll and marketing tools.

BT said the service was aimed at established as well as new businesses. BT said It has been put together to meet the core basic business administration processes. The tool can be downloaded at:

www.btbroadbandoffice.com/internetapplications/bt-business-builder?s_ced=btb_FURL_btbusinessbuilder

Retailers' guide to avoid card crime

The payments association APACS has issued a guide for retailers to help them avoid Chip and PIN card fraud. The guide, which can be accessed online, includes tips such as the importance of where Chip and PIN terminals are placed and to inform staff about security issues.

APACS said that despite security measures, organised criminal gangs are continuing to target businesses to copy customers' card details.

Read more on this issue at:

www.apacs.org.uk/media_centre/press/07_09_05.html

You can download the guide at:

www.apacs.org.uk/documents/RetailerPOSadviceguide.pdf

Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce, PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8XB

Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025 E-mail: info@harrogatechamber.org Website: harrogatechamber.org

Printed by Enid Taylor Ltd, Harrogate Tel: 01423 567764 Fax: 01423 567765 E-mail: info@enidtaylor.co.uk