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# Newsletter

March 2003

[www.businessclub.uk.com](http://www.businessclub.uk.com)

CHORLEY  
& SOUTH  
RIBBLE

BUSINESS  
CLUB

COMING SOON

Tuesday 1st April 2003

### *A different sort of Lancashire Night*

Jim Potts Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards Officer. Club members do their best to keep each other up to date with the latest scams, but at April's meeting we are going one better, the speaker will be Jim Potts from Lancashire County Council's Trading Standards Office and his topic will be Fraud and Small Business.

Those members who attend South Ribble's Business Forum will be familiar with Jim's expertise; he is a mine of useful information. Come along and pick his brains.

ALSO on 1st April come along and "gather rosebuds whilst you may". Keith Molyneaux from the Lancashire County Council's Rosebud Fund. Spring is coming, the gardens are beginning to come back to life and so is the County Council business support scheme the Lancashire Rosebud Fund.

Keith Molyneaux, the Investment Manager from Enterprise Ventures, is to give a brief presentation outlining what the fund can do for small and medium sized businesses in Lancashire. The Rosebud Fund was established in 1986 and during that time has invested £3million in more than 250 enterprises. There are no grants but they can offer alternative form of finance for small and medium sized businesses in Lancashire.

Tuesday 6th May 2003

### *"Discover the Secrets of Working the Room"*

Will Kintish, a professional trainer, is coming along to help us hone our networking skills. Some people find no problem in chatting to strangers at meetings – others just want to hide in the corner. Whichever one you are we are assured you'll leave the Club meeting having learnt a number of secrets to improve your technique or to help you destroy all those fears.

For more information visit [www.kintish.co.uk](http://www.kintish.co.uk)

## Noticeboard...

*Members news, special offers and members discounts, items for sale and items wanted. Just email me the details, your email and a logo.*

## AD-OPTIONS!

Ad-Options will offer between 10% and 20% off all promotional goods ordered by fellow members until further notice.

Artwork, origination and carriage charged at cost if required. 01772 435010.

Email [steve@ad-options.co.uk](mailto:steve@ad-options.co.uk)

# THE NEXT MEETING

T U E S D A Y

4th March

AGM & Motivated Mind

7.45 for 8pm

Please don't let three little letters AGM put you off – we promise it will be quick and painless. We are always looking for new committee members but we won't twist anyone's arm.

### Motivated Mind

Club member Jeff Benson is back by popular request.

In December Jeff was one of the Club's members who took part in our member's presentation evening, and he enlightened us on how to "Motivate our Minds" and to direct this skill into running our businesses. We could have listened to him for much longer but our Chairman for the evening, John Thompson, in a true engineer'manner, ruled the proceedings with a rod of iron and a stopwatch. This left us wanting more.

Come along on Tuesday and find out more. Usual place usual time.

Courtesy of [www.topwebsite.co.uk](http://www.topwebsite.co.uk) Simon Conroy, Web Site Promotion Services.

The number of web site design companies is growing as quick as the Internet itself as everyone and their dog with a book and a copy of Frontpage is cobbling together web sites and charging huge fees for half a job. So how do you avoid the coding cowboys and find your own web site wizard? Our top 10 tips for designing your web site will, I hope, help you to achieve your online ambitions.

- 1 Layout and design should be consistent throughout the site with navigation in the same positions on each page. Typefaces and effects such as bullet points should be the same throughout. If you use Bold page titles do so on every page.
- 2 Make the text easy to read, keep it aligned left not centred, not too small. All capitalized text is like shouting and harder to read than lower case text. Black text on a white background is easier than white text on a dark background. Web Site usability advice is available at [www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com)
- 3 Make all hyperlinks easy to identify. If they are not in the standard red and blue then give them emphasis using bold, underlines or larger font size. Ensure graphic links are clearly labeled. Ease of use is more important than using the latest flashy effects.
- 4 A quick download is crucial. Avoid using the latest cool animated effect as many users are slow to accept new developments. Users won't wait for large image files or animations to load, they just click on the next web site and are lost. Keep the programming code lean by hand editing out unnecessary code and optimise images for speedier loading using image compression software such as [www.xat.com](http://www.xat.com)
- 5 Have an opt-in e-mail mailing list and contact the people on it regularly. Having a form which allows people to request you to contact them with special offers allows you to build your potential customer database and e-mail them to reinforce your brand and inform them of special offers and new developments.
- 6 Make it easy for people to find your web site. Ask other related web sites to link to yours and link back to theirs. Visitors following links are likely to be looking for exactly what you are selling and the links help you achieve a higher position on many search engines. Get listed in directories and on search engines. Use Meta Tags to target each page of the site at the content of that page and employ a specialist search engine consultant alongside your web site designer. Find information about developing a search engine friendly web site at [www.topwebsite.co.uk](http://www.topwebsite.co.uk)
- 7 Check how the site looks on different computers, in different screen resolutions, different colour settings and different browsers. Netscape browser users won't be able to see the site at all if the html code has errors. Check your web site for errors and problems at [www.netmechanic.com](http://www.netmechanic.com)
- 8 Use your server logs to identify your visitors habits, how they find your site and what browser and screen resolutions they use. Then fine tune your web site to match your visitor profile. Look at which pages they visit most and arrange the web site to place your best offers where they will be seen most. Log analysis software is available at [www.analog.cx](http://www.analog.cx)
- 9 Content is King so give visitors a reason to come back to the web site. Forums create a community feel to the site while industry news and independent information gives users a reason to bookmark your web site. Establishing your site as a hub of free information reinforces your reputation as an expert in your subject. Free news feeds are available at [www.moreover.com](http://www.moreover.com)
- 10 Offer a downloadable e-catalogue from your web site. This will sit on users computer desktop ready for when they want to purchase your products. Software from [www.webcompiler.com](http://www.webcompiler.com) does this job admirably. They may not purchase today but your e-catalogue will reinforce your brand everytime they look at their computer.

With the explosion of Internet use and the opportunities this presents those businesses which embrace the web now will be the ones who reap the rewards of their foresight in the months and years to come.

Former Business Club Member David Batty has put together a special seminar focusing on e-business for small to medium size companies. Through sponsorship he is able to offer Business Club Members a special rate of £25, including lunch, for this full day event. Call David on 01772 454328 or check the website [www.sectorsoftware.co.uk](http://www.sectorsoftware.co.uk)

E-Business Seminar at Chorley, Lancashire  
4th of March 2003

Many interesting events are held 'down south' in Birmingham or London, and are often priced at hundreds of pounds per person per day. Often owners of small businesses are put off attending these events when they have to pay not only the delegate fee, but also their travel and accommodation expenses.

To address this problem and provide a quality local event, Sector Software are hosting an e-business seminar in Lancashire on the 4th of March 2003.

This one day event which is aimed at individuals and directors of small businesses features speakers from major companies like Microsoft, British Telecom, Cisco, Intel, and Hewlett Packard as well as organisations like UK Online.

If you are a small to medium business or an individual who would like to find out how to use the Internet to promote or enhance your business, find new customers, and keep them, then book your place at this one off event.

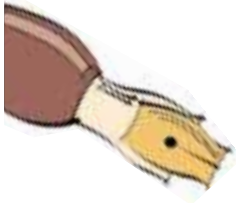
## JUST for Laughs

Did you hear about the meeting back in the 80's addressed by a guru from IBM. He was asked ... "How soon do you consider we will see the paperless office?"  
The reply  
"I feel confident that it will not be before we have a paperless loo!"

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death last week of Joe Maddox the man who invented the Hokey Cokey in the early 1900's. Joe was a great man and a joker till the last.

The funeral attendants were very respectful and took great care when putting Joe's body into the coffin.

They put his left leg in ... and then it all seemed to go haywire!



## The Chairman writes...

It doesn't seem long since Graham Archer was Chairman of the club but this March it will be three years. When I took over the Club chair, my own company was under performing, my wife Ann was contemplating looking for work outside the business and I was still deciding what direction we would take following the loss of a major contract with BT.

Now we have a part-time member of staff, both our teenage boys chip into help out and turnover has all but doubled. The Business Club has undoubtedly played a part in our success. It has sharpened my own commercial thinking, led to many introductions I would not otherwise



have had and given me many good friends I can turn to for advice and to test new ideas. The success now means that I will have to take a break from my position as Chairman and the coming AGM will hopefully open the door as widely for someone else, as it did for me.



I have many happy memories (and digital photos) of my three years in office. I particularly recall three very enjoyable Christmas dinners, the visit of the BBC

Working Lunch programme and the night Barn Owl Bill

brought his birds to Lancashire College. Thanks to all members who have largely been very friendly, very helpful and very forgiving when names have escaped me! Whoever may take over, I will continue to...

...see you at Lancashire College.



**"The Young & the Foolish"** represented the Business Club at the **Chorley Lions Swimathon** on Sat 15th Feb at All Season Leisure Centre. The team swam 52 laps & raised a grand total of **£510.50** - thanks to everyone who helped us. 30% of this amount (£153.15) will go to the charity of our choice. In this case Red Bank Scout Group who have problems with their meeting hut. Therein lies a story - only one member of the Business Club was actually swimming on the day! Thanks very much to Graham Archer. I was flowing profusely with a cold & so co-opted my wife. Keith had to be away on business so we co-opted a friend Chris. Val Burt kindly volunteered her husband, Ian, to swim as she does not like the water (or perhaps the other way around?) Graham recruited two of his grandchildren, Elizabeth & Richard, to swim. They are involved with the Red Bank Scouts & we are very pleased to support them in return.

We all enjoyed the event on the day. Thanks to everyone who contributed in any way. John T

## Local Business Nominated for Award

Chorley & South Ribble Business Club member Brown & Lonsdale Chartered Accountants, based in Leyland, have been nominated as a finalist in the prestigious **Be Inspired Business Awards 2003** for the Westinghouse Business in the Community Award.

Christine Brown wearing her Brown & Lonsdale marketing hat said, "We are delighted to have been selected for the shortlist. The competition was open to all organisations operating in the North & West Lancashire so to have reached the final is a great achievement for a small company. We firmly believe you only get out of business life what you put in, so it is rewarding for our contribution to our local community to be recognised in this manner".

To enter the competition the Community Award businesses were required to show commitment to one or more of the following areas:

Activities undertaken to promote the link between the organisation and the community in which it operates  
Close links with the education sector  
Policies that promote employee welfare in the workplace  
Excellence in the

management of safety and environmental matters.

Christine went on to say, "We were able to show commitment to all the areas, though, being an office the Health & Safety aspect is not really comparable to that of a manufacturing company. Then again our accident book, covering nearly fifteen years, only has one very minor entry."

The competition is being run by Business Link North & Western Lancashire and the Learning & Skills Council Lancashire in association with the Evening Post, and the next stage in the judging process is for each of the short listed companies entries to be considered in depth by both the organisers and sponsors.

The four finalists for the Westinghouse Business in the Community Award are:

Brown & Lonsdale Chartered Accountants, Leyland  
Leisure Parcs Blackpool  
Wyre Housing Association, Poulton le Fylde  
Farmer Parrs Animal World, Fleetwood.

The name of the winner of the Westinghouse Business in the Community Award will be announced at a high profile awards ceremony on Friday March 21st at the Park Hall Hotel, Charnock Richard, Chorley.

Clive Memmott, chief executive of Business Link North & Western Lancashire said, "To be short listed as a nominee in the Be Inspired Business Awards is a major achievement. "I wish all nominees good luck in the final stage of judging and look forward to an exciting Awards Ceremony when the winning companies will be announced".

Where did she first hear about this competition? Through Business Club of course! Sue Watkinson of Preston Business Venture dropped off leaflets for display.

## Dates for your Diary

Mar

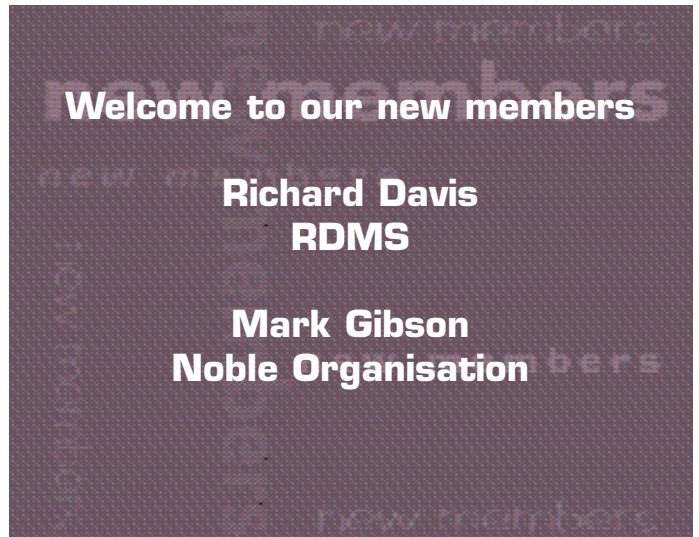
### This month

**4th:** Club meeting - AGM & Jeff Benson Motivated Mind A more detailed talk on "Change your thinking and change the results in your life and work."

### Future Events

1st Apr: Jim Potts - Trading Standards  
"Fraud Update"

6th May: Will Kintish - Trainer  
"Discover the secret of Working the room"



## At the last meeting



How does completing a 30 piece children's jigsaw improve your customer service. All those who saw Mary Gaskell's entertaining presentation last month will know. Business Club broadens your mind.



(Right)  
February prize winners Phil Lancaster and Allen Leaver - If you want to be a winner, come to the March meeting.



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