

The chairman writes *Spring is here*



Although the Meteorological Office classes the first day of spring as 1st March, saying March, April and May are regarded as the spring months, traditionally spring has started on the night of 20th/21st March. Whatever date you accept, spring is here. Certainly the weather I am looking out at while I write this is very spring like. I am sure that I am not alone in considering spring as the time to review what I am doing. Should I have a fresh start in some way?

Of the forty five definitions of spring in dictionary.com I pick just two:- "a source or fountainhead of something: a spring of inspiration."

"the first stage and freshest period: the spring of life"

Time for a fresh start maybe, a new beginning.

March 6th (officially spring if you believe the met office) saw the start of a new club year. First of all I would like to express my sincere thanks for your support in re-electing me as your chairman. I will certainly do my best, with the support of the committee and the membership in general, to ensure that we have yet another successful year.

What a start we had to the year! Chris Maguire, editor of the Chorley and Leyland Guardians, gave us a very informative and extremely entertaining evening. We must not only thank Chris very much for his presentation but also congratulate him on what he has and continues to achieve at the Guardian, which seems to go from strength to strength. Coincidentally starting his job during spring, Chris was prepared to change some of the long established aspects of the Guardian – a spring clean. This takes bravery and determination but the results speak for themselves.

May I just mention at this point the forthcoming Chorley and Leyland Guardian campaign Mary's Prayer? Mary's Prayer will be featured for several months and will raise much needed funds for local cancer charities. Chris Maguire is looking for local businesses and individuals

Dates for your Diary

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|---------|---|
| Apr 3rd | Alan Coventry of ACEntertainments,
Corporate Entertainments |
| May 1st | Eamonn Watson of The Best of Preston,
Google Search Optimisation |

Committee Contacts 2007

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to become involved in this campaign and your involvement will be greatly appreciated. If you feel that you can help in any way please contact Chris directly or let me know and I will pass on your interest.

Considering our own businesses for a moment, I firmly believe that anyone who feels that there is no room for improvement in their business, no need to change, is likely to find that the competition overtakes them at some time in the not too distant future. This spring take the opportunity to spring clean your business. Don't forget the offer from Efficiency in Business (www.EinB.org.uk) of up to 3 hours free accountancy and IT advice for small and medium sized enterprises.

Last November we made a very interesting visit to Radio Lancashire. During this new club year we would again like to include one or two outside visits. Does anyone have any ideas? Does anyone have any useful contacts? Please let us know.

Also we are always delighted to receive any suggestions for speakers. If you know of anyone who would be able and willing to give an interesting presentation at one of our club meetings again please let us know.

Our first speaker of the new year, as mentioned above, was a tremendous success and has set a high standard for others to follow. I have no doubt that the speaker at our April meeting, Alan Coventry of AC Entertainments, will continue this high standard. So please do make every effort to join us on Tuesday 3rd April, 8pm at Lancashire College. If you are a member who has not attended one of our meetings for some time please do come along, let it be your new thing for spring. You will be made most welcome and will experience a very enjoyable evening.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our next meeting.



Left: Chairman David Kevill with Chris Maguire, Editor of the Chorley & Leyland Guardians at our March meeting.

Below: March prize winners



NEWSLETTER

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April 2007

THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 3rd April

7.45pm for 8pm @ Lancashire College, Southport Road, Chorley

Prepare to be entertained as Alan Coventry shows us some of his professional entertainment skills and advises how to bring a little magic to your marketing. Alan of ACEntertainments has been sprinkling a little magic into people's lives by providing a range of entertainment packages for over 25 years. Suitable for all ages at any event or celebration with: - Magic / Fun & Fund Raising Casinos & Race Nights. Each entertainment is tailored to suit the budget available & the age group present. Ace is the name and entertaining is his game.

We will also have a short presentation from Chris Page of Connexions. Chris will show he can get the young staff of businesses on free accredited training, therefore increasing retention and efficiency of staff. Also how Connexions provide mentoring to run alongside the training to help the young people develop themselves. This can revolve around any aspect they need to improve on such as motivation, time management etc. They also offer a recruitment service and can place adverts for vacancies free and help business recruit young people. The service offered is Government funded and totally free!

10 ways to improve your cash flow
- by Business Link

Successful ventures are built upon healthy cashflow. This is where money entering the business is greater than money paid out. If you want to improve your cashflow, here are some simple measures to consider:

- 1. Take a good look at your costs. Finding ways to reduce your outgoings will quickly improve your cashflow. Identify areas where you are paying out unnecessarily. For example, you might be posting letters when emailing would be cheaper. Only buy things if there is a sound business reason for doing so.*
- 2. Eliminate waste and root out inefficiency. Deal with areas of your business where you aren't getting maximum value for money.*
- 3. Exercise better stock control. Of course you have to weigh up such things as discounts for bulk buying, but aim to keep just enough stock to service your customers' needs. To free up capital, sell off old or obsolete stock at a reduced price.*
- 4. Shop around for better deals than the ones you're getting from your current suppliers. Apply this to everything you buy or lease - from machinery and materials to utilities and professional service charges. However, before you change suppliers you need to be sure you'll receive the same quality (or better).*
- 5. Issue invoices promptly and charge interest on late payments. This will encourage all customers to pay their bills on time.*
- 6. Ask your customers for a deposit or part-payment up front to cover sums you will have to pay your suppliers. Having to pay these before you've been paid can put a considerable strain on your business.*
- 7. Offer early-payment incentives such as discounts to those who pay early. Don't offer too much (in fact, try to offer free products rather than money off). The trick is to offer just enough to make it worth the customer's while.*
- 8. Use the services of a debt factor. Factors will advance you up to 85 per cent of the value of each invoice before your customer pays and the remainder - less a charge - when full payment is received. Factors will also chase customers for payment.*
- 9. Consider putting your prices up. This will boost turnover straightaway, but you need to make sure it will not put some customers off. Knowledge of your market will help you decide whether a price increase is a good idea.*
- 10. Stop doing business with bad or slow payers. Instead of spending time and money chasing money from such customers, you could be finding new customers who pay their bills on time.*

Noticeboard...

Members news, special offers and members discounts, items for sale and items wanted. Just email through your details, & a logo.

Meeting Secretary Vacancy

Your club is in need of a Meetings Secretary, can you help please? We are looking for an organised individual who can undertake the following tasks:-

- Maintain a diary of speakers.
- Contact speakers prior to meetings to issue gentle reminders and ascertain their requirements.
- Book meeting rooms with Lancashire College and other venues if and when appropriate.
- Maintain the meeting box to ensure that adequate stocks of visitor forms, new members application forms etc., are always available.
- Prepare the meeting room on club nights. This will involve being present a short time in advance of meeting start times. A substitute should be arranged if this is not possible on any occasion.

These tasks should only involve a small amount of time but we feel that a Meeting Secretary would greatly improve the running of our meeting nights and the club in general. We operate an open and informal committee and any new members are always made most welcome. Please let myself (david@kevell.co.uk) or any committee member know if you are able to help us.

For further business guidance and advice visit
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>