

EUROPEAN EDITION

SUMMER 2004

**Belfast boost  
from Tony's magic**

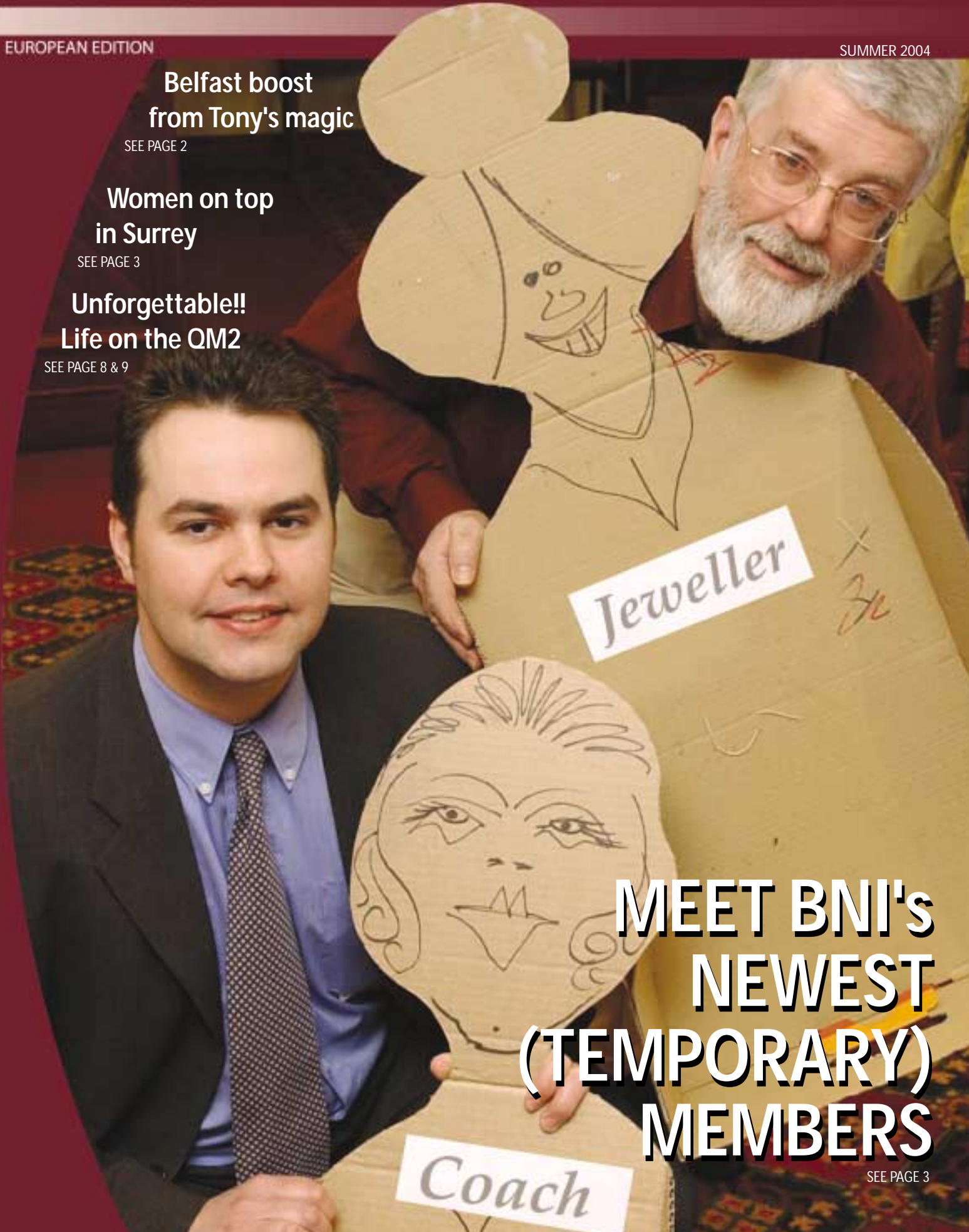
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**MEET BNI's  
NEWEST  
(TEMPORARY)  
MEMBERS**

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## Belfast businesses head for top with Tony's magic

### Cross-chapter networking produces remarkable business turnaround

**Belfast businessman Robin Nesbitt would be the first to admit that his printing company was a mere minnow in a pool of much larger rivals until 18 months ago. Today however, his business stands transformed, one of the best known in the region – and with major, long-term contracts that are the envy of competitors.**

How? As a member of Lisburn Chapter, Robin had already gained some modest additional business through his BNI colleagues, but then he started to hear glowing reports about a member of the Ballymena Chapter – some 30 miles away – with a reputation for helping small but sound businesses grow dramatically.

That member was Ballymena's Tony Devlin, whose company, Glenovation, provides a range of key business support services - including tender writing and bid application management - to companies throughout the UK.

Tony said: "Robin is the senior partner of Print Solutions started five years ago, and he won't mind my saying that when we first met, his firm was more used to small orders than processing six-figure print jobs for corporate clients. He'd decided that he wanted to grow the company's public sector customer base and knew an innovative new approach was required to be successful in winning public sector customers.

"He had heard of my company through BNI testimonials in his own chapter but he was still sceptical when he approached me looking for a strategy that was going to help them win this new public sector business. We met and developed a strategy for re-positioning Print Solutions, changing its emphasis to make sure it would be able to compete for bigger contracts."

Having re-structured the printing business, Tony then set about writing the first of a number of bid proposals and tender applications for large contracts, some of them only accessible through the complex

EU and Public Sector Approved Contractors tendering process. To Robin's delight, Print Solutions soon found itself on shortlists and then winning major new business.

He said: "Before we developed our strategy with Glenovation we had little success in tender applications. Today we are winning business that once we could only hope might come our way! In our first year of working with Tony, we gained one local education authority order worth in excess of £100,000, and we have also been accepted as an approved supplier to share a new public sector printing contract worth £5 million a year.

"We are now working closely with Tony to bid for further contracts and we still have a number of other tenders outstanding. Getting to know about his specialist services has transformed our business in barely 18 months, from a small printers to a major player in this part of Ireland, and it is very doubtful we'd have ever made contact had it not been for our membership of BNI."

Tony, a bid manager before he decided to use his skills to develop his own highly-successful company in North Antrim, now spends much of his time providing bid and EU tender management solutions to businesses trying to sell into the public sector throughout the UK and Ireland – a service that includes personal coaching of key personnel in terms of public speaking, appearance and even choreographing entire presentations to clients.

**Contact Tony at Glenovation on +44 (0) 28 2076 8758. Robin can be reached on 028 9077 4664**



*CLIMBING THE LADDER OF SUCCESS: Robin Nesbitt (left) has not looked back since recruiting the expertise of Ballymena Chapter's Tony Devlin*

**Meanwhile Glenovation has worked its magic for another, even newer Belfast company, Mailroom Limited, helping Lagan Valley Chapter member Desy Gault and his business partner win a £250,000 contract through the EU tendering process.**

Mailroom provides high quality mail fulfilment services throughout the UK and Ireland, but Desy was keen to obtain public sector contracts, so he talked to Tony who helped the company develop a strategy for responding to large tender invitations, and instigate an effective information collation process that would be crucial to gaining contracts.

"After a very short time working together, the approach we suggested paid off, and Mailroom won their first major contract for a quarter of a million pounds – producing plenty of happy faces around their offices that day," Tony added. "It's another great example of cross-chapter networking, and it could never have happened without BNI."

**Desy Gault can be contacted on 07734 428424**



*MAILROOM GETS BUSIER: Lagan Valley's Desy Gault (right) is broadening his business sights, following Mailroom's new collaboration with Glenovation's Tony Devlin.*



## Women definitely on top in Esher

**Did you know that on average, women speak 6,500 words a day, while men speak just 2,500 words in the same period? Of course you did! But in Sandown (Esher) Chapter, male members are fast coming to realise that having more than their fair share of chatty female colleagues, generates very positive results....**

For no obvious reason, the Chapter's early recruitment efforts have attracted a surfeit of female applicants, with the result that today, the North Surrey group boasts more women than men – making it unique among BNI's normally male-dominated groups.

And, while an influx of the fairer sex has certainly raised the decibel levels during meetings, it is also raising the volume of business done, as founder member Richard Forshaw (pictured) from TAL Computer Services is discovering every Thursday morning.

Richard said: "In our chapter, we have 11 women to 10 men so, given their far greater ability to talk more, you can imagine what I and my male colleagues have to put up with! However, all this talking is good for business, because our referral rates are rising and the quality of business is consistently high. It's also more pleasant to do business in a chapter where there is a good mix of the sexes, rather than having only a few

women members."

The Chapter's recent recruitment drive has brought in four new members – three of whom were women. Karen Sutton, Membership Co-ordinator, who runs Digital World Direct, told SuccessNet: "I think you'll find that our group has more female members than any other in the whole South East. When members from other chapters visit us, they always comment on the number of women around the table.

Karen is not in the picture [below] because, as

an ex-Formula One photographer, she took the photograph! Also not pictured is Gillian Harvey-Bush, a personal development coach.

Not that Sandown intends to be sexist! "We didn't set out to recruit mainly females. It's just worked out that way," added Karen. "But we'll be just as pleased to welcome new applications from men."

***If you'd like to know more about Sandown's winning formula, call Jackie on 01372 465041 or Karen on 020 8391 0717.***



*SSSH! CAN I GET A WORD IN PLEASE? Esher's Richard Forshaw is getting used to all the talking from his female colleagues.*

## Cardboard cut-outs do BNI business on the border!

**They may belong to BNI's newest UK group, but the founders of East Staffordshire Chapter already know they are cut out for great success, after boosting the attendance at their pre-launch meetings with a variety of life-sized cardboard 'members'!**

The Chapter was being launched as SuccessNet went to press, but for several weeks, the group's founder members swelled their own ranks – and their confidence – with the help of a dozen full sized cardboard colleagues, each one representing a trade or profession that the Chapter wants to attract during the summer months.

Michelle Moore, a BNI Assistant Director said: "We thought it would be a novel idea to give Chapter members a feel for just how big the group will be once we've achieved our

first target: doubling the group's size over the next few weeks. Our founder members made the life-sized cut-outs – both male and female versions – to which we attached the names of specific occupations that members are now targeting to join us.

"It provided good entertainment and was the source of countless wisecracks, as well as acting as a continuing reminder of the need to attract real-life replacements for our cardboard colleagues.

"It also generated significant media interest, with pictures and articles appearing in

the The Burton Mail.

Anyone interested in boosting the group's numbers – or joining any other Staffordshire chapter – should **contact Michelle Moore on 01782 208 297.**



*TOO MANY LOW CALORIE BREAKFASTS? No, it's just East Staffordshire Chapter's temporary cardboard members, keeping the seats warm for their real-life replacements.*

## Lawsons' Lore

**Gillian and Martin Lawson  
National Directors of BNI, write:**

Readers will know that from time to time during BNI's rapid growth in the UK and Ireland, we have reflected on key milestones along the way. Two major events in the past three months have colourfully confirmed, more than anything previously, just how successful BNI has become, in establishing itself as Britain's most dynamic business networking organisation.

This year's European Conference at Bradford, hosted by our Yorkshire colleagues was, without doubt, the biggest and best so far and it is significant that in each successive year we have managed to markedly improve every aspect of this annual event.

Those of you who attended last year's conference at St. Andrew's Bay Resort in Fife, came away with the unanimous view that it could not have been bettered. Yet within 12 months, directors and members had again raised the bar – giving us a truly incredible day. On Page 6, you can find out what made it so special. For those of you who missed the experience, we hope the article will inspire you to book a place at next April's European conference in Bristol, as soon as full details are published. It is one of the most valuable, enjoyable dates in the BNI calendar.

The second event could not be more different, but its occurrence was equally significant. We were recently privileged to play hosts to our Chapter Development Drive winners who experienced the trip of a lifetime to New York, aboard Cunard's new Queen Mary 2 - the world's largest, most luxurious liner. On the centre pages, you can read what some of them had to say about their week, but the sole reason for its reference here, is because it again demonstrates how far BNI has come, in providing rewards of this quality.

Common to both events was an ongoing enthusiasm for, and commitment to, networking amongst BNI members. While you might not be surprised to learn that those who took part in the annual conference, collectively went away with a conservative £4 million worth of new business, you might be astonished to know that BNI networking continued successfully in mid-Atlantic, producing an unexpected business bonus for more than one of our members!

The clear message is that if you pursue BNI's philosophy, and you follow our tried and tested practices, you can ALL be winners. Just ask those who took part in these activities.



## "The best member we haven't got!"

**An Edinburgh businessman has doubled the turnover of his thriving financial services company in the past nine months thanks to his local BNI chapter – even though his sustained efforts to become a member have been unsuccessful!**

High-flying independent financial adviser Kevin Quinn found himself 'locked out' of his local Edinburgh South Chapter because his position was already taken – but it hasn't stopped him using the combined expertise of no less than 17 BNI members, whom he credits with "growing my business at an extraordinary rate."

He heard about BNI through The Royal Bank of Scotland Business Adviser Jim Bowman (a member of Edinburgh South) who helped turn his business plan into a successful IFA and mortgage consultancy – Options & Choices Mortgages Ltd – based at Dalkeith. Jim also felt his chapter colleagues could offer many of the services Kevin needed to get started, and took him to meet Tony Miller at Riverside Stationers, who provided

the company with a variety of office supplies and business machines.

A strong relationship was struck up between them and Tony duly introduced Kevin to other chapter members whose services he needed, including an accountant, web designer, vehicle salesman and corporate image specialist. Formed just over a year ago, Kevin's firm now employs 15 people and earlier this year moved to larger premises when, naturally, many BNI members were involved in its relocation!

Tony said: "Kevin desperately wants to join the chapter that has played such a key role in the growth of his business, but his category has remained filled, so he has been looking for an alternative group for nine months. Ironically, the only other recently launched chapter in the area - at Musselburgh - already had an IFA founder member, so he missed out there too, but he is utterly committed to working with BNI. It is far from one-sided, because he has also given a steady stream of referrals to our members. He must be the most prolific member we haven't got!"

Kevin told SuccessNet: "I am now so involved with BNI that I joke about Edinburgh South Chapter holding its meetings in our offices. Dealing with nearly all its members regularly, I feel I belong to BNI. One day soon, I hope they'll let me come in from the cold," he added.

**Tony can be contacted on 0131 665 2784 and Kevin can be reached on 0131 663 7711.**



PLEASE LET ME JOIN BNI: Kevin Quinn (centre), pictured with Edinburgh South Chapter's Royal Bank of Scotland Adviser Jim Bowman (left) and business supplies boss Tony Miller.

## Brum gets first black badges

SuccessNet is delighted to report on the first two Birmingham members to win their coveted black badges, for what has been described by their chapter's leadership team as "fantastic contributions" over the past two years.

Garden designer David Robinson who runs 'Up the Garden Path' and telecoms systems specialist Stewart Evans of Qualitel Solutions, are members of the Great Barr Chapter and, to the best of our knowledge are the first members in Britain's second city to join BNI's prestigious Gold Club after each

recruiting more than six new members.

They are among six members to earn their black badges in recent weeks, the others being printer Stuart Howarth and solicitor Philip Stephenson (both members of the Walworth Chapter in Darlington), John Hart from Harrogate's Thursday Chapter and David King who has introduced no less than 10 new members to Hastings Chapter. Our warm congratulations to all five.

If your chapter welcomes any of its members into the Gold Club, please make sure that someone tells us at SuccessNet.



## BNI members look to the future

### London - Here We Come!

A group of teenagers from a Hull comprehensive school will be making the most important presentation of their young lives in a few days time – hoping to win the UK finals of this year's prestigious HSBC Young Enterprise Innovation Awards - after sweeping to a clear victory in the competition's Yorkshire and Humberside Regional finals.

If they gain top prize it will be the ultimate 'rags-to-riches' success story for the youngsters but, even getting to the finals (being held at London's Savoy Hotel) has been a remarkable achievement, thanks in no small measure to BNI members of Hull's Wednesday Chapter.

Earlier this year, KH Smilers - a Young Enterprise company launched last September by other pupils in the school - was rescued from collapse with help from the Chapter's IT and Training specialist Vic Golding, following a plea from his own secretary, Dianne Garbera whose 15-year old son David had just been 'appointed' its new managing director in a classroom vote.

David and his five classmates – all students at the Kelvin Hall School – took the reins of the flailing company in January after the business's original board of directors found the project too demanding. And in less than six months, they have transformed the previous flop into a thriving, profitable venture that many a professional business person would be proud to own.

With little help from busy teaching staff, the new team switched its product range from novelty cards and gifts to bedding plants, produced a superb business plan, delegated specific tasks – marketing, sales, operations, IT and product development – to different team members, and started to turn the business around.

In stepped Vic Golding, first offering KH Smilers the professional IT and computing support they needed (including a crash course in Sage accounting and book-keeping) and then inviting the team to present their business plan to a meeting of his Wednesday Chapter. Several BNI members were so impressed that they immediately offered their own expert services to the young entrepreneurs, covering marketing, printing, exhibition and promotional work, financial planning and reporting.

The result is that KH Smilers have gone from strength to strength, despatching orders for hundreds of pounds worth of plants (making over £1,000 profit!), joining VIPs at the prestigious Yorkshire International Business Conference, and being given a civic reception by the Lord Mayor of Hull.

Vic Golding said: "When we heard how the school's new Young Enterprise team had started to make such big strides, the whole chapter wanted to help. When we first met them, they were £250 in debt, had products no-one wanted to buy and all but two of the original board had resigned. The new team has done a truly brilliant job in turning it all round!

"All the team members are 14 and 15 year olds and were up against 17 to 19 year olds from other schools – including public and private schools - with far greater resources. However they fare in this

It may have arrived in Britain less than eight years ago, but BNI is here to stay. That means planning for the successes of tomorrow's businessmen and women, while maximising the profit potential of today's members. Here, we are delighted to reflect on how two UK chapters have taken time out to help and support the country's up-and-coming business entrepreneurs....



HULL'S TEENAGE WHIZZ KIDS: KH Smilers' winning Young Enterprise team with Hull's Lord Mayor Councillor Ken Branson, after BNI members had lent their support.

month's finals, we are proud of them!"

**You can contact Vic Golding on 01482 328 706**

## Sussex business students get BNI once-over

Planning the school's annual outing to Britain's top theme park at Alton Towers might not sound too onerous a task, but when you're talking about a two-day 450-mile round trip with overnight accommodation for several hundred teenagers, and you are expected to make a decent profit along the way, well.... it's an altogether tougher proposition.

That was the challenge presented to a 10-strong group of 'A' level business students at Littlehampton Community School in Sussex who, as part of their transition to the real business world, were also asked to present their completed project to members of BNI's neighbouring **Arundel Chapter**.

"We were all most impressed by their

achievement," said Chapter Director Nick Peters of Netintel Media. "It was not an easy situation to have their coursework subjected to scrutiny by business professionals. Each of the group was asked to describe how he or she managed their part of the business, which showed an impressive profit of £1800.

"They presented themselves very well and are clearly destined for great things when they move on to the next stage in their lives, And from our point of view, members were well aware that today's students are tomorrow's BNI members," he added.

Geoff Davis, the School's Deputy Head said: "The students were genuinely impressed that BNI took them seriously and that members asked them probing questions. It was a superb experience. We have actively encouraged links with the local business community, and meeting with BNI was an excellent example of this."

The students seemed equally pleased with the occasion, despite having to show up at 6.45am to present their work to the Chapter's breakfast meeting.

**You can contact Nick Peters on 01903 885191**



A WINNING TEAM: LCS Managing Director Emma Biffi is presented with a Notable Networker Award by Chapter Director Nick Peters.

## Simply the best!

They knew that the 2003 European Conference held 12 months earlier at the St. Andrews Bay Golf Resort would take some beating. They knew that BNI's late and much-missed Executive Director Ron Hain had set the gold standard by which all our future major events would be judged. But BNI's Yorkshire directors did it! This year's Conference and Members' Day at Bradford's Hanover Hotel was - declared: **Simply the best!**

Organised largely by the nine assistant directors who make up Executive Director Niri Patel's support team covering one of BNI's largest geographical regions, the 2004 Conference attracted nearly 400 members – many of them from the north of Britain, but a significant percentage coming not only from far-flung corners of the UK, but also from as far away as France, Malaysia and Australia.

*I met several people I may do business with, got new ideas about developing my business, and learnt how to get more referrals for my chapter colleagues. Not bad for a day's work!*

- Andrew Lawrie, The Leeds Royal Armouries Thursday Chapter

And they were not disappointed! What was, by common consent, the best-ever Members' Day agenda saw wall-to-wall keynote speeches, break-out groups, workshops, highly focused networking sessions and of course, plenty of member participation with all the usual fun that has become a hallmark of BNI's major annual get-together.

John Middleton, one of West Yorkshire's assistant directors, whose own keynote address about 'thinking outside the box' gained very positive feedback from delegates, told SuccessNet: "We'd all come away

*The coloured spots on delegates' badges to denote their appropriate power circles was an inspired idea. It meant we could all focus on people who could be most useful to us.*

- Jeni Rankin, Wakefield Thursday Chapter



THE BIGGEST AND BEST EVER: That was the unanimous verdict of the 400 delegates attending this year's European Conference at Bradford, many of whom told organisers they had done new business worth more than £10,000 at the event!

from Scotland the previous year thinking our conference couldn't get any better than that, but we still managed to raise the bar!

"One of the biggest factors behind the high-energy Members' Day was that several keynote speakers such as Terry Hamill and Andy Bounds delivered excellent presentations on improving fundamental networking skills, which delegates were then able to put into practice as soon as the next open networking session began. This immediately produced better business results, which in turn made the day even more exciting – with everyone determined to get in on the action. There were no retiring wallflowers..."

Area Director and co-organiser John Leach said this year's conference, more than any previous event, had made many participating members realise the full extent and depth of BNI's value to their own businesses.

*The conference agenda was the best to date.. The key to the day's success was the variety of subjects, presented in manageable chunks. At no time did the programme drag.*

- Jeffrey Cohen, Leeds Moortown Chapter

"Everyone always talks about the fact that BNI is more than simply a weekly opportunity to meet and exchange referrals, but I believe the vast majority of this year's delegates went away understanding fully, just what that means. Conference speakers and the various workshops and group activities showed them just how much the average member can get out of BNI, if s/he is willing to listen and learn."

At the end of what was undoubtedly the most frenzied day's networking in BNI's

*Of all the UK conferences I have ever been to, this was the most rewarding, and the Yorkshire team have been the best hosts yet...*

- Martin Bailey, BNI Executive Director for South Derbyshire

relatively short UK history, every delegate was asked to carefully assess what level of potential new business he or she believed they had generated during the conference – referrals they believed would turn into firm business, generating income during 2004.

Niri Patel, the host region's Executive Director told SuccessNet: "We collated all of the delegates' confidential assessments and then deliberately reduced the resulting figure by a factor of four, to produce the most conservative estimate of the new business produced on the day. Even that came to a remarkable £4 million, which shows why it was such a powerful event."

## New Chapters

In addition to new chapters individually featured elsewhere in SuccessNet, the following chapters are among other UK groups launched during the past 10 weeks:

Brunel (Bristol), Derby 4, Falcons (Manchester West), Grosvenor (Ireland NE), Highway (Enfield), Lionhead Alpha (Rugby), Lowestoft, Meridian (East Grinstead), Regency (London North Central), Science (Oxford), Surtees (Newcastle), The Arrow (Alcester), Tuesbury (Watford), Waterlooville (Hants), Amethyst (Amsterdam), Loewe (Berlin), Sempione (Milan), Scandic KNA and Alpha, (both Oslo, Norway), and Rezdor Inn, Gavle and Slottet, Uppsala, both in Sweden.



## Jude – the not so obscure!

**Jude Thompson, Chapter Director at Kidderminster, may share his first name with the 'obscure' central character of Thomas Hardy's famous novel, but that's as far as any likeness goes.**

For the one certain thing you can say about Kidderminster's Jude is that he does not keep himself hidden: in fact, his photograph has been appearing in West Midlands newspapers on a regular basis, because of his business links with newly-promoted Premier League football team, West Bromwich Albion.

As Managing Director of Stourbridge-based CSCM Ltd, whose computer support division pioneered Albion's ground-breaking

'Stilecard' security access system for supporters, Jude and his team have been regularly making the headlines – thanks to his immediate predecessor in the chapter director's chair, PR expert Louise Jew who generated all the publicity, and to another BNI colleague, photographer Carl Bridgewater, whose pictures were snapped up by the media!

Over the past five years, Jude's company has developed a highly successful working relationship with the football club. It also runs the busy CSCM Learning Centre-based alongside Albion's ground) which offers 'Learn-Direct' courses to local youngsters, ranging from IT to business and manage-



*A PREMIER SUCCESS! Jude Thompson (right) with Phil Everitt checks the new security system at West Bromwich Albion FC.*

ment skills and care industry qualifications.

**You can contact Jude on 01384 866 866 and Louise on 01384 872776.**

## Broad band of business for Harrogate members

**Two BNI member companies in Yorkshire have each won substantial long-term business with ABC, the Access to Broadband Campaign, as a result of a some sharp-eyed opportunism by Harrogate Thursday Chapter's IT specialist Joel Smith.**

Joel, whose company Dales IT Ltd in Pateley Bridge is at the forefront of helping rural communities to obtain broadband internet services, was aware that the National Broadband Conference was due to take place in London – despite the fact that no conference organiser had been appointed. Joel turned the business opportunity into a

referral for his chapter colleague Andrew Macdonald, Business Development Manager for Harrogate-based events organisation, - www.conference-events.biz - who quickly gained the contract to stage the event.

Since receiving the initial referral, Andrew's company has gone on to win the contract to manage all of ABC's national conferences and other events, and he said: "Having won such a substantial piece of business through networking has highlighted the



*EVERYONE WINS: Joel Smith (left) and Andrew Macdonald outside their Chapter venue – scene of some lucrative referrals that will help more small and medium sized businesses in the Yorkshire region gain broadband internet access.*

benefits that BNI can offer any company."

Happily, Joel's original referral has turned full circle as Andrew explained: "All of this new work has generated additional referrals and even more customers for Dales IT, enabling Joel to provide Broadband for more local businesses who will immediately benefit from it."

As a further direct result of their work for ABC, conference-events.biz has been able to pass additional referrals to other Chapter members who are now providing services such as print and signage for ABC's national events.

The Access to Broadband Campaign is a national campaign group formed to promote affordable broadband access and more details can be found at [www.abcampaign.org.uk](http://www.abcampaign.org.uk)

Grant information can be obtained from Business Link North Yorkshire or through Joel.

**Contact Andrew Macdonald on 01423 810 297. Joel Smith can be reached at [www.dalesit.com](http://www.dalesit.com) or on 01423 712 591.**

## A real treat as Cork members fillet raw fish!

More than 20 of BNI's most intrepid Irish members recently found themselves having to fillet raw fish, peel potatoes and wade barefoot

through fountains – but all in a good cause!

The members of Cork's Treaty Chapter were among scores of Limerick businesses who turned out in their droves a few weeks ago to support a restaurant charity treasure hunt organised by their chapter colleague Brid Fox of Cater Care Limited.

Surprised to discover that they would not only have to travel throughout Limerick, but also around Clare and Tipperary, they were even more perplexed to learn that they needed to perform a variety of unusual tasks at each stop in order to earn the next clue!

Brid said: "Everyone enjoyed themselves and we raised €5,500 for 'People in Need'.

**Contact Brid on +353 (0)61 469 008.**



*READY FOR FUN: Treasure hunt organiser Brid Fox (left) with her colleagues, Aoife McMahon, Ellen McEniry and Chevy Johnston.*

## Once in a lifetime voyage of luxury on QM

By Malcolm Grosvenor, SuccessNet Editor - (who felt obliged to be a paying guest)

It simply could not have been any better! That was the consensus among BNI's lucky draw winners from the recent chapter development drive, after soaking up one of the most luxurious and pampered weeks of their lives – aboard Queen Mary 2, the world's newest, largest and most sumptuous liner.

We'd just eaten, drunk, danced, played and generally cavorted our way 3,500 miles across 'the pond', easily adjusting to the unfamiliar surroundings of the truly rich and famous and, for an all-too-brief six days and nights, forgetting completely that a 'real' world was still out there, beyond our temporary fantasy cocooned within 150,000 tons of pure pleasure.

Being a sceptical soul, it hadn't felt like that a week earlier when, bracing myself for the potentially dubious pleasures of a gale-ridden Atlantic Ocean, sickly fellow travellers and long days and nights spent watching a stormy horizon disappearing behind 30 feet waves, I joined BNI's merry team of 11 (mainly) first-time cruisers and partners for champagne cocktails on one of QM2's endless aft decks as we slipped silently down Southampton Water on a sunny May evening.

The lull before the storm? After all, this was only her second ever Transatlantic voyage to the Big Apple, and already tales were legend about the ship's stormy maiden crossing to New York just a fortnight earlier. Any repetition would soon wipe those self-satisfied smirks from our faces...

Into the English Channel and, as we donned formal attire for the first of several evenings of spectacularly lavish wining, dining and entertainment, still the seas gave forth barely a ripple.

Gosh, were we supposed to sleep like angels throughout our first night at sea? Sunday came and went, a moving feast of deluxe

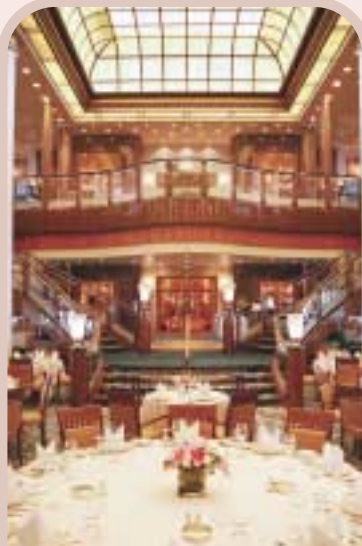
meals, endless social activities and, for the few silly folk in our party, a bit of serious exercise in the QM2's health spa or gymnasium. Tut, tut. Then it was time to stroll along to the Winter Gardens for one of the week's few formal events: the BNI winners' reception hosted by national directors Martin and Gillian Lawson.

Don't BNI-ers ever stop networking? Perhaps it was the copious flow of bubbly, maybe just the sheer intoxication of our surroundings, but sssh, whisper it quietly, yours truly knows that serious business was being conducted amongst our number, long after the brief formalities were over.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...why was it that the days of the week had ceased to matter? Well, having the choice of an incredible array of round-the-clock activities, from golfing to ball-room lessons, sports competitions to pub quizzes, might be one reason. Not your style? Then how about celebrity lectures (did I mention all of the well-known faces on board?), jazz, pop and classical concerts, variety shows, cabaret, spectacular formal Balls, countless restaurants offering all the world's cuisine, endless bars and cocktail lounges, library, art gallery, casino, the biggest health spa on the high seas and, oh yes, and Commodore

*There were so many magical moments including the unforgettable arrival into New York harbour.... In BNI, networking never ceases, even on holiday, and it was exciting to exchange business cards with a fellow lawyer on the way to JFK airport, who can help me achieve a good result for a client.*  
- James Bell, Eardwulf Chapter, Carlisle.

*The cruise itself was one hell of a prize - with a whole lot of wow factor, but the extra business I have received by taking part in the competition has been the real reward.*  
- David Vizard, Enterprise Chapter, Watford.



PURE LUXURY? You'd better believe it. The Britannia Restaurant - just one of many on board.

*The ship was huge and its facilities were incredible. Having experienced just how fantastic the prize is, I should warn everyone that I definitely intend to be in the reckoning again next year.*  
- Lesley Woolhouse, Coventry Chapter



DO I LOOK SMUG IN THIS, OR WHAT? A member of BNI's party can't hide the sheer indulgence of basking in a hot tub on one of the ship's many aft decks - with panoramic Atlantic views!



AREN'T WE THE LUCKY ONES!? Our Chapter Development Drive winners have plenty of reasons to feel pleased with themselves, as they gathered for the formal BNI Reception.



## WHAT WAS!

### QM2 for BNI's lucky winners

*Best to report on the extent of members' 'suffering'....)*



**DWARFING NEW YORK'S HARBOUR:** The QM2 offers winning BNI members a spectacular view of the Empire State Building.



**PLEASE PUBLISH THIS PHOTO!** That was the plea from Karen Wright of St. Georges Chapter, Whitstable, pictured left with QM2 Commodore Ronald Warwick and colleague Michelle Cole.

*From the moment we boarded at Southampton, we were made to feel special, and the ship was totally luxurious. We were fairly awestruck for the first couple of days, by its size and the amazing service we all received. I'll definitely be going for the prize next year.*

- Colin Sadler, Falcons Chapter, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Ronald Warwick's 'at home' where, if you were lucky (and pretty) enough, you might be photographed with Cunard's Master Mariner. And everything rounded off by wonderful, old-fashioned English service.

The whiskered old sea dog had obviously been requested to chart a ripple-free course for his BNI cruise virgins because, on Day 4 - or was it Day 5? - his midday message, delivered in the laconic tones of one who had been obliged to do it several thousand times before, was to advise us that in all his years of plying the northern Atlantic, he'd never known a more tranquil crossing.

And he was right. The sheer unadulterated opulence one feels when sitting in one of

*We particularly enjoyed being waited on hand and foot. The service was wonderful. Nothing was too much trouble and the crew were superb. Having time to relax and take advantage of everything the QM2 had to offer was the real luxury - fabulous!*

- Valerie Gunning, Wells (West Mendip) Chapter

QM2's many frothing hot tubs high on a deserted deck, sipping something suitably chilled and alcoholic served by constantly attentive waiters, whilst gazing out over hundreds of miles of deep blue duck pond and light blue skies, is simply indescribable. But, "out-of-this-world" would come close to it.

The single 'problem' with a mere week's cruise on this vast ship is that no matter how hard one tries, it is physically impossible to take in all of its attractions. And yes, they are attractions. You want to cram them all in, but you can't. So, like the child who knows he's about to forfeit his favourite toy, you become possessive, hurrying about all of the ship's 13 never-ending decks, briefly stopping off here and there, to get a taste of everything on offer. Silly really, but then who knows when we'll all get another chance of a lifetime?

Settling down in our premium balcony cabins on the final night, before the superliner's scheduled dawn rendezvous with the North American coastline, what was this strange feeling. Sorrow? Regret? Surely not. But yes, like all of my BNI colleagues we'd fallen in love, with a beautiful lady of the seas, and with the deliciously decadent lifestyle she'd given us, albeit all too briefly.

By a strange quirk of irony, just an hour off the landmark Verrazano Narrows Bridge which heralds the outer limits of New York Harbour, the heavens opened and we were awakened to a vociferous coastal thunderstorm. Easing under the bridge, up the Hudson River and past the Statue of Liberty, Manhattan's skyscrapers glowed eerily, illuminated by repeated lightning strikes. Yet, barely an hour later, as we disembarked at Pier 92, New York smiled and greeted us with

bright Spring sunshine and temperatures that soon soared to 80 degrees. A fitting end to a fantastic week!

If cruising is an acquired taste, then there are at least two dozen new BNI addicts who will be trying even harder to win a repeat trip from the next chapter building drive. And, to the scores of you unfortunate qualifiers whose names did not come out of the hat this time, I can only say: you missed a truly incredible experience!!

*Getting dressed up for the evening's endless entertainments - especially the theatre productions - was wonderful, and we especially enjoyed relaxing in the Spa and jacuzzis on the open deck! I am inspired to win the similar cruise prize next year - although I know the competition will be tough.*

- Jeremy Taylor, Worthing Chapter.



**ALL QUIET ON THE ATLANTIC FRONT:** This was the serene ocean - enjoyed by BNI's winners all the way to New York!

## Norwich's big screen performances

Many BNI members know only too well that it can be difficult explaining their business to other people – even colleagues.

That's how it was for Norwich City Chapter's Toby Wise, until he decided to invite the entire 40-strong group down to his multi-media equipment company, Snelling Business Systems, to let them see his busi-

ness in operation, and 'play' with some of the latest audio visual technology.

"I joined BNI last year and it has been very good for us, bringing in £40,000 worth of business, but I found it difficult explaining what we do to my colleagues – especially in 60 seconds – so I thought the best way would be to let them see us at work," Toby said.

Members needed little persuasion to relocate their breakfast, especially when they heard that most of the meeting would be spent sitting in deep comfortable armchairs in Snelling's audio visual theatre, watching their one-minute infomercials filmed and broadcast on huge 100-inch plasma screens.

**Contact Toby Wise  
on 01603 711 111**



*NOT YOUR TYPICAL BNI BREAKFAST: Members of Norwich's City Chapter get first hand knowledge of colleague Toby Wise's audio-visual business.*



## Conjuring a winner

**It took just a fortnight for two of our newest members to find the mutual benefits that only BNI can provide.**

Graphic designer and artist Duncan Redpath met professional magician David Faulks when both were invited to join the new Swadlincote Chapter in Derbyshire, and just two weeks later Duncan had conjured up a superb caricature for David to use in all his promotional literature.

Now David is so delighted with the result that he has spread the word around fellow Magic Circle members that they should seek out Duncan's artistic talents for their own marketing needs. "With his talent for design, he deserves to get lots of referrals, and I hope I can help by promoting his skills to fellow magicians," said David.

Both David and Duncan have already reported significant benefits from BNI membership.

**Contact Duncan on 01283 536 169 and David on 01283 219 580.**

## Givers gain all the way in Winchester

**Everyone in BNI talks about the real benefits of Giver's Gain but, in practice, how far are we prepared to go, to 'give' freely of our time and expertise to someone else, without knowing what (if any) the returns will be?**

The answer, in the case of Winchester Chapter members Emma Pirie (Education Coordinator) and Lynne Wardale (Membership Coordinator) is a classic lesson in BNI's philosophy.

Emma runs 'the wedding you want' consultancy and, earlier this year she took a stand at a large wedding exhibition. Enter Lynne, whose 'Tall Hats Catering' business had already worked on many weddings arranged by Emma. "As soon as I heard Emma would be spending the weekend on an exhibition stand, I offered to help out," said Lynne. But how does giving up her time for Emma, help Lynne's business?

Emma said: "Firstly, the more Lynne 'gives' to help me win clients, the more business I'm going to be able to give her. And, giving up her weekend to work on my stand, reinforced my opinion that Lynne is an excellent supplier, so I'm looking to give her even more business than just the leads generated from the show!"

Emma reckons she has been able to refer around £30,000 worth of catering business to Lynne, "For me, a far more valuable BNI benefit has been the new contacts I have made and the extra networking I have been able to do."



*HAPPY EVENT: Emma (pictured right) with one of her many happy wedding couples, for whom Tall Hats did the catering.*

## David's BNI progress going swimmingly

**Cheshire mortgage broker David Randall has a lot of reasons to feel pleased with his progress this year.**

Not only is his own business doing rather nicely, thanks to BNI, but he's also just launched his first chapter as an Assistant Director – and won gold, silver and bronze medals as one of the UK's best long-distance swimmers!

"I guess you could say it's been a good first half of the year," said David. "My own company, DJ Financial Solutions has benefited from BNI from the moment I joined the Brooklands/Sale Chapter four years ago, and even though I've just moved to my local Hale Eagles Chapter, I reckon we'll still earn commissions worth around £50,000 from business that comes through BNI referrals. That represents mort-

gages worth £4 million a year, so you can see why I'm enthusiastic about BNI."

So keen in fact that David recently became an assistant director for South Manchester and saw his first chapter, Bowdon Falcons, launched last month. "BNI is so popular that we're already building our fourth chapter in the area. I don't subscribe to the view that you can't have several BNI groups in close proximity. There is plenty of business to go round."

David's personal sporting triumph came in the Spring when he took part in the Great Britain Long Course Championships and surprised himself by winning Gold in the 1500 metres, a silver in the 800 and a bronze in the 400 metre events.

**Contact David on 07767 833 951**



## Alvin is the real thing at Fakenham

Members and guests attending the launch of the new Fakenham Chapter in Norfolk had a bonus ingredient when they found themselves sitting down to breakfast with rock legend Alvin Stardust – there to lend his support to the BNI philosophy.

In fact the Sixties and Seventies superstar took a whole day out of his still busy performing schedule to learn about BNI's own business success, not least through the words of his daughter, Sophie Jewry, who was the Chapter's founding inspiration and is its first Membership Co-ordinator.

Sophie, who now runs Media8, a growing graphic design and print business, told

SuccessNet: "Before I'd heard of BNI, I was lacking direction as to how to make progress with my business and it was a bit of a struggle."

"Then my partner (past Norwich City Chapter Director Dan Kelly) introduced me to BNI, and from the moment I attended the first meeting I thought it was fantastic. Initially I tried to join the Kings Lynn Chapter but my position was taken, so I decided to form a new group in Fakenham. Without Dan's help and the other core members, I couldn't have done it, but we had 19 members by launch day and, after only a few weeks, we're delighted with our progress."

Sophie's family – Dad Alvin, her mother (actress Lisa Goddard) and her step father David – also played key roles in her business regeneration. "They have been very supportive, which is why I'd hoped they could all be there to share the excitement of our chapter launch, but Mum and my step dad were stuck in France.

"Even so, I was very happy that Dad took

such an interest. The launch gave me the perfect opportunity to show him how I have turned my life around. By coming to the launch, I knew he would get a far better idea of how much I've moved on. I think he was pleasantly surprised," Sophie added.

In fact Alvin was very impressed, both by his daughter's achievements, and BNI's consolidation as the UK's most successful business networking organisation. He told members: "I have always believed that the best way to approach any business deal is to be involved with people you know and trust. BNI is built on the same concept and I wish all members of the new Fakenham Chapter every success."

**Ccontact Sophie on : 01485 529 129**

## Name change honours director

**Members of West Swindon Chapter are mourning the untimely death of their first and inspirational Chapter Director Tony Read.**

Now, as a tribute to Tony, who was killed in a motor cycle accident, his colleagues have agreed with BNI's Executive Director Paul Clegg, that their group, based in Wootton Bassett should be re-named the Read Chapter.

Paul said: "News of his death came as a terrible shock to us all. Only days earlier he had presided over a very successful visitor day and was talking enthusiastically about his plans for the Chapter's development. Tony was one of those people you could not help but like, and who left you feeling the better for having met him. Everyone in the Chapter respected and appreciated him for his commitment and generosity. He was a kind and considerate man.

"It would have been necessary to re-name the West Swindon Chapter as part of BNI's move away from geographical titles, so it was fitting that members should want to honour Tony (pictured below) by naming the group after him."



*A NEW STAR IS BORN: Fakenham Chapter's founder and Membership Co-ordinator Sophie Jewry at the group's launch, with Dad (rock star Alvin Stardust) and Chapter Director Richard Hewitt.*

## BNI is perfect therapy for Jason

**Take your chosen vocation, develop an outstanding business idea from it, and then join BNI. It's a sure formula for success, according to Jason Parlour, whose Therapy Agency is now making a big name for itself with a little help from his Reading Chapter colleagues.**

Jason had long believed that complementary therapies were widely under-utilised in promoting wellbeing, and he recognised the divide between such therapists and business clients. To fill the gap, he developed a fresh approach to bring together providers and users through his new The Therapy Agency.

"One of the biggest problems faced by solo therapists was promoting their services, while many would-be clients did not know how to find local practitioners they could trust," he said. "What we needed was a central, high-quality database of carefully chosen practitioners to bring supply and demand together."

The Agency was founded two years ago but it reached a new level when Jason joined BNI last year, tapping into the expertise of chapter colleagues, including website designer Vimal Patel, marketing expert Mike Abbott and solicitor Bill Montague who all helped develop his business into a thriving national consultancy. "Without BNI, we would have taken a lot longer to reach this stage," added Jason. (pictured left)

**Contact Jason on 0845 458 1977**



## Why Networking Works

*(And why you should leave networking events with appointments not names)*

Maximising the value of every networking meeting and event, means first identifying and evaluating our 'prospects' (people whom we think we can do business with) and then removing the barriers between ourselves and them.

There are two main obstacles preventing us from reaching prospects - physical barriers and psychological barriers. These must be overcome if prospects are to see us as solution providers rather than sales people. We also need to overcome these hurdles to ensure that we are engaging with real prospects rather than "tyre-kickers".

### Physical barriers

Prospects have a nasty habit of putting barriers in place to prevent us reaching them. They erect these to prevent outside interferences from disrupting their lives and making unwarranted demands upon their time. And they are right to do so.

Normally we generate a huge amount of activity in trying to overcome the resistance created by these barriers, through a variety of tried and tested - though often ineffective - sales and marketing techniques, including sales calls, phone calls, letters and advertising. Many of us are familiar with the more commonly used term "the numbers game". If all this sounds familiar, there is a better way: networking.

### Networking

You can overcome all physical obstruction - and speak directly to prospects - simply by inviting them to a networking event,



As every seasoned BNI member knows, networking works. That is why BNI has grown so dramatically over the past 20 years - and why thousands of UK and Irish businesses have grown as a direct result of membership. But why does this networking work so well - and how can we maximise the business potential from every networking opportunity we get. Mort Murphy, BNI's Executive Director for Ireland South and West Region, explains.

which might be a visitors' day, a business conference or expo, or indeed just lunch with a few others. Whatever their size, networking events place your prospects right there in the same room as you. So, by organising and participating in networking events, you literally transcend the barriers erected by your prospects. That is why networking works.

### Psychological barriers

Now, even though you are confident that there are 'prospects' in the same room, you don't know if they are in the market for your services. How can you find out? And, even when you do find out, how can you give them the instant confidence to accept that you are the solution provider they are looking for? How can they possibly be sure?

These two great barriers can be overcome by a single action: the introduction of a common intermediary or, what we in BNI call a referrer - someone who believes in you, and believes that you honour your promises, delivering the required solutions. In short, the referrer can give the prospect confidence in you.

That same referrer, without pressure or manipulation, can discover if prospects in the room are in the market to do business and whether they are open to meeting with you, through BNI's simple but highly effective networking process.



*FOLLOW THE BNI SYSTEM: So says Executive Director Mort Murphy, who has some practical advice on better networking.*

### 'Givers Gain' approach

The key to securing appointments is to use the Givers Gain approach. At the end of the event, when the dynamics and energy levels are high, ask guests: "Who is the one person in the room you would most like to meet?" - and arrange the resulting connections right there.

Time after time we have seen appointments secured and business flowing from this simple, practical approach. So, to those who, like the member that recently told me this method was 'pushy' and felt we were asking too much of our guests, I'd remind you of the alternative - leaving networking events with names, but no appointments.

In such cases, all people are doing is collecting business cards, perhaps followed-up with a phone call. Having gone cold by now, the prospect will say 'Call me back later. I am busy just now'. When you phone again s/he will say 'I will call you back as soon as possible'. Doesn't this sound all too familiar?

Compare this to the infinitely better scenario of leaving with appointments, arranged by our mutually respected intermediary - the referrer. He or she enquires of a prospect whether they would be "open to meeting with you during the coming week". The referrer will only do this if he/she feels it is in the prospect's interest to meet with you.

Networking works because the barriers to reaching prospects are overcome. Your prospects are right there in the room with you. Your referrer is also there working on your and the prospect's behalf. And, by using Givers Gain, you get appointments not just names.

Ask yourself: Is your networking working for you? If it isn't, you know what to do.



## Do you kiss on the first date?!

Business relations are exactly like any other – personal, friendship or family. So says Sarah Owen, Regional Director for Avon and Monmouth, BNI's fastest growing region in the UK with the highest average chapter size over the past year. Here she explains why a member's success within BNI depends largely on how effectively he or she develops strong, personal relationships with other members of the group. Concentrating both on quantity and quality of members will, she says, result in both quality and quantity referrals.

### "It depends...."

So, would you kiss on a first date? Well it depends! Some of you may have met your partners when your eyes met across a crowded room. It's a common way for people to meet but, to stay married to them for the next 35 years is all in the follow up work! We all know that this is the number one characteristic of a master networker! In a business context, how fast you get a return on investment depends on many complex things which are personal to us all as individuals.

### Get rich quick?

We hear consistently that our membership is not a get rich quick scheme? But can it be? Yes. Is it always? No! Business relationships are just relationships and they work in the same way as all other relationships. Some develop faster than others! Any relationship I have ever damaged or destroyed was the result of something I did or didn't do.

Remember that everyone you meet has three invisible words written on their foreheads – Handle with Care. **A clear understanding of some facts may help:**

- Know what type of person you are.
- Know what type of person you are with.
- Understand that people move at different speeds.

### Time

Time affects our relationships and it's not only your perception of time that counts. It is the other person's too. It will take us longer to trust some people, dependent upon our previous experience, the profession and the quality of the education we receive. And, all the time in the world will become irrelevant if there is one ingredient missing: trust.

### Trust

Trust can build quickly. I asked Roger Hughes, the Chairman of Imperial Business

Interiors (a member of Bristol's Compton Chapter) how he gets potential clients to trust him early in the relationship. His response was simple. "I ask the person to trust me!" He went on to explain that there are three types of people he encounters during an office refurbishment or new design project – a high value business in which the average project costs around £150,000.

"Some 25% of clients know what budget they have and tell me, a further 25% have no idea, and the other half know what budget they have, but won't tell me. This makes my life and theirs complicated! Early on in the process I ask for the person's trust. If I have been recommended by someone they trust this is easier; if this is not the case, I have to rely on my own credibility of 30 years experience, a track record of great projects, I am nice, up front and honest."

We can use our own system of measurement to decide if we trust someone. How someone conducts themselves, how much their product or service costs, their professionalism and whether or not we like them can all contribute to our ability or desire to recommend them.

The mind works in mysterious ways, we have to like them too. How many times have you heard the name of a new baby and



SARAH OWEN: Developing sound business relationships is no different to building strong personal relationships.

instantly disliked it because you once met someone horrible with that name?! We must keep ourselves in check that the decisions we make are rational.

### Expectation

In the same way that our definitions of time and trust vary, we also have different expectations too. Look at how not sharing expectations can contribute to the success or failure of a relationship. What if I was expecting a kiss on the first date and it didn't happen? Conversely what if I absolutely did not feel that this was appropriate? Either way I could have just missed out on a life long happy marriage.

### Complex but Simple!

I believe that the most enjoyable and most cost effective way of growing our businesses is to do so by word of mouth marketing, inside and outside of BNI. Just like all relationships, although complex it can be really simple!

With a better understanding of how time, trust and expectation can impact on our relationships in business there will be no need to try new techniques at every turn. We have a choice, we can just keep doing the simple things which, done consistently over a period of time, will result in making more money with our values intact - or we can make it more complicated!

**Contact Sarah on 08700 150 4661 or email her at: sarahowen@bni.com**



CATCH THEM YOUNG: Sarah's five year old son Nicholas gets an early introduction to the BNI principles of networking.

## Building a great and successful chapter



**By Danny Davey,  
Chapter Director, Ipswich  
Cobbold Chapter**

**What makes a good Chapter? The great British breakfast? A venue on the river? Maybe a happy-go-lucky Leadership Team?**

I would liken the creation of a good, strong chapter to building a jigsaw, where it is important to first get all the edge pieces in place, because this gives us a good base from which to complete all the details. Your Leadership Team must not be weak or "have bits missing."

Next, it is important to check that all the pieces are there, and that they are a proper part of the puzzle. If members are regularly absent or do not fit the positive attitude of your chapter, it may well be that the you are better off without them.

A small but strong and motivated chapter is worth ten large weak ones. Remember that each piece of a jigsaw will only fit in one particular spot and it may be helpful to obtain some help in sorting

out the pieces. Involve ALL your members by giving them a role to help run things smoothly, from being responsible for stationery to taking money on the door. This will keep everyone actively involved and at the same time help raise members' profiles within the group. In turn, this will generate greater confidence for them and eventually result in more referrals.

A jigsaw needs to be built on a suitable surface. In the case of a BNI chapter this means being based in the right venue, which should present a professional appearance, be easily accessible, and have plenty of space for parking. And do not over-concentrate on the breakfast element. For example, during the 60-second presentations, it is not a priority to be worried about finding the salt, or getting yourself another cup of coffee, but rather



*PIECES OF THE JIGSAW: Members of Ipswich Cobbold Chapter are all crucial elements that make up a whole vibrant networking group, says Chapter Director Danny Davey (kneeling, right)*

to concentrate on each speaker.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the right piece of the jigsaw, no matter how hard you look, which is why it is beneficial for all your members to attend several BNI workshops. Not only does this help you to see more clearly, it also shows how the missing "pieces" can affect your chapter's overall performance.

Rest assured, once all the pieces fit together properly, the whole wonderful picture WILL emerge.

**Danny Davey can be contacted on  
01473 255 970 or 07939 877 384.**

## Recognising – and rewarding - extra effort

**By Danny Kelly, Immediate Past Chapter Director of Norwich City**

I have been a member of the Norwich City Chapter for four years and, while we have always been a strong group in terms of the quality and quantity of referrals passed amongst our members, I always felt it would be a good idea to introduce a way of recognising the efforts of those who have worked particularly hard to gain a referral or go out

of their way to help another member within the chapter!

The opportunity to do something about this came during my recent term as Chapter Director – and it arose from something that had evolved over a period of many months. During my time in the Chapter, I had started to sign off my 60-second and 10-minute presentations with a strap line for my business, saying... "So for signs and print, who's the man?" - and the whole chapter would, embarrassingly, with one accord would shout back, "Dan's the man!"

From this, came an idea for creating the weekly DAN Award which has seen individual members modestly rewarded for their extra efforts by Chapter colleagues.

During my six months in office, I encouraged all Chapter members to nominate weekly those people who they felt were deserving of recognition for a particularly good referral or service, and then the individual with the most nominations would receive – to great applause - the Dynamic Active Networker Award, an Oscar-style statue which, over the months, came to mean something quite special.

I am a great believer in encouragement, recognition and giving thanks for things well done, so it has been a real privilege to be able to present the weekly DAN Award to members of the Norwich City Chapter, and I am delighted that my successor Ian Fitch is continuing the theme with the IAN Award.

**Dan Kelly can be contacted on 01603 893 497.**



*HIGHLY MOTIVATED: Norwich City member Michael Lockwood (left) receives the Chapter's coveted DAN Trophy from its creator, past Chapter Director Danny Kelly.*



## Midlands members are Charlie's 'Angels'



*BRAVE, OR FOOLISH? Great Barr Chapter Treasurer Charlie Robinson isn't sure, after pledging to raise £1 million for charity.*

**Birmingham's Great Barr Chapter Treasurer Charlie Robinson has embarked on the toughest challenge of her life, after pledging to raise £1 MILLION within two years, to provide a conductive education centre in the region for children with cerebral palsy and other genetic disorders.**

She has been made a "fixer" for Rainbow House, a national charity whose aim is to vastly improve the quality of life for youngsters damaged by genetic disorders, and their families. Charlie, a former leisure centre marketing boss, was sought out by the Lancashire-based charity after it heard of her networking skills and, barely four months into her new 'role' she has had to abandon her own thriving health and nutrition business to concentrate full time on fund-raising.

Naturally, she wasted no time in persuading BNI colleagues across the West Midlands to help in her bid, and happily members have responded with huge enthusiasm and generosity.

"I'd hoped that the spirit of giver's gain would prevail but a true example of the power of BNI is that in addition to substantial support from my own chapter colleagues, I have had many offers of help from members in the

Bournville, Cannock, Stone, Lichfield, Tamworth, Birmingham Victoria and St. Philips Chapters," she said.

"I've been amazed by their willingness to get involved, despite having such busy lives. My chapter's car leasing specialist ran a big promotion at the NEC raising cash for the charity, our garden designer and personal trainer are both offering free services in return for donations, and our web designer, telecoms and cleaning supplies companies, have all pledged a percentage of their new business profits or donations for every new order."

Charlie added: "After receiving a phone call asking for my help, I visited the existing Rainbow House centre in Chorley and was totally amazed by what this charity does. When I watched a child take his first step at the age of five and saw the delight on his face, I knew I had to get involved. Driving back to Birmingham, I wasn't sure whether my offer was brave or just stupid, but one thing is certain: without being a member of such a fantastic networking organisation I would never have even considered taking on the challenge."

***If you can help Charlie's bold fund-raising effort, call her on 07939 279129 or 01543 682070, or email her at: [charlie.robinson2@btopenworld.com](mailto:charlie.robinson2@btopenworld.com)***

## Nexus 'Dance Chart' is No. 1 for charity

**Members of the Nexus Chapter which meets at Eaglesham just south of Glasgow, have come up with a novel idea to boost fund raising for their nominated charity, Cancer Research.**

While many chapters chart their members' external one-to-one meetings with the help of the 'dance card', Nexus tracks its 'one-on-one' meetings with a simple, enlarged Excel spreadsheet, providing a very visible indication of the level of 'dance' activity. The chart is easy to update and tracks home and away one-on-ones, allowing both arranged and completed dances to be recorded. The number of new dances that take place are reported every week.

Now, to help their charity and in the true spirit of giver's gain, Nexus is offering a copy of its Dance Chart to all other chapters in the UK, in return for a charitable donation of £9.99.

Chapter Director, Charlie Gallagher said: "We hope that by offering the ready-made chart in return for a nominal donation, other chapters will be encouraged to help themselves and boost our charity fund raising. There is a direct correlation between referrals and the level of one-on-one activity, and our chart enables us to easily monitor this."

Copies of the chart in Excel file format can be obtained by calling Doris Robertson on 01355 230099, or sending an e-mail to [doris.robertson@concept.co.uk](mailto:doris.robertson@concept.co.uk). Cheques for £9.99 should be made out to Nexus and sent to Doris Robertson, Concept Consulting, Walter Scott House, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G74 4AA.

## Loughton's keys to business spirit!

Members of Loughton's Spirit in Business Chapter, Essex, are certainly living up to their name, by supporting a £1million charity appeal to provide new premises for pre-school children with special needs and their families.

It began when Chapter member Graham Playle from Creative Business Services was asked by colleague, charity fundraiser Christine Baker, to create a special design for the First

Step charity appeal which now appears on posters, folders, leaflets and stationery.

Now, thanks to his work, the unusual design features on key rings - in the form of a token - which are used to lock and unlock supermarket trolleys and lockers in the area. Meanwhile, his chapter colleagues are busy selling key rings that also sport the charity's distinctive logo, and Essex members will find

these being sold in retail and service businesses around the county.

First Step, based in the London Borough of Havering, works with special needs youngsters and has found larger premises, which means raising £1million to re-fit the building. "It is a fantastic charity and we are all pleased to support it in this way" said Graham.



*THE KEYS TO SUCCESS: Loughton Chapter members with the keys they are selling to help raise funds for the First Step Charity Appeal in Havering.*

## No April Fool as Forest goes shopping!

When it was suggested that members of Forest Chapter switch from their usual meeting venue at Nottingham Forest's football ground to the middle of the city's main shopping mall, more than a few eyebrows were raised – not least by catering staff who couldn't imagine dozens of business people sitting down to breakfast in a shopping precinct at 7am!

The fact that the venue switch was to take place on All Fools Day did not help to

convince sceptics either – but in the event, the Chapter's transfer to the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre proved a huge success.

The one-off shift was agreed so that the Chapter could support several of its members who were participating in a wedding exhibition. Retiring Chapter Director Carl Oakland said: "Even with only half an hour to go before our meeting started, the catering staff still didn't believe that 40 of us wanted breakfast in the middle of the shopping precinct.



WE CAN'T GO ON MEETING LIKE THIS!: Or can we? Members of Nottingham Forest Chapter at their 'new' shopping mall venue.

## Cheeky referral greets launch of BNI's most 'noble' chapter

Is there any less likely pair to have done business with members of Staffordshire's newly formed Paget Chapter than the chart-topping duo, The Cheeky Girls?

The Transylvanian pop twins became the subject of a referral passed by Linda Jones of PR firm Passionate Media to her namesake Linda Hill from venue and events management experts Meriden Associates at the first meeting of the recently launched group, which meets at Penkridge's Chase Golf Club in Staffordshire.

Linda Jones explained: "One of our clients holds an annual event and this year it is being held locally with the Cheeky Girls taking part. I knew they would want to spend the night in

the comfort to which they have grown accustomed so I asked Meriden, who had already given the charity invaluable advice on staging the event, to find suitably prestigious accommodation for them."

Linda Hill commented: "It was great to get such a bizarre referral but we had to make our colleagues promise not to break into a chorus of 'Touch My Bum' (The Cheeky



A ROYAL COMMAND PERFORMANCE: Members of the newly launched Paget Chapter in Penkridge, Staffordshire, decided to dress in period costume, in recognition of their noble connections.

Girls top-ten hit) when we entered the room." Meanwhile, the entire chapter has reason to feel rather special, having taken its name from royal inspiration! In Tudor times, 16th century nobleman Sir William Paget was sent by King Henry VIII, to mine the area's mineral resources, and he acquired Cannock Chase at the Church's expense. Assistant Director Tracy Pound said: "We wanted a name that would reflect our rich heritage. Sir William was a pioneer who maximised the use of the Chase, and we are doing the same by passing business to the area's modern day entrepreneurs."



SuccessNet is published quarterly and distributed free of charge by BNI to all members. We are delighted that with each successive edition, we receive more and more of your emails, letters and calls, asking us to include your news or picture item in the newsletter.

However, the advent of electronic mail is causing us a real headache, because more than half the emails we receive don't contain any contact details, other than the sender's email address. Since not everyone checks their email accounts frequently, this leads to considerable delays and extra work in following up your submissions.

## You & SuccessNet

If you want your item to be considered for inclusion in SuccessNet, make sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and your address! But note that, faced with up to 200 editorial contributions per issue, we cannot squeeze all of them into our 16-page publication. Some stories may be held over for a later edition, but it means some of your contributions may never see the light of day. Please don't be deterred from sending in your news and views because we DO want to hear from you.

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**Printed by:** Tony Batkin, Alpine Press. Tel: 01923 269777. Copyright © BNI 2004. All rights reserved.