

SWS... **BEST NEWS**

Oh, what a year!



Andrew Sweeney

When I look back at 2016 I realise that we have experienced history in the making and the world is likely to be a different place as a result. Firstly, the unexpected outcome of the Brexit vote leading to David Cameron's resignation and Theresa May's appointment and in the US, Donald Trump defied the odds to be voted in as President Elect.

Closer to home, in a fairytale ending, Leicester City clinched the league title with odds of 5000 -1! Who would have thought it? The UK Olympic team had their best ever performance coming second in the medals table with some new world records and personal bests – Nick Skelton won the showjumping at the age of 58 – the second oldest Briton ever to win a gold medal. England won the 6 nations cup, Andy Murray took the Wimbledon trophy and went on to become the World's Number 1 tennis player. Of course, we have had our own success - celebrating 25 years in business! To mark the occasion we had a memorable party that many of you shared. I will certainly never forget introducing Jasper Carrot to the stage whilst balancing on a broken ankle!

For the Group it has also been a great year with turnover hitting £350M and numerous branch openings including Cambridge, Chelmsford, Barnsley and Ashford. Next year we plan to open around six new branches including Darlington and Glasgow.

In this, our final edition of SWS Best News for 2016, we continue to reflect on the hard work and events that make our business what it is and the individuals that shape its culture and

character. We also focus on some of the issues we face in our industry and what measures are being taken to improve people's working lives. Our reputation in our market sectors continues to attract motivated and talented people who are making their mark on our future. As we expand as a business community this creates more opportunities for career progression and change, so please keep a eye on internal vacancies if you are looking for a fresh challenge in 2017.

Your remarkable fundraising efforts for Fisher House are sadly coming to an end, however, we can reflect on the creativity and fun that has been central to making the initiative a great success. Just to remind you, Fisher House is a 'home away from home' for military patients and their loved ones at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEHB) that opened in April 2013. Since then, it has catered for over 1,500 people including patients and their parents, partners and children. This equates to 8,000 nights of accommodation for people ranging in age from one month to 94 years! Again, I would like to thank you all for your enthusiasm and generosity. It will make a positive difference to people's lives.

On behalf of all the directors, I would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for next year.

Andrew Sweeney
Chief Executive



NEXT ISSUE...

Could you please contact Jan Blann if you have any topics for inclusion in the next issue of Best News or with subjects for future Press Releases.

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One-stop-shop boosts FleetMaster Training demand

Since The Best Connection and FleetMaster joined forces to spread the word about the benefits of a one stop shop for recruitment and training, the outcome has been a win-win for all concerned. "The Best Connection and FleetMaster can now offer a training portfolio of over 90 products and services," commented Darren Ainge, TBC's Director.

"There is a large demand from our customers for high-quality training. In the short time since training has been included as a service accessible through The Best Connection, the feedback has been very encouraging. Customers that have taken advantage of the service have welcomed a 'one stop shop' that includes additional training services as this removes the need for multiple suppliers across the UK and guarantees quality and consistency of service," said Jamie Boocock, Director, FleetMaster.

FleetMaster delivers value-added services to customers through an extensive portfolio of training courses and services.

"We currently offer over 90 training products and services and are accredited to deliver and certify both externally recognised qualifications and in-house certified training to meet customer-specific requirements. Working in conjunction with TBC branches, we can undertake training needs analysis. This allows TBC to offer value-added training products to its clients complemented by FleetMaster's skills and knowledge. We have over 200 highly skilled assessors, instructors and trainers across the UK and Ireland that can be deployed to support large national employers and local based employers alike," added Jamie.

As it can be costly for employers to employ trainers, this has opened the doors to outsourcing key training services, however, this isn't without its challenges as employers can find it difficult to secure a consistent service that meets their needs due to volumes, geographical locations or training type. This can result in commissioning multiple small local providers to meet

demand that can result in inconsistency in terms of quality, content and management of training activities.

For large employers that have opted to outsource training, FleetMaster provides a national support structure that addresses the need for consistency of service delivery with the bonus of centrally managed reporting.

So, where is demand coming from? There are several common areas that FleetMaster is currently being asked to support. These include mandatory DCPC, planning for the Apprenticeship Levy and supply of apprenticeships, upskilling drivers for C1, C and CE licences, FLT refresher training and manual handling, first aid and health and safety training.

If a customer requires training support, what do you do? If a customer expresses an interest in relevant training, please call the FleetMaster training team on **01924 416624**.

FleetMaster wins Fleet Safety Product Award



FleetMaster has been presented with the prestigious Fleet Safety Product Award (Road Safety) at the BRAKE Awards held at the Hilton Metropole, Birmingham. FleetMaster received the award for its contribution to reducing at-fault collisions in its customers' young driver population.

Commenting on the selection, Ellie Pearson, Professional Engagement Manager at BRAKE, said: "FleetMaster has developed a training initiative to help young, at-work drivers develop a better understanding of road safety. The scheme has produced some impressive results so we are delighted to recognise their achievement in improving at-work road safety through innovation with this accolade."

The scheme, which is the largest of its type in the UK, is delivered over a 12-month period through mentored on-the-job sessions and is focussed on developing advanced driving skills. These translate to more competent and safer drivers for an organisation. The scheme has been in operation with British Gas as part of its Young Driver Academy where it has helped to reduce the under 25 drivers group at-fault collisions by 50%, making them one of the safest age groups in the business.

"FleetMaster is focused on addressing the challenges faced by

young, inexperienced drivers in the workplace and is passionate about developing training programmes that positively influence accident rate reduction. We are very proud to have been recognised for our contribution to driver safety with this prestigious award," said Jamie Boocock, FleetMaster's Director.

The 2016 event, which attracts entrants from around the globe, was BRAKE's largest gathering with over 400 logistics professionals attending.



L to R Jamie Boocock, Fleet Director; John Boocock, Project Manager & Nicholas Boocock, Funded Director

New Faces

It's always great to welcome new people to the SWS Group. On this occasion, we have pleasure in saying hello to two new members of the Bailey Employment team in Goole; Zane Berzina and Cheryl Bishop. Here's what they have to say about themselves.

Zane Berzina joins Bailey's team

"I have always worked in customer service and spent the past three years in the recruitment industry working on an industrial desk for three agencies. My responsibilities have included liaising and developing relationships with clients, drafting advertisements and resourcing. I have a degree in small and medium business management. This knowledge has helped me to understand the clients' needs and how important it is to find the right person for the business. I enjoy working with others towards a common goal and love dealing with lots of different people and the variety of challenges that can arise from day to day. The best part of my role as a



recruitment consultant is that every day is different and challenging.

"Outside work I enjoy travelling, skiing and volunteering. The most memorable thing I learnt during my first week with BES is

that anything is possible! I am delighted to have joined the team and look forward to my new challenge."

Cheryl Bishop – from Banking to Baileys

"I have worked in banking for the past 10 years in various customer-facing roles and over this time there has been a lot of change. I felt that the emphasis was moving away from customer service so with this in mind, I decided it was time for a change. When the opportunity for the role of Administrator and Receptionist with Bailey Employment Services (BES) became available, I jumped at the chance!

"When I started work at BES it was a bit of a culture shock - but in a good way. Everyone has been very welcoming. At the bank, we had lots of regulars that came in most days and they became like an extended family and I can see that this is the same with BES. It is great to see that all the temporary workers are really looked after and everybody really believes in doing all that is possible to get the best out of everyone. I am mastering Staffplus for registering the temporary workers, bookings and submitting timesheets, although there is still a lot to learn!



"I am really looking forward to learning more about the recruitment industry and I'm already surprised at the number of people that use the agency and what a difference it makes to their lives."

Dee heads back to Thailand

Sometimes we have to say goodbye to friends and colleagues as their lives take a new direction. For Bailey Employment Services, it is a fond farewell to Dee Cheesman who has decided to move back to her beautiful homeland of Thailand.

"When I moved to the UK in 2006 it was to marry my husband who I had met in Thailand. I had previously worked for the Asia Hotel Group in Bangkok and



Dee Cheesman

held the position of Assistant Public Relations Manager so moving to the recruitment industry was a big change. During my time in the UK I have gained lots of experience and improved my language skills - mostly whilst working for Bailey Employment Services.

"I would like to thank all the people I have worked with for making me feel so welcome and passing their experience on to me and especially Michelle Oxborrow for giving me the chance to work in this industry, even though I had no previous experience.

"During my time at Baileys and then later, SWS Group, I have had the pleasure of meeting lots of people including Nick Bailey the former owner and Andrew Sweeney, both of whom have always been very kind to me. I would also like a special mention for Joan Riley who took the time and had the patience to train me in new systems for payroll.

Over the years, I have met many

temporary workers from different countries and cultures and I am proud to have helped them start a new life in this country just as I did a decade ago. In one respect, I will be very sad to leave BES but it is time to start a new chapter in my life and I am looking forward to new challenges," explained Dee.

"We would all like to say goodbye to our colleague and friend Dee who has worked with us at Bailey Employment Services for the past 10 years. Dee is returning to Thailand and we are all going to miss her greatly. Thank you for being such an integral part of our team for so many years and bringing your culture to our world," said Michelle Oxborrow, Manager BES.

Khidthung khun rŭcak kạn mả nản
(miss you long time).





MSD rebrands to Onsite Connection

Following the enormous success that the Managed Services Division (MSD) has achieved for The Best Connection, it has been decided to freshen its image with the launch of a new brand identity. The operation will now be known as **Onsite Connection**.

The Onsite Connection team, headed by Ian Russell and Scott Meredith, is responsible for all activities associated with on-site and value-added contracts,

from initial analysis to implementation, recruitment and training of onsite staff, KPI's and site auditing. This includes the evaluation and implementation of Infinity Time and Attendance and Automate plus. This year has seen some great new innovations from the team including the development of a Dashboard product that gives clients access to information from their mobile devices 24 hours a day.

Currently, the division controls 40 full on-site and over 60 value-added site customers across the UK with many more planned for 2017.

We are looking forward to profiling members of the team in a future issue of SWS Best News, but for now, we would like to wish the team a massive good luck for the future growth and development of Onsite Connection.



L to R: Ian Russell, Faye Harrison, Mat Filipiak, Chris Willington, Gabriel Sirghie, Tom Clarke, Carly Meads, Alex Dirman, Curtis Coble, Maniel Bains, Lee Nash & Scott Meredith

TBC wins Homebase Swindon contract



After much hard work and relationship building, TBC has secured a new contract to provide temporary workers for Homebase at its Swindon depot. Around 150 warehousing workers will be supplied across a 3-shift system with the day to day responsibility for this provision falling to TBC consultant, Debbi Jones.



Debbi Jones, TBC onsite consultant

"The award has been the culmination of a great collective effort by the TBC team," explained Danny Keyes, Area Manager, TBC.

"The contract was negotiated and won by Susan Harwood and her National Sales team. Operational project implementation was handled by Gabriel Sirgie with T&A implementation managed by Chris Willington and supported by the Managed Services Division."

The contract will be supported by the entire Swindon office with day to day accountability being handed to Megan Hoole.

Fisher House Charity Fundraising Update



The Best Connection
EMPLOYMENT GROUP
Celebrates
25
Years

In celebration of The Best Connection's 25th Anniversary, as of December 5th 2016, due to your hard work and kind donations from friends, family and business acquaintances, we have raised a fantastic £27,785.93 for our chosen charity, Fisher House. We are committed to continuing our efforts until the end of the year.

In response to this, many of you have still been organising events and undertaking challenges and activities to keep the momentum going and this will culminate in a Charity raffle with some magnificent IT prizes, organised by David Morton, which takes place on 21st December. So, to all of you, thank you very much. It does make a huge difference to people's lives.

Let's look at some of the stats. In total, 47 fundraising groups have been active and together they have attracted 783 separate donations. The top fundraising activity was 'Topaz – 24 hours to Truro' which was organised by Darren Ainge. This was a live feed over the internet and many of you logged in to see the grimacing faces and sweat soaked participants battle with this gruelling virtual bike ride to Cornwall! It was tough in the early hours for some but well worth the effort as they attracted over 100 donations and raised £3,073. The auctions, organised by Martin Thorogood, were also very popular with some great activities and goodies available for the taking. And they all went! 23 donations raised over £2,000. Thank you to everyone who donated a prize and for all those that placed and won bids! At the time of going to press, the SWS charity raffle grabbed third place with 31 donations and nearly £1,800 raised.

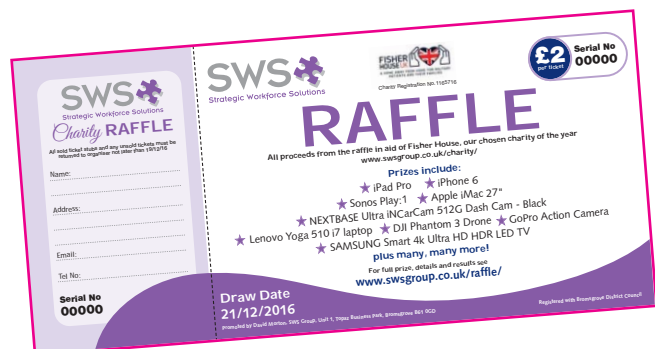
Of course, these are just a few of the many group and individual efforts that have been made throughout the year



A HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR MILITARY PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

that have contributed towards our goal. It has been very entertaining to receive your stories that have reflected the inventiveness and sometimes eccentric nature of our employees! Some of you have pushed your own boundaries by undertaking challenges that you may not have considered, had a good reason not given you that incentive!

In a world where we can be bombarded by demands for charitable contributions, it is easy to forget the real impact donations have on the day to day lives of people that rely on the good nature of the public. Your activities, blood sweat and tears have all helped in this collective effort for Fisher House. It's been a sterling effort - thank you all again for your support.



The Best Connection opens for business in **Ashford**

The Best Connection has opened its doors in Ashford, Kent. In line with the company's 'local presence, national coverage' strategy, the branch will provide those looking for temporary work assignments in the industrial, manufacturing, engineering, logistics, retail, agricultural and healthcare sectors with face to face access to expertise, advice and opportunities.

The new offices are located close to Ashford's International Station and County Square Shopping Centre at 17 High Street.

Neil Yorke, Director, said: "As a communications hub, Ashford is a key location for our business that has been serviced by a team from our Maidstone operation for some time. Due to the continued growth and expansion of our business in this region we are excited to be opening a local office in this prime

location. Along with Dartford and Maidstone, this will be our third branch in the region."

Ashford's proximity to London and Folkestone and developing economy, together with excellent transportation links, has driven demand for temporary

labour in the region to address the needs of thriving local businesses. Manning TBC's Ashford branch will be a team of experienced professionals including Fiona Nayer, Samantha Grove, Robin Harris, and Jessica Stemp.



L to R: Robin Harris, Fiona Nayer, Sammy Groves & Jessica Stemp



Baby Boom!

Is there something in the water in Telford? Well, according to Maria Jones, Recruitment Coordinator at Matrix, a baby boom is upon us! This is what she reports.

"Matrix has been established for 16 years and for most of this time not a single bundle of joy has come along. Then in December 2013 everything changed! First, our Administrator, Leanne Price, announced she was expecting a baby girl in May 2014. How exciting! As the weeks passed by Leanne had to deal with everyone's excitement and constant baby questions. The time arrived and Leila Smith became Matrix's first baby! Leanne brought her in to meet everyone and we all fell in love with her.

"Fast forward to February 2015 and Marie Jones, having moved from the Assessment Team to Recruitment, began behaving a little strange! It soon became apparent that she was expecting a baby girl in October. We were doubly excited when we found out that Lee Jones, our Assessor was waiting for his wife, Diane, to give birth to a baby boy. Our first Matrix baby boy! Right on time in October 2015 Lily Jones and Harrison Jones opened their eyes to a bright new world.

"Christmas was a flash and 2016 soon upon us. To our surprise two more

pregnancies were announced within weeks of each other. Leanne Price was expecting a baby brother for Leila and our Administrator, Amy Williams, was expecting her first baby, a baby girl. Two more Matrix babies!

"Their pregnancies went by so quickly (I am not sure they would agree) and this month we said goodbye as Leanne and Amy left for maternity leave. On Saturday 2nd December, Leanne gave birth to her second baby, Ethan Smith. Congratulations Leanne, we look forward to meeting Ethan.

"Meanwhile, we are all waiting patiently for our 5th Matrix baby, little Avery Biggs, to come into the world. Good luck Amy we can't wait to meet her."



Leila Smith & baby Ethan



Lily Jones



Harrison Jones

Jess and Inga become 'official' Payroll Techies!

Have you ever thought about what goes into preparing a pay cheque? With the ever-changing demands of taxation, laws and regulations, the task of preparing the payroll and the systems used to deliver this service have become increasingly more technical and challenging. With the many thousands of transactions that happen every month, it's just as well we have people in the business that have the knowledge and skills to help out then! And on this note we would like to congratulate Jess Swoffer and Inga Grauzaitė on successfully completing The Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP) Payroll Technician course. Great Job girls!



L to R Inga & Jess

The CIPP course took five months to complete and included how National Insurance and tax is calculated using various approaches including HMRC tables and a percentage method. The couple learnt how sick pay, maternity pay, paternity pay and adoption pay is calculated and the qualifying criteria for each. In addition, they were taught how statutory deductions are applied and they learnt the basics of pension schemes.

In order to pass, they were required to complete two assessments, one of which was a question-answer test on all the topics they had covered and the second element was a practical challenge that involved taking different scenarios from gross pay to net pay and calculating the tax, National Insurance and other statutory deductions. Well Done – it's good to know that payroll is in safe hands!

We asked the girls to tell us a little about themselves and this is what they shared.

"I have been with TBC for four years as a Payroll Clerk. My main job is to deal with the holiday pay for the temporary workers which includes collecting all the holiday requests each week, dealing with any adjustments and processing any holiday that needs to be done manually. I also help with day to day tasks of the payroll team to ensure the payroll is completed each week. Furthermore, each week I am responsible for processing Canada's payroll," explained Jess.

"I've been with the business for 18 months and I am mainly responsible for Bailey Employment Services' temporary workers' payroll, but also do some processing for TBC. I cycle to work every day and make sure our cycle shed is used!" Says Inga. (Good for you Inga – setting a great example!).

Lee Gilbert promoted to Branch Manager

It is always a pleasure to announce career promotions in SWS Best News and on this occasion, we would like to give huge congratulations to Lee Gilbert from TBC who has recently been promoted to Branch Manager for Leicester. Well Done Lee!

With a decade of service under his belt and a history of achievement in the recruitment sector, Lee received complimentary feedback from both Paul Tavinor, Senior Manager and Dave Schilling, Director, on Lee's loyalty, talent and suitability for the role.

"His hard work and consistent drive has helped him to realise his goal, showing that it is possible for anyone who really wants to achieve that they can do it!" said Dave Schilling.



Paul Tavinor (L) congratulating Lee Gilbert on his promotion

REC Consultation - Apprenticeship Levy

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 is set to turn funding of apprenticeship schemes on their head. Shifting the burden of cost from the taxpayer to the business sector will require a new financing and administration process that is both fair and clear. The Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) has been working with HMRC to develop proposals around the Levy initiative and in a recent consultation document it looks at whether the draft regulations achieve their intended objectives. Before we look at some of their observations that may impact business operations, let's briefly recap the basis of the scheme.

The Apprenticeship Levy affects any employer that has an annual PAYE (Pay As You Earn) bill of £3M or over. Qualifying businesses will need to contribute 0.5% of the pay-bill less a £15,000 allowance that is redeemable once. Funds are collected monthly through the company's PAYE system and transferred into a digital account. The funds can be used for the payment of authorised training services and assessment providers. For those companies that do not qualify, they will continue to have access to apprenticeship funding through the existing arrangement. Current funding of training providers to deliver

apprenticeship training will continue until at least 2018, however, companies will now have to pay 10% of the cost as part of a 'co-investment' arrangement with the Government.

The REC assessment generally supports the Levy payment through the PAYE system as this simplifies the process through a single payment. However, temporary recruitment may be adversely affected by the way temporary workers are paid, as described below:

"Recruitment businesses will probably charge this sum to the end user clients (of the temporary labour). Employment businesses must pay temporary workers even where they have not yet been paid by the end user client. This means their tax and NICs liability arises before they have been paid. This regulation will mean that their apprenticeship levy liability will also arise before they have been paid by the end user client. This will increase pressure on their cash flow facilities."

A further draft regulation places the onus on businesses to report their levy liability when the pay-bill reaches £2.8M – irrespective of the fact that they will not be liable to a levy payment until it hits £3M. The REC suggests that as HRMC is in possession of all PAYE

records, it should be proactive in informing businesses of their position once they reach this threshold.

The impact on payroll systems was also discussed. Whilst the calculation of the monthly allowance (1/12 £15000) is straightforward, payroll systems may be impacted when challenged with accommodating all the necessary changes. This task may become even more complex if the business chooses to spread its allowance across multiple PAYE references or when the first monthly bill is processed in April 2017 and in subsequent months. In addition, in the case of overpaid levy duty, how these funds are offset against future levy payments and how the management of the digital account is undertaken may also have an impact on payroll processes. Until the levy system is in place and businesses are faced with having to address the nuances of implementing changes to internal systems, it is difficult to forecast how this will play out in practice!

Through further engagement with HMRC, the REC along with input from its members, will continue to help to introduce workable proposals to make the scheme as user friendly as possible. We will, of course, keep you informed as and when any changes are made.

TBC Driver delivers HUMANS Synths!

Ever fancied a 'Synth' to help with the daily chores?

Humans - the sci-fi drama series written by Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley - hit the UK screens on Channel 4 last June and has launched a second series. For those of you that may not have followed this foray into futuristic life, the story is set in a parallel universe where advanced human-like robots called Synths are the new must-have gadgets around the home. As with all things humanoid, however, things don't always go to plan and technical malfunctions add to some interesting storylines.

The acclaimed drama has been a great success resulting in the launch of Series 2. To help with the promotion of the programme, a national advertising campaign was launched and one of TBC Manchester's drivers, Roy Ingham, was tasked with



driving a promotional truck to Glasgow, Birmingham and London, accompanied by a photographer, to help spread the word about the new series of Humans. Roy's job was to drive the 'Persona' vehicle to collect 'Synths' for recalibration. To make this a little more authentic, Roy actually collected 10 life-size models for the back of the truck! Series 2 premiered at the end of October, but sadly without Roy.

Who said driving was a predictable occupation?!

New Look Talent Acquisition Team for 2017!

The talent acquisition team is poised to finish 2016 having introduced over 150 new starters into the business. In order to build on this success, Talent Acquisition Manager, Andy Guest, has added two new members to the team.

Julian Thomas will be familiar to many within the group having spent the majority of his illustrious sales career with The Best Connection. Julian is screening applicants, putting them through their paces and selling the many benefits of joining us. Having spent such a long time with the company, Julian has become familiar with the preferences of each branch and is a great addition to the team.

Charlotte (Lottie) Jarvis joined the team in October having recently graduated

with first class honours. She will help to aid the progression of the department as a Resourcer, assisting in attracting and processing candidates to be contacted by the team.

In 2017, as well as plans to increase the number of roles filled, future projects include the launch of group assessment days and adding more interactive material to the careers section of the TBC website.

Last January, the talent acquisition team was inundated with thousands of applications so please ensure Andy and the team are fully up-to-date with your requirements.

With the branch network expanding throughout the UK into Scotland, further opportunities for internal advancement will become available.

Please contact Andy Guest (0121 504 3065) for an initial confidential conversation if you're considering an internal move.



L to R: Andy Guest, Lottie Jarvis & Julian Thomas



Georgina is pictured being congratulated by Kevin Atkinson, Divisional Manager, Carlisle HGV

Quarterly sales competition goes North

Winning the regional sales competition has become somewhat of a quest for the Carlisle branch, with all the consultants working hard to out-perform each other and be the first to claim the honours for the revised 2016 competition.

Well, the spoils and bragging rights go to Georgina Metcalfe, HGV Consultant, who beat over 40 consultants from Darren Ainge's region, to claim the title of 'Regional Salesperson of the Quarter August 2016'.

Well done Georgina – great job!

The consultants' focus has now shifted to the final quarter of 2016 and the ultimate accolade of winning the annual competition! Who will be crowned 'salesperson of the year'? Watch this space!

Fancy being the Face of The Best Connection?

Well, now's your chance to get on camera guys 'n gals!

All you need to ask yourself is:

Do I have what it takes?

To support our internal recruitment team, The Best Connection is commissioning a short video production that will be used on the website and shared through social media, to promote the exciting opportunities we have throughout the Group.

We are looking for individuals across all levels of the business who are passionate about what they do and are happy to tell others about it. You don't have to have film star qualities as we're looking for real people with genuine enthusiasm. The filming will take place at Topaz on a day to be agreed in January. If you're interested in taking part, let us know by sending an email to:

auditions@thebestconnection.co.uk



Cyclist turning left

- what are your thoughts?

Think Lycra - Think cyclist? They are arguably synonymous nowadays. Since the 2012 Olympics an unprecedented surge in people cycling for fitness and fun has brightened our roads and given the nation a reason to exercise (and wear lycra of course!). The dark side of this trend is the danger of using the public highway and the challenges this throws up. In particular, large vehicles, visibility of cyclists and the controversial left turn!

The Government's campaign to raise awareness of the safety issues around HGV's and the cyclist has roused diametrically opposed opinions fuelling the debate on safe road sharing. Official figures state that of the 100 fatalities in the past five years, 20% are attributed to vehicles turning left. It's clearly a problem that needs a pragmatic solution with the Government promoting a 'cyclist hang-back' message for this particular scenario.

But will this advice be accepted and adhered to? Our roads are busier than ever with more cars per capita than ever before and HGV's remain the mainstay of distribution. In most cases, roads have not been modified to accommodate cyclists so a loose co-operation has to prevail. Some would say that the left turn issue is just the tip



of the iceberg with many opinions polarised on rights and responsibilities. Clearly, cyclists are vulnerable and utmost consideration must be taken by all vehicle drivers to ensure nobody is ever harmed, however, both sides have an equal role to play in delivering the status quo.

It may be unreasonable to expect the cyclist to determine the lowest common denominator on our roads whereby all other vehicles must modify their behaviour and speed. Many HGV drivers cite on the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency Blog - THINK - cyclists reluctant to give way and adopting a dominant and often aggressive attitude on road rights. Is this a helpful position to take?

Some would agree – others beg to differ and the debate rages on. On a practical point, there is reluctance by some cyclists to adopt some basic safety behaviours, for example, through the use of appropriate clothing and helmets. Likewise, some drivers may be guilty of lack of awareness or patience. Perhaps it is time to have some basic training and safety standards for all cyclists (and maybe motorists) to ensure every effort is being made to reduce accidents. In the meantime, greater co-operation and consideration from all parties would not go amiss. After all, the end goal must be safety for all.

New Faces at CPA

We are delighted to welcome to the fold at CPA Recruitment, Watford, two bright new recruits. Zoe Phiri has joined the business as a Trainee Consultant and Lisa Fox takes on a Recruitment Consultant role. Let's hear what they have to say.



Zoe Phiri - Trainee Consultant

"Hello all! Prior to joining CPA, I worked as a receptionist at a GP's surgery. I had never considered recruitment until a friend told me about it and I was attracted to the idea of being a recruiter. I have only worked at CPA for a couple of weeks but I am enjoying the job and loving the team. Fun facts about me: I like

to dye my hair different colours and I have a twin brother. I would like to say a huge thank you to the CPA team for hiring me and giving me this opportunity."

Lisa Fox - Recruitment Consultant

"I am excited to have joined CPA as a recruitment consultant. With a background in recruitment and a Food Science degree it seemed like a natural step to be working in the food and beverage industry! So here I am. I will be focusing on ingredients, technical sales and interim roles and I am really looking forward to developing my client and candidate base. I am overwhelmed by the warm welcome I have received here at the CPA office. Outside of work, I love to spend time with my family, cooking and eating out, as well as taking long walks where we live in Shenley, Hertfordshire."



Dave Payne three score and 10!

Oyez oyez, Dave Payne has a birthday.

Let it be said that life doesn't begin at 40 anymore, it's much, much later than that and Dave Payne is testament to that sentiment! So, congratulations to Dave on his 70th birthday. In true TBC fashion, Dave was showered with gifts and compliments during an office presentation. Let's see what the TBC conveyor belt had to offer . . . starting with the Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall Cookery Book Selection consisting of 7 books and a million recipes for the next 20 years, River Cottage Cookery School Voucher, Eckington Manor Cookery School Voucher, Eckington Manor Apron (there's a theme going on here!), £40 towards Dave's stay at River Cottage Cookery School or to Extend his Eckington Manor Cookery

Experience, Photograph Paper, Steam Train Calendar, Train Set, Boy Racer Mug and a Falconry Experience Day! Wow! – not a cuddly toy in sight but

everything else imaginable. We all hope you have a great time enjoying the presents and activities and look forward to sampling some food creations.



Oldham Training

initiative provides TBC with temporary workers

A recent article in the Oldham Evening Chronicle (November 24th) that celebrated a local initiative between the Job Centre and a training provider outlined the great work that had been done to take unemployed people and to give them training in operating a Fork Lift Truck and associated warehouse and storage skills. To ensure that the trainees find a suitable role following the completion of their training, the Job Centre has been working with The Best Connection to secure work opportunities.

"The good news is that out of the eight trainees that initially registered with us, we have found immediate work assignments for four of them with the remainder making positive progress," said Darren Jarvis, industrial consultant, TBC Oldham.

Such is the success of the scheme, TBC is set to receive a steady flow of newly qualified people eager to get back into work. And of course, the team will do everything they can do to find them suitable positions!



One File Success tops 300 people!

In November 2016 Matrix Training congratulated its 300th learner who completed their Apprenticeship Programme using the One File e-portfolio system. The software platform, introduced by Matrix in September 2014, has helped to significantly reduce the time it takes for learners to complete their qualifications as well as lessening environment impact by adopting a paperless portfolio.

Phil Hutchinson, Director, Matrix

explains: "The One File system has helped to improve the way we deliver qualifications. It's now much easier for assessors to record their assessments using the audio, video and camera features on an iPad whereas before they would have to write everything down and be constantly photocopying documents. They can also manage their caseloads more effectively by being able to see the progress being made by their learners with the click of a button."

Matrix has adapted the way they use the

system to suit different learners and programmes, for example, Business Administration Apprentices tend to complete a significant proportion of their work by completing tasks online, whereas Warehouse Apprentices benefit from the electronic recording using the iPad so they can provide verbal answers to questions instead of having to write them.

The system was initially piloted by Matrix with Branch Administrators from The Best Connection who were undertaking a Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship course.

Apprenticeship Frameworks are changing to Standards!

The Government is replacing Apprenticeship Frameworks with new Apprenticeship Standards and aims to complete the transition by 2019. A framework is a set of mandatory qualifications that are assessed throughout the apprenticeship by the training provider. There are currently around 250 Apprenticeship Frameworks.

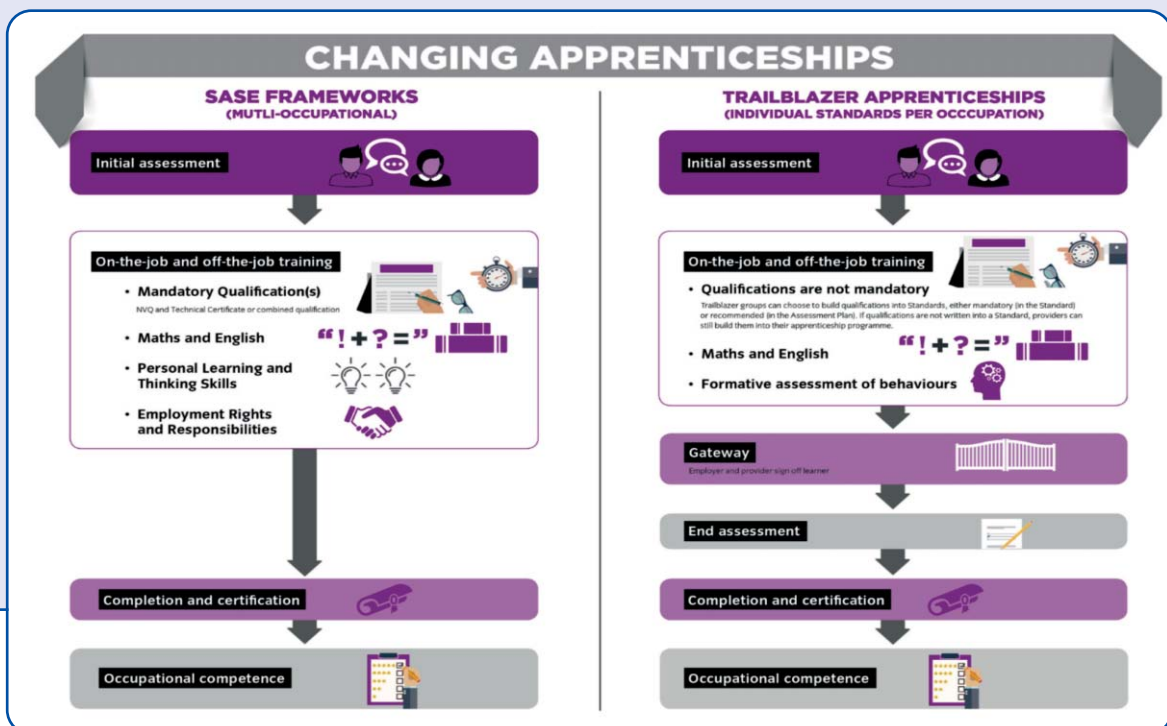
In their place, there will be up to 650 new Apprenticeship Standards developed by employer groups called Trailblazers. Each standard will cover a specific job role and level. The significant difference between a framework and a standard is the introduction of an independent end-point assessment. This replaces the need for apprentices to complete mandatory qualifications in some standards. The aim of the changes is to create a greater focus on training during the apprenticeship and

introduce a more robust end-point assessment to improve the quality of the apprenticeship.

Matrix Training is planning to offer a range of new Apprenticeship Standards from May 2017 in conjunction with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy. These will include:

Customer Service Practitioner - Recruitment Consultant - Team Leader/Supervisor - Operations/Department Manager - Business Administrator - Supply Chain Warehouse Operator - Manufacturing Operative - Logistics Operator/Manager and Food and Drink Process Operator

If you would like more information about the Apprenticeship Standard, please contact Phil Hutchinson at phil@matrixtraining.org.uk



Martin Ansley CTS

– not just a great driver!



Mike Ansley

It's 4.30am and minus 4 degrees when Martin Ansley pulls into the haulage operating centre at City Transport Solutions in Leighton Buzzard to start another shift. He is not alone as the yard quickly fills with colleagues who all set about their vehicle checks before heading off. The place is very lively and good humour prevails - despite the cold!

Martin is a long-standing member of the CTS driver team having joined previous incarnations of the business as far back as 1994 as a 45-year-old raw recruit. As with many truckers he is not known by his real name. His old boss, Alan Gaunt, dubbed him 'Badger', a name reflective of his trendy haircut 'back in the day'! Martin is very comfortable with this nickname having had a colleague called Broken Arrow! Apparently, he didn't work properly but could not be fired! So, Martin considered he got off lightly!

A 7.5t rigid lorry is Martin's drive for CTS today. He is taking it on a run that he knows well for Transaction, a company that CTS services every day. It's a tough day that requires a prompt start. He has nine drops to complete today and

expects them to be a challenge as circumnavigating London is involved!

Martin was born in Brixton. When he was young his family moved to Aylesbury where he went to school. He started work at 15 and was married to Sally when he was 24 and had two children, who in turn, have given them four grandchildren, all girls, 'who are very hard work, especially the four year old twins' so he tells us!

Although a stalwart of the driving team at CTS, Martin was previously a 30-year veteran installer of Crittall Windows for commercial clients and remembers well one day admiring a Jumbo jet coming into land at Brize Norton where he led a team installing windows in airfield buildings. Military Police approached him during this episode and although Martin's van had a pass to be on the airfield, Martin hadn't, so he was duly arrested and marched off for questioning and fingerprinting at the local Police station. No charges ensued!

He is an outdoor man and has enjoyed wildlife watching for as long as he can remember. He modestly describes his extraordinary camerawork as 'not bad' despite being able to sell plenty of pictures at local events. Only two months ago Martin waited patiently at CTS for hours to capture a Vixen nurturing her cub in the grass on the outskirts of the yard. This framed picture now hangs in the CTS office and is regularly admired.

Martin loves his job and says the 'spirit of the place' is what feeds this warmth. He can count the bad days of the past 21 years on the fingers of one hand. To be fair to him he makes a major contribution to the team and creates much of the warmth that the whole team benefits from.

Retirement is firmly parked whilst he stays healthy and keeps making an exemplary contribution to the CTS team. Anyway, he needs the money 'to buy more camera gear, but don't tell Sally!!'



Stronger Together – fighting modern day slavery



tackling hidden labour exploitation

According to the Global Slavery Index which conducted surveys in 167 countries, nearly 46 million people around the world are trapped in modern slavery. The UK ranks 127th with an estimated 11,700 people considered trapped in forced labour – although this figure is thought to be much higher.

To combat this practice in business, a multi-stakeholder initiative - Stronger Together - run by the GLA (Gangmasters Licencing Authority) and ALP (Agency Labour Providers) is working to highlight the seriousness of the issue to the Government.

You may or may not be aware that the GLA is changing its name to the GLAA (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority). With this change of name comes stronger powers to investigate companies in the UK. The issuing of the gangmasters licence is just the first step to ensuring compliance with the rules and regulations.

Over the past 18 months the Government, in partnership with the GLAA and the ALP, have been delivering workshops across the country focused on what 'The Modern Slavery Act 2015' and 'Immigration Act 2016' mean to UK businesses. Richard Owen, TBC's Training & Development Officer, attended a two day Modern Slavery course in June of this year and a further

one day Stronger Together course in November.

"Both courses highlighted the criminal activity that underpins the systematic abuse of those forced into working for a gangmaster. It is specifically designed to highlight the signs that people may be involved in these practices and what we should be doing to minimise these activities. By implementing strategies that address these situations we will build our awareness and help position our organisation as one of the 'go-to' Labour providers.

"The main focus of the initiative is to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers through forced labour. Whilst we have processes in place to help identify these practices we are reviewing what we do and how we identify such risks. There is a video on the training portal 'Stronger Together' to help highlight the issues. You may have noticed the changes to the application forms where we ask each individual 'Have you paid anyone or will you have to pay anyone to get a job?' (page 3 of the application form). This could be an indicator that someone is being forced to work or controlled by a gangmaster," explained Richard.

We will continue to keep you informed of any future developments in fighting modern day slavery.

2016 – a great year for TBC Milton Keynes

Trudy Carr, Milton Keynes Branch Manager, has a career spanning 15 years in recruitment, of which the past five have been with The Best Connection. The past year has emerged as one of the most satisfying and successful years on record with the highest ever weekly margin for the Milton Keynes branch in week 35.

Now, under the new guidance of

Director, Dave Schilling and Senior Manager, Simon Thompson, Trudy believes that, as a result of everyone's hard work, the team has gone from strength to strength and are now in a much stronger position to take Milton Keynes to even greater heights.

"Milton Keynes has four large on-site clients. Kamil, our On-site Account Manager, manages the day-to-day on-

site teams to make sure everything runs smoothly," said Trudy.

Trudy is extremely proud of this year's successes. The Milton Keynes team have all worked tirelessly to achieve some record margins throughout the year. And what's exciting is that Trudy already believes that 2017 promises to be an even better year! Good luck MK!



Milton Keynes team, L to R: Deimante Geleziune, Michael Napper, Katrina Ellis, Kamil Miareczka, Trudy Carr, Marta Dzevenkauskiene, Marius Dirman, Inesa Urbonaviciute, Gaynor Ridge, Simon Thompson, Adrien Kecskemeti, Gabriela Pascu & Pawel Zurkiewicz

SWS Vacancies!

SWS Featured Vacancies

As the SWS Group continues to grow, so do the opportunities for new roles in the business. So, if you are considering a new challenge in 2017 take a look at some of our current internal vacancies.

A full list can be found at: www.thebestconnection.co.uk/careers

Management Opportunities are available in our current TBC branches:
Warrington, Chelmsford, Bristol, Grimsby, Scunthorpe & Truro

Bailey Care Services – Registered Branch Manager/Recruitment Lead – Abingdon

CPA Leicester and Watford – Permanent Senior/Recruitment Consultants

TBC Stockport – Industrial Divisional Manager

Senior HGV Consultant opportunities are available in the following TBC branches:
Swindon, Watford, Bristol, Abingdon & Birmingham

Senior Industrial Consultant opportunities are available in the following TBC branches:
Stockport, Sunderland, Birmingham, Bristol, Abingdon, Taunton, Cardiff

The Best Connection has identified the following locations for future branches and has opportunities for current or aspiring Senior Consultants and Managers:

- Glasgow • Basildon • Chelmsford • Stratford (East London) • Rugby
- Harlow • Tunbridge Wells • Swansea • Hereford • Huddersfield

Please contact Andy Guest if you are looking to relocate or further your career call **0121 504 3065** or email andy.guest@thebestconnection.uk

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