

From the manager...

We issued our first focus newsletter in January 2011 and the positive response we received from our overseas partners and host companies was overwhelming, so a big thank you from everyone at **ectarc** to you!

Many of the companies we work with have already expressed great interest in contributing to the newsletter as they see the advantages of featuring their own success stories to promote product awareness. So if you have any interesting stories, contact Sabine Hoekema, Communication Officer, 01978 861 514 or sabine.hoekema@denbighshire.gov.uk

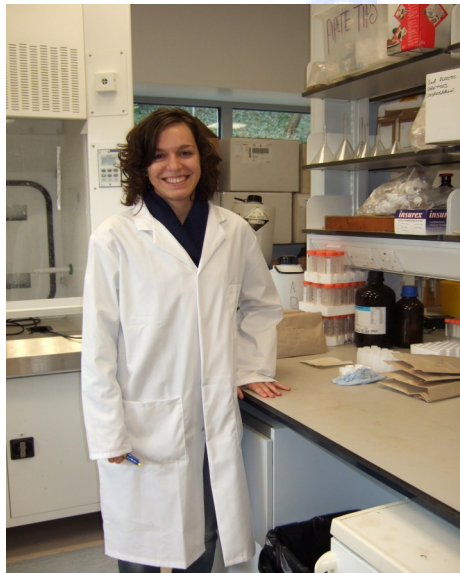
The support **ectarc** receives from our host companies continues to impress and it goes without saying that we could not make the Leonardo da Vinci programme the success it is today without that support. We continue to see an increase in the number of new companies wishing to take advantage of the skilled professionals we welcome to Wales, and many of the placements we secure lead to permanent employment. This is very encouraging for us because it means we are placing the right people at the right companies.

ectarc is continuing to build strong relationships with companies, community projects and local government to ensure we continue helping, not only our participants but also our host companies. We are certainly moving in the right direction by working with the likes of the **North East Business Parks Project, Conwy Rural Development Centre, Cardiff City Council and the West Cheshire and North East Chambers of Commerce**. Their assistance allows us to reach more companies and inform them about the work we do here.

2011 is already proving to be a busy year with heavy emphasis on building strong business links to ensure the continued growth and success of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

**Nia Jones, Work Placement Manager
Leonardo Inward Programme
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Leonardo Programme Leads to Employment



Ana Maria from Barcelona at Bangor University 2010

There is nothing better than to hear a good success story, and so far this year we have received many of them.

When **ectarc** secures placements on behalf of our participants, we are always confident the company will benefit from the participant's skills and that the participant will benefit from the practical work experience they are given, not to mention the improvement in their everyday English vocabulary. During the course of the programme the participant becomes a full time member of staff at the company and as they showcase their skills, are usually given more complex tasks to complete. Regardless of the length of the programme, whether 3 weeks or 14 weeks, companies can recognise the value some participants bring to their work force and sometimes, won't want to let them go!

During May, **ectarc** waved goodbye to one of our groups from Barcelona. This group were here to complete a 14 week programme and skills ranged from a food lab technician to a production assistant. Participants were placed all over Wales in a variety of companies offering work within their field of expertise. Feedback received from both companies and participants has been very positive and, even better, of the 17 in the group, 5 were offered either short term contracts or long term employment. Some of these companies offering employment included:

**Castle Fine Arts/The bronze Foundry
Bangor School of Law
Cadbury's**

Not only were the Catalan group successful, but we also saw one of our Danish industrial technicians offered a position at **Ellison Sensors International**, and a German student taken on at **Maxines Book Shop and Café** in Llangollen.

We often see participants being offered short or long-term contracts within the companies they have been placed, and this is testament to the quality of the participants selected to take part in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. However, it is important to remember that this programme is not about finding permanent employment for foreign participants. It's about giving young professionals the opportunity to improve their chances of securing permanent employment when they return to their own country. The ability to converse in English and to have relevant work experience will greatly assist all participants when they continue their employment search on completion of the programme. In fact, 85% of the participants who joined the programme during 2008/2009 from Barcelona found employment within 3 months of completing the programme, of these, 20% were offered employment by their host companies.

Since we started managing the Leonardo da Vinci programme here in Wales some 20 years ago, we have seen many participants offered permanent positions within their host companies, and it's for this reason that so many companies want to work with us. They understand the programme, how we operate and see the added value this can bring to their organisation. They recognise that if they host 1 participant or 100, there is no obligation to offer them a position at the end of the programme; in fact we ensure that no participant expects such an offer, but if the company has a genuine position available, hosting can be the ideal solution to short term staff shortages or project demands.

ectarc

Focus

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Into the Arts Sector:



Work placements in the arts sector are always in high demand, from both national and international applicants and are therefore difficult to get. Through the various good contacts that **ectarc** has built up over the years, we were able to organise a fantastic placement at the Washington Art Gallery in Penarth, Cardiff where the participant made a real difference. Maggie Knight from 'Cardiff's leading contemporary Art Gallery by the sea' was very supportive when the experienced Exhibition Coordinator, Guillaume Julien, from France joined her team in September 2010.

Ms Knight is the director of the PACL, the Penarth Arts & Crafts Ltd. charity who are responsible for the Penarth Pier Pavilion Project. This project plans to refurbish and re-invigorate this iconic art deco Pavilion built in 1929 and make it a centre of excellence for environmental issues, maritime and social history, heritage, education and entertainment. The project depends solely on funding and donations. As employ-



Penarth Pier overlooking the Bristol Channel

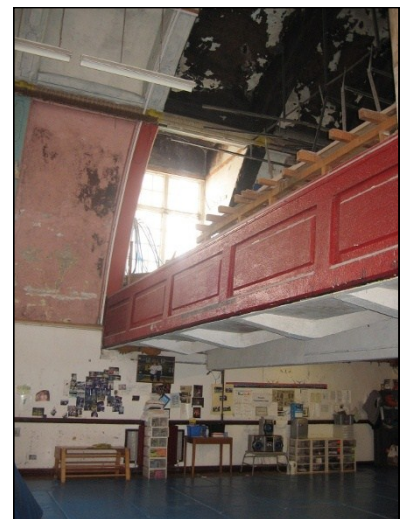
'ectarc's placement was a significant move forward'

ing highly-skilled people can be costly, it was a real treat to be able to send someone like Guillaume to them. 'We both benefited from each other', Ms Knight explains. 'He worked on a project in the development of an exhibition programme which would underline the main themes of sustainability and heritage. So this placement was a significant move forward in the planning stages'.

ectarc's executive director Sharon Thomas has also sent a letter to the PACL to express **ectarc's** support of the project to aid their Heritage Lottery Fund Application.

Guillaume, for his part, gained an insight into the art and exhibition sector and built up contacts with artists and galleries. This will be very beneficial for his future career in France.

For more information about the Penarth Pavilion Project please visit: www.letsmakeithappen.org.uk



The current interior of the Pavilion

A Spanish Chemist in Cardiff

Ana del Rio, a chemist from Burgos in the North of Spain, came to Wales in June 2010 with the rest of her group. After a 2-week language course she was offered a 14 week work placement at **Dow Corning** in Barry, Cardiff. It would be our first time working with this company and expectations were high.

Dow Corning's field of research is silicone polymer chemistry and they also perform a large amount of analytical testing for quality assurance. With the support of her colleagues, Ana settled in quickly and had her 3 month placement divided into 2 parts. First she worked in the Quality Assurance Laboratory to conduct tests on different samples. The second part of her placement was to work on a research project creating new products from waste material.

During her placement, Ana lived with an **ectarc** host family in Cardiff who helped her with her language and made her feel at home. She also had the support of 2 other Leonardo participants from Spain who were working at the Cardiff University Schools of Engineering and Bioscience.

During her 3-month work placement, Ana made such a good impression on her boss that they offered her a 6 month contract afterwards to work in the company's Quality Assurance Laboratory. Recently this was changed to a long-term contract.



Ana, left, with her fellow Spanish Leonardo participants Asun and Gonzalo

Benefits for local business and youth

ectarc's head office is located in Llangollen, which is also where all our participants complete their language course. Most of them will leave the town for placements around Wales but some of the younger groups stay in Llangollen. These participants are usually still at secondary school or have low language skills, so will work in local shops to concentrate on improving their English. The influx of foreign visitors has a significant influence on Llangollen, giving it a buzzing and multi-cultural feeling. It not only creates business for the town, it also gives it an opportunity to take part in the programme.

"Giving young people a chance to learn"

Local delicatessen shop, Bailey's, has been working with **ectarc** for

over ten years. They have welcomed many participants from a variety of backgrounds. Co-managers Amanda Jones and Stuart Slater 'We do it mainly to give young people a chance to learn. Of course it is good to have some extra help in the shop, but with us being such a small team we do it also for personal development reasons for all of us'. They talk about cultural differences, local foods and languages. 'The Italians have taught us the correct pronunciation of our Italian products, which is great'. Bailey's is also working with the local secondary school, Dinas Brân, to offer work placements to their students. Often they work together with **ectarc's** participants giving them an extra opportunity to create friendships, develop language skills and increase their cultural understanding.



(Advert)

Wanted: Host Companies

ectarc, organiser of the European work placement project 'Leonardo da Vinci', is always looking for new host companies in various sectors, including:

- * Hotel and Catering, Tourism *
- * Architectural Design, Industrial, Graphic and Web Design *
- * IT, Banking, Business and Administration *
- * Marketing, PR, Sales and Events Management *
- * Accountancy, Finance, Import/Export *
- * NGO's, Social Work, Teaching and Nursery Education *
- * Journalism, Photography, Film and Multimedia*
- * Retail, Culture and the Arts*
- * Horticulture, Agriculture and Laboratory Work *
- * Electrical, Industrial and Mechanical Engineering *
- * Carpentry and Construction *

Contact Nia Jones for more information on tel 01978 861514 or at nia.jones@ectarc.com

The Leonardo Outward Programme: going from Wales to Europe



ectarc not only creates opportunities for young people from continental Europe but is also working hard to do the same for people from Wales. We are celebrating 10 years of success in giving young people living, working or studying in Wales the opportunity to spend 3 months living and working abroad.

Our *Leonardo Outward* Programme provides language tuition and a work placement in Berlin, Bordeaux, Barcelona, Seville or Florence. Every year since 2000, up to 100 young people aged 18-35 from Wales have each year been able to spread their wings and learn new skills under the supervision of **ectarc** and its partner organisations abroad.

'A career is stepping stones, and the Leonardo internship was the first vital stone.' Nathan, Bordeaux.



ectarc participants in Seville

The *Leonardo* Programme has an EU-wide reputation for improving the mobility and increasing the employability of young European citizens, and **ectarc's** *Leonardo Outward* participants are no exception. On the strength of her work for a graphic design company in Florence, Italy, Claire is now working as a creative designer for her 'dream company' in Cardiff. Anna found a legal placement at a law firm in Wrexham, having completed a placement with a law company in Berlin.

Further training is another option through one of the 'open doors' leading from the *Leonardo* experience. Alan from Rhyl is studying for an MSc in Astronautics and Space Technology following his *Leonardo* placement in this sector in Bordeaux, France. *Leonardo* gave Nia from Aberaeron, who worked at a kindergarten in Florence, the confidence to apply for and gain a place at the University of Glamorgan.

When you have proved to yourself that you can rise to the challenge of living and working in a foreign country, the urge to explore other opportunities is strong, and some of our participants don't return to the UK at the end of their *Leonardo* programme. They stay abroad to train, travel or work.

If you know someone who would like to apply for the *Outward* programme, do get in touch with our *Leonardo Outward* Coordinator: jane.trudgill@denbighshire.gov.uk

More information can also be found on our website: www.ectarc.com under the tab **work experience/working abroad**

Update...European placements get the go ahead

ectarc, the European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation has secured EU funding for 2011-2012 to enable 100 Wales-based graduates to experience a work placement in another European country. Working with GO Wales, **ectarc** plans to recruit 100 graduates per year to their Life-Long Learning Leonardo da Vinci programme to offer them the opportunity to develop their employment opportunities by participating in a 13-week programme of language and work experience in Spain, France, Germany or Italy, directly connected to their studies.

The programme will accept applications four times per year and will be open to all degree specialisms. With more than 20 year's experience of organising European placements, **ectarc** have placed over 2,000 young people to date. Some of these have stayed and taken up employment in Europe and others have returned from their experiences to further develop their careers in Wales. The benefits to career development and employability of such a placement are obvious but it brings other rewards, as explained by Sharon Thomas, **ectarc's** Executive Director:

"Our participants gain so much in terms of confidence and wider skills development. To be immersed in another country for 13 weeks with the opportunity to hone your language skills while working does wonders for your career progression."

Advertised via the GO Wales and **ectarc** website, these placements are an excellent opportunity to enhance graduates' employability. HEFCW (Higher Education Funding Council for Wales), project managers of the GO Wales/**ectarc** programme are keen to develop this new addition to their placement programme. David Blaney, Director of Strategic Development, HEFCW said:

"We believe it is particularly important to the economic, social and cultural development of Wales that individuals here have the opportunity to access this European programme. We consider that the benefits are very clear in terms of personal and language development and employability."

For further information please see www.ectarc.com

Partner Profile: ZAV in Bonn - Germany

ectarc works with partner organisations from various countries. They basically do the same as our outward department. They promote and select the participants, apply for funding and are our main contact for any matters regarding the participants while they are in the UK. In this section, we would like to present our partners to you, starting with one of our German partners.

ZAV, Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung, or International Placement Services in English, whose head office is in Bonn, is one organisation managing the Leonardo programme in Germany. They are part of the Federal German Employment Agency and specialise in international job placements.



ZAV have been involved with the Leonardo programme since it began and have been working with **ectarc** since 2004. Since then, ZAV have already sent more than 100 participants to Wales and they also work with other organisations in London, Ireland, France and Spain.

As part of the employment agency, ZAV use the Leonardo programme as a mobility and training instrument to increase the employment prospects of unemployed people in Germany. Applicants for the programme must comply with a list of specifications such as:

- Registered as unemployed in Germany
- Finished studies/vocational training or at least two years of work experience in the same field,
- Good command of English,
- Resident in Germany,
- High motivation (no age limit, open to different professions)

The German programme consists of a 2 week language course and 4 weeks work placement, during which the candidates can often keep their unemployment benefits to protect their financial situation back home.

For ZAV participants the main benefits of the programme are to improve language and job-related skills in order to increase their chances of employment in Germany.

For participants who have just completed their education it provides that all-important first work experience. Those who have been made redundant find it can help them to return to employment.

The results of **ectarc's** collaboration with ZAV have been great. The German participants are generally highly skilled and motivated with good language skills. The feedback from their British hosting companies is always very positive.

The programme also has a direct impact back in their home country with an impressive 80% of the participants finding employment within 6 to 12 months after finishing the Leonardo project.



Programm für lebenslanges Lernen
Leonardo da Vinci



ectarc's German colleagues on a visit to Llandudno, North Wales to get to know our country first hand

ectarc
European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation

Introducing:

ectarc's
'refer a family' scheme

ectarc is always looking for more host families and has now developed the 'refer a family' scheme.

For every new host family that you suggest and that is successful in becoming an ectarc host family, we will send you **£5.00 in vouchers** of your choice.

To find out more, please contact:
Mandy Jones or Rebecca Breton

ectarc, Parade Street, Llangollen LL20 8RB
Tel: 01978 861 514
mandy.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk
rebecca.breton@denbighshire.gov.uk
www.ectarc.com

Education, Training, Language Courses
& European Work Placements

Car Showroom Transformed Into Premier Art-space

The Willow, which opened to the public in October 2010 is Oswestry's most exciting project of regeneration through the arts. At the heart of this inspiring journey is Oswestrian Peter Vidal who transformed this former car showroom and 17th century tavern into a premier arts-pace, cafe and artisan outlets with the help of a dedicated team of volunteers.

The Willow is a place to bring the family, relax with friends and sample a wonderful array of delights from sumptuous wines, delicious coffees and cakes in spacious, creative surroundings. As well as one of the region's largest dedicated art spaces, it also boasts a gallery design shop, timeless vintage clothing and a luxury wine shop.

The Willow is home to some of the country's leading artisans including furniture designers and makers Vidal & Company, specialist lighting Blowzone and master-craftsman jeweller, Ken Kapal. The gallery runs a fantastic programme of events, exhibitions and workshops throughout the year for children and adults of all abilities.

This year **The Willow** were absolutely delighted to welcome Angela Hannawald from Berlin as part of the **ectarc** cultural exchange programme. During her time at the gallery, Angela helped to promote the gallery and organise an exhibition of Welsh artists. **The Willow** look forward to a continuing collaboration with **ectarc** in the future.



Music To Our Ears

Both **ectarc** and the **International Eisteddfod** (Wales' annual International music and dance festival) have had their home in Llangollen for many years. The **Eisteddfod** established itself in the Welsh hills in 1947 and **ectarc** came to the town in 1988. Both organisations have contributed to putting this little Welsh town on the world map, so it will be no surprise to learn that they have been working together for many, many years.

Every summer the **Eisteddfod** opens its doors to more than 800 volunteers who come to help run the festival and look after the approximately 4000 performers taking part. Working with the **Eisteddfod** team is a unique experience for any **ectarc** participant, but in particular for those with a background in Events Management.

Examples of **ectarc** work placements at the festival are: Marketing, Accounts, Fundraising, Administration and of course the planning of and the assisting with the activities during the actual **Eisteddfod** week.

Their most recent **ectarc** colleague is Yolanda Martinez Luceño from Barcelona, Spain. She has a background in Business Management and is assisting the office with the prepa-

ration of material for fundraising appeals and is also involved with social networking and mail-shots. Another main contribution she makes to the festival is in the form of researching contacts with choirs and dance/



Eisteddfod Pavilion

music groups from her region. The **Eisteddfod**'s Chief Executive, Mervyn Cousins, explains how this is the most important part of the work exchange: "**ectarc** participants come in with their own knowledge and contacts in the arts world. This is invaluable to us. It also makes it easier to set up any initial contacts with music and dance groups in their native language. Apart from this, they give an extra vibrancy to the office that only people from foreign countries can bring." Yolanda has settled right in and because her work placement finishes before the festival starts she is already making plans to return to Llangollen in July to work during

the festival. Both **ectarc** and the **International Eisteddfod** play an important role for each other. The **Eisteddfod** benefits from extra help in the office and the knowledge and contacts that the **ectarc** participants bring. **ectarc** itself benefits in the way that it can offer its participants a unique work placement, and the festival is an extra attraction for participants to come to Llangollen, rather than choosing to go, for instance, to competitors in Birmingham and Ireland. Chief Executive, Mervyn Cousins: "We see many of the **ectarc** participants returning to our festival, some as visitors, some to volunteer and some even to compete! We have a unique relationship with **ectarc**, one of which we are both very proud".

The International Eisteddfod will be from 4-10 July 2011. For more information visit:

www.llangollen2011.co.uk



Choir of the World 2010

NEW COMPANIES WORKING WITH ectarc:

Gap Personnel
 Valleys Race Equality Council
 Harlech College
 Dorothy Perkins Broughton / Wrexham Remsdaq
 Conwy Rural Development Centre
 North East Wales Business Parks Project
 Call Miss Jones
 Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch Association
 Earthing Solutions
 Scallywags Nursery
 Worldwide Marine Technology Ltd.
 Willacy Oil
 Sea Technik
 Dow Corning
 BDC Engineering Services Ltd.
 Mersey Dee Alliance
 Venture Photography Cardiff
 Washington Art Gallery
 Denbigh Community Hospital
 Wrexham Maelor Hospital, Haematology department
 St Deiniol's Library
 Tactical Solutions
 Theatr Stiwt
 Welsh National Opera
 Ruthin Public Library
 Conwy Rural Development Centre
 Denbighshire Record Office
 Hacker Young Accountants
 Monmouth Youth Centre
 Dragon Digital Intermediate
 It's My Shout film company

WELCOME BACK TO OLD WORK PLACEMENT COMPANIES:

Pristine Ceilings
 Castle Fine Arts Foundry
 Vidal and Company
 University of Bangor, School of Law
 RJA Orthopaedic Hospital
 SWPP Association Photography
 Crichton Bespoke Tailors

ectarc Open Day at Glasdir Centre

ectarc would like to say a big THANK YOU to all the people at the Glasdir Centre in Llanrwst for organising **ectarc**'s first open day on February 16th this year. This day was organised to give aspiring host families and companies a chance to meet the **ectarc** staff in person to hear first hand about the Leonardo da Vinci programme and how it can be of benefit to them. We received a very positive response so thank you to everyone for their support.



The Glasdir centre in Llanrwst

Telecoms revenue share

Over the last 20 years **ectarc** has been extremely fortunate in forming close ties with some of the UK's finest and most successful organisations. And it is only your unrivalled support that enables us to continue improving the education of young people throughout Europe.

Without your generosity and that of many others like you who help us to support these young learners, we could not continue to run the Leonardo programme.

As you are undoubtedly aware, we rely wholly on the EU for our funding and although grateful for this, we still, as an organisation, are forced to budget carefully and make the most of every opportunity to raise additional resources.

We have recently formed a partnership with a company called **iData** who are based in North Wales. As part of this relationship, **iData** have agreed to share all revenue received from any organisation referred via **ectarc**, who signs up for one of their land-line or mobile phone packages.

And fortunately, their line rentals and calls are some of the cheapest in the UK!

So next time you are reviewing your telecommunications, please either call iData on 0844 84 76 766 or email them on info@idata.uk.com and don't forget to quote 'ectarc' and help



the complete solutions company

0844 84 76 76 6 | www.iData.uk.com

Has your company got a success story to tell? Do you want to promote your product or service? Our FOCUS Newsletter is a quarterly publication and we want to feature **YOUR** news.

We send our newsletters to over 1700 companies and 2330 individuals within these organisations across Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire.

We always like to hear of our host organisations success stories from tenders won, major orders and of course expansion into new markets and sectors. These are difficult times for everybody so it's so good to hear about companies that are doing well.

As many of you will be aware, **ectarc** work with companies from every sector from engineering to medical. So we would like to share these contacts with you. If you have seen a company featured in our FOCUS Newsletter and you believe you could benefit from their products or services, please contact them!

This is only our 2nd newsletter and we are relying on our host companies to provide the content. The more news-worthy stories and advertising requests we receive from you, the bigger the newsletter will become!

To find out more about how to feature in our quarterly newsletters, please call **Nia Jones** on **01978 862204** or email **nia.jones@ectarc.com**

Managing Talent in Your Company



As the economic recovery unfolds, organisations are taking stock of their talent. For many companies, the last two years have meant restructuring, layoffs and salary freezes, creating an environment of low morale. Now that the economy is starting to improve, disengaged employees are beginning to look elsewhere. Companies are looking at their career planning, development and rewards programs to make sure that their employees are engaged and working toward long-term goals.

Another factor shaping corporate talent strategies is projected job growth. As companies start to hire again, many are being cautious, often initially turning to outside contractors or part-time workers. Therefore, with only modest job growth expected in the near term, companies must find ways to recruit, motivate and retain employees in an environment of limited career advancement.

But perhaps the biggest influence on talent strategies has been companies redefining their business strategies and goals in light of the new economy, with resulting shifts in the talent needed to achieve these goals. This, in turn, impacts all talent initiatives within the company, from workforce planning and recruiting to retention and compensation strategies.

Smart companies realise that these talent activities are inextricably linked. The success of an organisation's talent strategy depends on the integration of its talent processes.

Therefore if you want to give a boost to your staff, inspire and re-energise them again, why not have an interactive workshop tailored for your needs to do just that – inspire and re-energise.

The trainers at the Chamber of Commerce can assist you in putting a programme together to manage the talent you have in your company...you may have hidden talents that can assist in taking your company to the next level of growth.

Call us if you want to uncover your hidden talents and inspire your staff to greater performance.

For further information please contact Helen directly on 01606 883347 or 07855 311393. Alternatively you can email her at training@cepnwchamber.org.uk

Are You A Serial Networker?



Social Media Master Class - 8th June 2011

The West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Cheshire West & Chester County Council are delighted to request your attendance at their Social Media Master Class which will be held 8th June 2011 between 8.00am and 10.30am at the Council's HQ Building, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester, CH1 2NP. As we see an increase in the use of LinkedIn, Twitter and facebook by businesses this event will provide the opportunity to see how to maximise these systems to help YOUR business GROW

The event is **FREE to attend** so don't miss your opportunity to hear about the latest thinking on Social Media for SMEs at our Social Media master class.

There will be a talk on 'How to make the most of Social Media as a marketing tool' presented by **Andrew Greenyer, Head of Marketing, Knowledge and IT with Business Link**. This will be followed by a presentation from **Linda Merrills an Innovation Specialist with Business Link** who will discuss the benefits of applications and downloads to business.

As well as these great presentations there will be the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with businesses across the area.

Places are limited so don't miss your chance to book and move your marketing strategy into the 21st Century.

To reserve a space simply contact the Chamber Team on 01244 669988, email us on info@cepnwchamber.org.uk



The Glyndwr University Management Centre is holding a **Business Support Day** on the 9th June in the Centre based within Redwither Tower on Wrexham Industrial Estate. This drop in day is an opportunity for local businesses to hear about what support is available to them. There will be exhibitors available between 10am and 4pm to talk to businesses about what they can offer. Exhibitors attending the event are:

Finance Wales - Commercial funding for businesses in Wales
Deeside College - Find out about subsidised courses
Leadership Management Wales - Funding for Leadership & Management Development
Go Wales - Subsidised work placements & funding for training
Regional Support Centre - Information, advice & Support for businesses
ectarc - Free work placements for your business
North Wales Fire Service - Fire safety advice for businesses
Wrexham County Borough Council - Specialist business advice
Glyndwr Innovations - Consultancy, business training & Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
Venture Wales - Information on starting or growing your business as well as information on funding

As well as...

Glyndwr University
Flintshire County Council
Federation of Small Businesses

Gemma Wrathall from The Glyndwr Management Centre said, "The day aims to be a one stop shop where businesses can come along to a relaxed atmosphere to see what support is available to them such as funding for training and the opportunities available for placements within their business." For more details please contact one of the team on **01978 664611** or email managementcentre@glyndwr.ac.uk

A recently established network designed to promote business growth and innovation across the North West-North Wales border will have its next meeting on 14th June at Egerton House, Wirral.

Mersey Dee Alliance's Innovation Network provides an opportunity for small and medium-sized businesses to assess their performance, gain access to entrepreneurs and experts, and make them aware of the latest regional and national initiatives and opportunities.

The network includes those who support the growth of businesses, including business advisors, investors, legal advisors, industry and university experts and government agencies.

It also allows members to collaborate, share best practice and discuss ways to move businesses forward in the current economic climate.

Egerton House is the home of Invest Wirral, a single-point-of-contact service from the Council's inward investment and business location team. It provides a one-to-one service that resolves issues facing business development.

Executive Member for Prosperity, and Vice Chair of the MDA, Councillor Herbert Manley said: "The network will not only include members of small to medium businesses but will provide them with an opportunity to meet and progress their businesses with those who support them.

"It will also provide members with access to innovative networks such as the national Knowledge Transfer Networks run by the Technology Strategy Board.

"In these economically challenging times it is particularly important to help such businesses face and overcome commercial difficulties and begin to grow."

The network is also supported by Cheshire West and Chester, Denbighshire, Wrexham County Borough, Flintshire and Wirral Councils alongside the Welsh Assembly Government and formerly the North West Development Agency.

The next meeting of the network will be a business breakfast taking place on 14th June at Egerton House, Wirral. To book your place at the free event please visit www.merseydealliance.org.uk/innovationnetwork.

iData - business mobiles, landlines and phone systems

Imagine a world of business where there were no computers, no mobile phones, no Internet and no e-mails. You barely have to go back a couple of decades to find that world - where telecommunications meant a huge phone system physically cabled to a phone on your desk and that was it.

In a very short time, businesses have added car phones, quickly to be replaced by mobile phones, plus personal computers, then laptops, a company website and e-mail access. For many businesses, their communications have grown in a piecemeal fashion, with different contracts for landlines and mobiles, one company responsible for website development and another company responsible for web hosting. The result can be telecommunications that are both inefficient and expensive.

Fortunately help is at hand. **iData** was founded by three people who know the telecommunications industry inside out and who have a genuine passion for providing their clients with solutions that maximise efficiency and minimise costs.

A converted garage in Ewloe seems an unlikely base for a hi-tech business, but this is where Chris Quayle, James Wilson, and Nick Cheetham started iData.

In 2008 they bought new premises on Welsh Road, Zone One of the Deeside Industrial Estate, which they completely refurbished and moved into in September that year.

Starting a new business just as the recession was beginning to take its toll might not sound like a good idea, but Chris explained that a tough trading climate has brought benefits for **iData**: "Businesses are looking at ways to reduce costs and improve performance and their telecommunications has proved to be a good starting point. We undertake a review of existing systems, including landlines, business mobiles, phone systems, websites and e-mail.

500 businesses rely on and trust iData

iData are very proud of the honest, trustworthy and reliable advice we give to our business clients. With nearly 500 customers and growing, all our staff are thrilled with the combined goals we have achieved in just under 4 years and the feedback and testimonials we have recently received from our 'Customer Satisfaction' survey.

Our reputation and business ethics have enabled **iData** to achieve the following over the last 18 months;

1 of only 75 GOLD partners in the whole of the UK partnering with Vodafone

Recently Achieved the 'Apple iPhone Accreditation' and joined the select few

Created our own landline billing platform and passed the criteria to partner with Openreach

Awarded our own Direct Debit licence with Lloyds TSB commercial

We Are Certified through Vodafone's 'One Net' accredited partner scheme

Won regional 'Business of the Year' award in 2009

iData's main goal is to save our customers money, continue to build our superb customer relationships and also look at ways in which emerging technology and products can benefit our clients now and in the future.

iData are the market leaders for all your Business Telecoms in Flintshire, Chester and the surrounding areas, we also have clients throughout the UK and are trusted by some of the biggest names.

For further information please call iData on 0844 84 76 76 6



OFFICE TO RENT

Small, fully-furnished office to rent in East Street, Llangollen

Telephone point
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Parking nearby

Photocopying facilities can be arranged if required

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01978 861 514

You'll never miss a business call again

With many businesses struggling to make ends meet, the last thing they want is to lose customers because they can't get to the phone.

Peter Belton and David Toner have managed to turn this problem into a successful business venture by providing a telephone answering service.

Call Miss Jones launched in October last year and business is already booming, with more recruits being taken on regularly. If you're engaged or unable to get to the phone, Call Miss Jones answer your calls from their office and pass any messages to you by text or email.

Clients of the Wrexham based company include electricians, plumbers and legal practices.

"One of our clients is a locksmith who said he was losing business because he couldn't answer all the calls," said Peter. "If you're locked out you just look in the Yellow Pages. If a number is engaged you'll just try the next one down the list. This service means he'll never be engaged, we take a message and text it to his phone."

Peter and David came up for the idea for **Call Miss Jones** when talking about their own problems they faced in their own jobs answering the phone.

"The concept for the name came from the idea of a 1950's secretary called Miss Jones," Said Peter, "Stereotypically it was Miss Jones who answered the phones. We've had a lot of positive feedback on the name."

He added; "We are finding that small businesses who are serious about growth would rather use a professional call answering service, than recruit a full-time receptionist. Many small firms simply cannot afford to recruit in the current climate but don't want to miss out on possible new customers by not being able to take their call."

Call Miss Jones employs 12 people at the moment and is planning to expand to 50 employees by the end of this year. They are also looking at developing the business to provide other services such as Payroll in 2012. For more information go to www.callmissjones.co.uk

If you would like more information regarding this topic, or to schedule an interview with Peter Belton, please call **Andrea Murtagh** on **01244 572099** or email info@callmissjones.co.uk



New ectarc Groups Arriving May— September

Start	Finish	Country	Examples of skills
6th June	23rd June	Italy	Variety of lab placements
18th July	11th August	Germany	Marketing, event organisers, HR, accounts, sales admin, export
July/August TBC	14 weeks dates TBC	Spain	TBC
30th August	22nd September	Germany	Graphic Designers
30th August	22nd September	Germany	TBC
12th September	6th October	Germany	TBC
12th September	15th December	Barcelona	TBC
3rd October	27th October	Germany	Physician assistants, health care administration, IT, laboratory

