

Otley Economic Bulletin

The newsletter of Otley Chamber of Trade

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www.otleychamber.co.uk

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Otley Chamber of Trade is a non-political, independent, not for profit body of volunteers that seeks to represent and assist the town's business community and promote the town. This Bulletin is a monthly summary of local economic news relating to Otley and its business activity:-

Biskit - welcome back to Chamber membership to Ed Ryder and his Granville Court business, 'which uses innovative marketing and design ideas to help companies grow'. Tel 01943 461030 or 07950 126024, email edward@biskit.co.uk, web at www.biskit.co.uk

Black Horse PH – after a much trumpeted refit, including modernized guest accommodation, and relaunch last April the Kirkgate landmark pub has changed hands again following dispute with the buildings owners, Enterprise Inns

Bridal Gown – announces, “in February the Bondgate wedding dress shop is hosting two Designer Days to celebrate Valentines Day, the first is Madeline Isaac James on the 4th and 5th and the second is Kate Sherford on the 18th and 19th. Both designers will bring a whole range of their new gowns. We are inviting girls that have visited us at the shop and at Bridal Fairs. As it is an appointment only event we are asking them to arrange an appointment with us”

BT Scam – beware if someone phones claiming they represent BT and tells you that the line is being disconnected due to an unpaid bill. A demand for immediate payment is made or £118 would need to be paid at a later date to ensure reconnection. The reps appear unfazed and obviously give false names, e.g. one male with a strong African accent give the name John Peacock and contact tel of 0800 0800 152. The rep will demonstrate he is from BT and asks the victim to hang up and try to phone a friend, which could not happen as the rep would disconnect the line. The proposed victim tries to phone someone but the line is indeed dead, no tone. The rep then calls again demanding immediate payment.

How is it done? The scammer gives the wrong number - it should have been 0800 800 152 which takes you through to BT Business. The cutting off of the line is very simple, he stays on the line with the mute button on and you can't dial out - but he can hear you trying (This is because the person who initiates a call is the one to terminate it). When you stop trying he cuts off and immediately calls back and demands credit card details

Empty shops – the *Bulletin* has not reported on the level of empty shops in Otley town centre for many months now, given the relatively few (13) remaining. Nationally, the vacancy rate is 11.2% ie one shop in every nine, significantly worse than the situation in Otley

Eriks – engineering parts suppliers has moved out of Otley to Bradford. No jobs lost but a little more of the townscape changes with the 1894 built Board Offices on North Parade now looking for another use



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House prices – as at November 2011, the average house price across the UK, now stands at £161,731 (source: Halifax). As a rough barometer, what would that get you in Otley?

Inflation – remains higher than we all would like although the CPI for November fell back slightly again to 4.8% from November's 5.0%

Internet sales – the Mary Portas Report into town centre retailing advises that 50% of retail sales now take place away from the High Street, i.e. in out of town shopping centres and over the internet, predicted to reduce to 40% by 2014. Read the report at http://www.maryportas.com/wp-content/uploads/The_Portas_Review.pdf

Ex-Massingberd – the levelled site on Leeds Road is now up for sale through commercial agent Carter Jonas as a building plot with consent for 16 dwellings

McKendrick Multimedia Ltd – impressive credentials for another new member, 'specializing in interactive multi-touch and motion controlled screen technology for retail, together with iPhone and iPad App design and development as well as internet and web design, video and conference production. Located in Westgate Arcade, tel 01943 462846, email david@mckendrickmultimedia.com and website at www.mckendrickmultimedia.com

Ex-Mounsey's – the double fronted unit in Market Street and Boroughgate is undergoing conversion works before opening up as, we understand, a café and card and gift shop

OCT next general meeting - will be on Tuesday 17th January 2012, 6.30pm. Again, a reminder that meetings will henceforth take place at Otley Town Partnerships spacious premises on Mercury Row above the Old Peoples Welfare Centre. As usual, anyone and everyone with an involvement in business in Otley is welcome to attend

OCT Light Up Otley – achieved over 25,000 pinpoints of light around town on the 130+ small trees installed above the shops and nine mature trees in church yards and on the main road entrances to town, with a further 30 trees installed in All Saints Parish Church for the debut Christmas Tree Festival

Attended by around 800 visitors the Christmas Tree Festival raised a similar number of pounds for local charities and community groups. The event made no call on Chamber reserves, thanks to the following local businesses who helped make this event happen for the town; **BEK's Electrical, B&TS, Dowgill House, Cambrig Computers, Kirkgate Arcade, Otley Lions, Stephen H Smith's Garden & Leisure, Wharfedale Angling Classics and Yorkshire Electrical Supplies**. The response has been very positive with an overwhelming request for the Chamber to repeat the event next year as an addition to the town's calendar of tourist attracting events

OCT advertising – if your business would like to sponsor the £60 printing costs of a whole edition of the *Otley Economic Bulletin* please let us know and we can explain further. Thanks to **Pinecraft** for sponsoring this month's issue

OCT annual subscription – the Chamber membership fee for 2012 has been set at £47 for the year. Invoices will be going out as usual in January. With membership at record levels details of how to set your payment up as a BACS payment or a standing order form to save future administration will be supplied

Orchard Gate – the often changing larger kiosk is vacant and To Let again via Ministar Services. Paula Hodgkinson, who has been operating as **Glitz & Glam** offering handbags, accoutrements and hairdressing, is moving to **Salon 7** in New Inn Court



Pinecraft is a family business established over 30 years specialising in quality pine furniture. Our large 4,000 sq ft showroom offers wide selection of dining, occasional and very successful bedroom ranges

Otley Shop Heroes – the initial short run of trail pamphlets showcasing a dozen of Otley’s more well known, ‘destination’ shops has been glossed up, re-formatted and another batch of 1000 has been ordered

Red Lion PH- is now under new ownership, Kevin and Collette Jones, and has brought back SKY Sports for all the sports enthusiasts. The Red Lion also offers free Atari gaming and free WiFi. Relining of the chimneys is now complete and two real fires are now lit

Shoplifting – after the presentation given to the Chambers general meeting in June, APEX radio assure us that their system is still of value, and indeed it is still operating in such towns as Skipton and Harrogate. In view of its dwindling support in Otley the Chamber has asked if the monthly charge of £20 + VAT plus £20 pa could be reduced for Otley Chamber members, without success. Alternatively, if any shop would like the Chamber to assist with putting similar types of businesses (ie all the gift shops etc) in touch with each other to assist future co-peration please let us know

Unemployment – against a backdrop of doom and unemployment gloom nationally the total of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in Otley & Yeadon Ward stood at 358 in September – but actually fell in October to 348. (Source: Leeds City Council). No new stats have been available since

Yew Tree – congratulations to the proprietors and customers of the Otley pub who arranged a fire walking event on 14th December. Around 25 customers walked across red hot embers in aid of the Little Heroes children’s cancer charity. The fire walk staged at 9pm in the front car park and raised around £3,000 for the charity.

YMCA - Otley’s 11th charity shop is now open and trading. The good news is that the letting of the former Clintons Cards now completes Kirkgate as a full street although the stretch of five charity shops in a row presents something of an issue to one of the town’s principle retails thoroughfares

Presidents Report

On behalf of the Chamber, and I hope the majority of Otley’s retailers, I’d like to thank Steph Lee and her team for all the hard work put in to the arranging and running of the Victorian Fayre. As it grows ever larger year on year tweaks and adjustments are always needed so please give us, or Steph direct, your feedback and ideas and suggestions. It’s a thankless job but without Steph and her team the town would be the poorer without the Fayre which I understand brought about 16000 people into our town centre this year

The Chamber’s own Christmas Tree Festival event also took a good bit of organizing, and even more lifting and carrying, but the steady stream of happy faces and kind comments in our visitor book cheered the soul and again showed what we can achieve when the town’s businesses join together. Now we have proved the Chamber can stage the event the challenge is to repeat with a bigger and better publicity drive aimed at attracting visitors from out of town next time

All that now remains is for me to wish you all Good Luck for 2012 as we all continue to battle along

Brian King
President, Otley Chamber of Trade

If your business has any interesting economic news, large or small (expansions or contractions, achievements, announcements, minor victories or anecdotes) or would like any rumour or concern investigating, please email wilkinson_tim@sky.com and Otley Chamber of Trade will do our best.

Although by no means comprehensive, this newsletter is produced after reasonable direct research from a number of reliable sources and accordingly, this information is offered in good faith and believed to be accurate and authentic. If in doubt readers may like to rely on their own investigations.

Previous editions are available by visiting the Otley Chamber of Trade website www.otleychamber.co.uk



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