

SOUTH EAST VIEW

SUMMER 2006

ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE REGION

TECHNOLOGY GOLD

THE SOUTH EAST IS STRIKING A RICH VEIN OF INNOVATION FROM THE ROAD TO THE AIR

ANOTHER COUNTRY

How the rural sector is changing with the times



PLUS: SEEDA CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIEF THE PRIME MINISTER

PREVIEW



Welcome to the summer issue of South East VIEW, in which we'll be looking at pushing boundaries, both in terms of technology and the rural sector. Here's what's inside:

SE Overview

The latest news from around SEEDA and comment from SEEDA's Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, on the effect of Broadband and WiFi on South East businesses

SE Close-Up

Featuring five examples of how SEEDA has helped support technology-based companies to speed up and lift off, plus an overview of the rural sector and the Single Regeneration Budget

SE at a Glance

Our directory of statistics, appointments, terms and definitions, updated every issue, providing you with all the most useful information about the South East

As always we value your comments on South East VIEW, not only on what's in this edition, but also what you might like to see in future editions. Drop me a line at editor@seeda.co.uk or call me on 01483 470177. I look forward to hearing from you.

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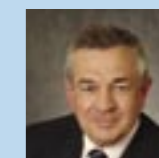
For the alternative perspective



REGENERATION

"I want to see all our communities, cities and towns both creating economic prosperity and benefiting from it. This means seeing all deprived communities successfully regenerated and continuing to narrow the gap in terms of crime, jobs and skills, between the toughest estates and the rest."

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



NEW ENERGY

"We need the market and consumers to support us to push existing technologies towards greater efficiency and lower emissions, actually making all of this happen in reality. We need individuals to grasp the reality of the new energy landscape and be willing to adapt to it."

Malcolm Wicks, Minister for Energy in the Department for Trade & Industry (DTI)



ON THE ROAD TO THE FUTURE

"Should there be any doubt about the importance of motorsport to the UK, remember what Fernando Alonso said after winning this year's British Grand Prix: 'This is another of the classic races that you want to win. Great Britain is the home of motorsport. I live in Oxford myself and of course we have a big part of our team based nearby at Enstone.'"

Christopher Macgowan, CEO of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders

Making the NEWS

For further information on any of the following stories, email Sam Philpott on editor@seeda.co.uk

THE ESSENTIALS OF HORTICULTURE

SEEDA recently took the opportunity of highlighting the importance of the horticultural sector and to demonstrate how evolving plant technologies and science can help achieve sustainable economic growth when it attended the world-famous Chelsea Flower Show. SEEDA supported two of The Show's exhibits: Sparsholt College and Hilliers Nurseries, both from the South East. SEEDA's Rural Sector Director, Valerie Carter, said: "Plants not only provide food and building materials, but they have a real potential to contribute to a range of industrial processes and energy – for example, oilseed rape and sunflowers for industrial oils and lubricants, maize to provide plastics, hemp and nettles for fabrics and woody biomass for energy. Plants are renewable, sustainable and biodegradable as well as providing potential for more secure incomes for producers. And the

South East has the necessary soils for producing such crops, and is close to high-value markets in its towns, cities and London."

Although the region has a world class reputation for horticultural skills through such places as East Malling Research Centre and Imperial College Wye, there is a need to continue skills development for new processes and products. Valerie added: "The profile of the horticulture sector needs to be raised, promoting new opportunities through science and technology as well as traditional plant growing. SEEDA will be working with private sector lead businesses, universities, colleges, research establishments, and others such as The Royal Horticultural Society and the National Trust to develop the sector and encourage news entrants into the industry."



Students at Sparsholt College with their Lifelong Learning gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show



Sir Digby Jones, left, with Dr Treve Willis

IAS TAKE-OFF

The launch of the Innovation Advisory Service (IAS) was a great success; more than 170 delegates attended the event at the RBS Williams Conference Centre in Oxfordshire recently. Dr Treve Willis, IAS Project Director, and Sir Digby Jones, both pictured above, were among the speakers.

KENT SCIENCE PARK WINS ENTERPRISE

Kent Science Park in Sittingbourne is the South East's most enterprising place. It has just won the regional title in the 2006 Enterprising Britain Awards which seek out the places doing most to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship.

It goes through to the national judging in September and, if successful there, could go on to the European Finals.

IMMIGRATION HQ IN FOLKESTONE

Construction has started on a 55,000 sq ft development to house the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Headquarters in SEEDA's Shearway Business Park in Folkestone. One thousand people will work there when the building is completed contributing further to the regeneration of the town.

SPARROW RESCUE

Following the pioneering initiative with SEEDA's Building for Nature at the Ropetackle development in West Sussex, Berkeley Homes is introducing Schwegler Sparrow Terraces at its offices and developments in the South East.

Building for Nature aims to minimise the impact that building and housing developments have on the environment and to create positive gains for wildlife.

SEEDA's Building for Nature Project Manager, Peter Wain, says: "With correct guidance and advice at the design and planning stages, developments can protect and enhance our natural environment. We are currently identifying SEEDA developments where similar schemes can be implemented."



Peter Wain, left, with Martin Bolton, SEEDA's Sustainable Development Manager at Ropetackle

PEN PRIZE



Christina Hartshorn

Christina Hartshorn, SEEDA's Management and Enterprise Skills Manager, has won a top prize in the Emerald Literati 2006 Network Awards for Excellence, for an article on teaching entrepreneurship. 'Paradoxes in Entrepreneurship education: chalk and talk or chalk and cheese' was written in collaboration with Paul Hannon, Director of Research and Education at the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship and it will now be available on the Emerald Network, a leading English language publisher of academic and professional literature of the fields of management and education.

AWARD-WINNING REGENERATION BUILDER APPOINTED FOR WOOLSTON RIVERSIDE



Plans for Woolston Riverside

SEEDA has appointed Crest Nicholson, regeneration award winner, as its housebuilding partner for the flagship regeneration project at Woolston Riverside in Southampton. Work on site preparation should start in spring 2007, with building of the first new homes beginning later in the year.

The eight-year programme will deliver over 1,500 new homes as part of the major revitalisation of the area which will also include extensive community business facilities.

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY SECTOR CONSORTIUM SET UP

South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA) has been launched to help medium and small businesses in health technologies including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices, and diagnostics. SEHTA's aim will be to provide an industry informed focus for SEEDA's funding, advice and support for the sector. Any company in the sector in the region can become a member free and members will be involved in the running of the Alliance to ensure it focuses on real commercial needs. Chief

Executive, David Parry, says: "The region has the highest number of health technology companies in the world outside the US. Nine of the world's top 10 life science companies and all the top pharmaceuticals companies are in the region which also has top research universities and medical schools undertaking pioneering research. Our mission is to catalyse innovation and international competitiveness among our small and medium-sized companies."



David Parry

AT HER MAJESTY'S PLEASURE....

HM The Queen has officially opened Oxford Castle Heritage Project, attracting a big crowd of excited onlookers. The result of a partnership between SEEDA, Oxford County Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust and English Heritage, the Castle Project has been designed as a major visitor attraction.

Central to the development is the Malmaison Hotel which used to be the notorious Oxford Prison but is now rather more attractive to its inmates. Restaurants, a market, an Art Gallery, plus the site's own historic monuments, complete the development.

The development has been so successful, that it is already being used as a model for similar projects.

DARTFORD DREAMS

Two new SEEDA property purchases in Dartford in Kent will help bring forward the planned redevelopment of the town's Northern Gateway. A 2.6 hectare site has been acquired, along with the Matrix Business Centre, which used to belong to the Unwins Group. The Matrix Business Centre houses 30 businesses and is part of a planned mixed-use redevelopment.



Her Majesty The Queen at Oxford Castle

YOU CAN'T IGNORE THE DRAFT

A number of major new SEEDA initiatives have been announced, picking up major recommendations for 'transformational actions', designed to address issues identified in the new draft Regional Economic Strategy (RES). After a final consultation, the RES is formally sent to Government for approval, then officially launched at the SEEDA Open Annual Public Meeting at Reading Town Hall on 31 October 2006.

Among the initiatives was the decision to prepare a South East Coast Strategy by the autumn of 2006. From Thanet in the east to Southampton in the west, the Strategy will seek to unblock the path to making the coast perform as strongly as other parts of the region.

STARTING GUNNELL



Sally Gunnell OBE

Olympic Gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE was a keynote speaker at a conference for all key stakeholders to launch the region's offer for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The Regional Olympic Co-ordinating Group has been set up, led by SEEDA and Sport England South East, to deliver big wins from the Olympics.

The South East's core aims are to promote the region globally, attract tourism, win business, create jobs, encourage sport, and involve communities, all within a sustainable framework.

MONEY TO GROW

Growing businesses in the region can now get fast-tracked to investment funding through the Investment Readiness Programme just launched by Business Link and Finance South East. Eligible companies seeking £20,000 plus of external finance can be referred by their local Business Link to an Investment Readiness Adviser.

This free service will assess the business plan, discuss the best type of funding and create an action plan to win the funding.

CREATIVE THINKING

Southampton's Bargate historic monument has opened as a contemporary art gallery this summer. Funded by SEEDA, the project has been developed in partnership with Southampton City Council. The Bargate Monument Gallery is set to become the driving force of the creative industries, providing support, assistance and a new showcase, with the first exhibition 'Affirmation' featuring new works by Southampton-born artist, Sarah Misselbrook.

SEEDA's Area Manager for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Rachel Andrews said: "SEEDA is pleased to support culture in Southampton and delighted to be part of a project which has been a fantastic example of partners working together."

ENTERPRISING THINKING AT ARUN GATEWAY

'Think Enterprise', an event showcasing the support for starting and growing businesses available through SEEDA's Enterprise Gateway network, marked the launch of the Arun Gateway in West Sussex.

SEEDA Chairman, James E Brathwaite, CBE opened the Gateway which is located on Chichester University's Bognor Regis Campus. He praised the drive of the local businesses and other agencies who had brought it into being, saying how appropriate it was for an event encouraging enterprise to announce the opening.

Over 50 existing and would be businesses came to 'Think Enterprise' to hear how the Gateway's services of business support, advice and networking were already helping

many businesses. Gareth Sear, the Arun Gateway Director said: "Think Enterprise was a great success. The feedback has been very positive, with everybody commenting on a great buzz at the event. The range of people thinking enterprise was across the board; especially welcome was the interest from hard to reach people, such as ethnic groups, young people and women."



The Arun Gateway launch event

For further information on any of the following stories, email Sam Philpott on editor@seeda.co.uk

RDA's BRIEF PRIME MINISTER

Accompanied by Chief Executive Pam Alexander, SEEDA Chairman James E Brathwaite CBE, as Chair of Chairs, led his colleagues from the eight other Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) when they briefed Prime Minister Tony Blair on their achievements since 1999.

The RDAs were able to set out the breadth and effectiveness of their activities in promoting sustainable economic growth and regeneration, ahead of their forthcoming submissions to the Treasury on their future plans as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) which ends in July 2007.

As Chair of Chairs, Jim Brathwaite is national spokesperson for all RDAs on a range of issues, giving him unprecedented access to Government Ministers on vital policy debates. As well as leading the RDA representations to the Government's CSR he will be helping Government to make business support services more manageable and transparent, as well as promoting the take-up of environmental technologies, especially those conserving water.

Commenting, Jim said: "I am delighted to take on this role at such a crucial time. I'm hoping for a positive and

constructive Spending Review outcome for all RDAs, while highlighting the need for further investment in the South East. With our annual contribution to Government in decline, although still one of only three regions making a positive contribution to the Treasury, it is essential increased investment is made to the South East so that all regions benefit from our prosperity.

"I am determined that my work, and that of my successors, will secure the effective delivery of regional economic development in the future and show the positive impact of RDAs."



Pam Alexander (first from left) and Jim Brathwaite CBE (fifth from left) with Prime Minister Tony Blair at Downing Street

PUSHING IT

Technology plays a vital role in the performance of business and consequently the future of the South East region, explains SEEDA Chief Executive Pam Alexander.

When SEEDA Chairman Jim Brathwaite CBE, as Chair of Chairs, led the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to brief the Prime Minister on what their priorities should now be, he showed that the changes and opportunities we have today were little imagined when RDAs were first set up in 1999. This has been reinforced by the outcome of the consultation on the new draft Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

Globalisation was not a driver then; the USA was seen as the only real competition. Today, however, China and India have emerged as new economic superpowers, with Russia and Brazil not far behind. Suddenly, every company in every country has to start thinking in a global context.

Transformational change is needed in the ways we all do business to succeed in this global marketplace. One of the fastest ways to attain this all important global perspective is through Broadband. Recent research carried out by one of the world's biggest search engines shows that these developing technologies are changing not only our Internet use, but also our attitudes to work and our lifestyles. Broadband, a fledgling technology back in 1997, is now a familiar term to everybody – even if most of us aren't as fully competent as our eight-year-old children. Achieving nearly 100 per cent coverage for the South East over the last three years was the crucial first step into this new world. The challenge

now is to persuade our wired region to realise its massive business benefits and adopt it enthusiastically.

The development of the latest WiFi (Wireless Fidelity) technology, on the other hand, presents yet another, very different set of new opportunities. First, it enables and encourages remote working which is guaranteed to help with some of the infrastructure deficiencies harming the South East's competitiveness. Secondly, it will alter our perspective of the Internet, allowing us to dip in and out at will. We won't have to 'go' online any more – we'll already be there. We are only beginning to consider what this might mean. Thirdly, by reducing the need to travel, WiFi will cut down on carbon emissions and fuel consumption, two extremely serious considerations as we move into a future with depleted energy sources and irreversible climate change.

Global Competitiveness, Smart Growth and Sustainability are the three elements of Sustainable Prosperity shaping the region and are centre stage in the new draft RES. Growth is needed to sustain the quality of life for future generations, not to destroy it. As our expectations rise we need to change our behaviour at work and at home to cut fossil fuel emissions and to use energy efficiently. There are great opportunities for South East businesses to lead the world in microgeneration and renewable energy starting with the markets here at home. Creating a

sustainable future is itself generating new growth sectors in innovative environmental engineering and the South East is well placed to compete globally, building high-value businesses to develop and deploy new technologies, to harness academic exploration through knowledge transfer and to raise our skills and career opportunities.

In just seven years the South East's horizons have changed. Everything is happening faster and a future that was once merely talked about in think-tanks has arrived far sooner than we thought. It's not slowing down and it won't. Businesses across the South East know that we don't win by "keeping up" – we need to think ahead and transform.

Pam Alexander



SEEDA'S Chief Executive, Pam Alexander

THE FAST TRACK

Currently worth £2 billion a year, British motorsport is ahead of the competition both on and off the track and it is showing no signs of slowing. We caught up with some of its key drivers.

Motorsport is a major driver of innovation in the South East region. Of the industry's current worth of some £5 billion nationally, the South East accounts for about £2 billion. Technologies such as the efficient use of resources using alternative fuels are being developed by world-leading companies in Kent and West Sussex under the Energy Efficient Motorsport (EEMS) programme.

It is this part of the sport that is being helped by funding from SEEDA. Motorsport as an industry is a huge business sector in the South East. The motorsport development cluster, known by some as Motorsport Valley, leads the world in terms of expertise and experience. By investing in it, we are not only maintaining that lead over rivals like the US and Germany, but we are also making sure that motorsport



Fiona Leggate's bio-diesel car

businesses from across the world continue to use our experts and buy our technology. To achieve this, SEEDA is spreading its funding across the industry – skills and training, engineering, sporting talent and most importantly of all, technological development.

This funding is managed by Motorsport Development UK (MDUK), a union of the public and private sector, which was set up to manage a five-year investment plan recommended by the Motorsport Competitiveness Panel.

"British motorsport is big business in the South East" says Dr Stephen Bunkall of MDUK. "From Formula One teams like Williams in Oxford to McLaren in Woking to motorsport development groups such as Nasamax in Kent. But we need to make sure that it stays here. MDUK was set up to make sure that investment is channelled into key areas that will help the UK remain the global leader. Technological development is one of those key areas. We want racing teams from around the world to continue to use the UK's expertise and experience to create world class engines and automotive systems. As the world becomes increasingly economically competitive, it's vital that we play to our strengths – and motorsport is undoubtedly one of them."

MDUK currently funds a wide range of research projects, but some of the

most important in technological terms – and the most practical in terms of development for the automotive industry as a whole – are those overseen by EEMS. This organisation, initially conceived in 2002 and now under the control of MDUK, exists to encourage the efficient use of resources and the development of alternative fuels, putting energy efficiency at the heart of modern motorsport without compromising the speed and thrills of the sport itself.

EEMS supports environmentally-aware individuals and groups across 'Motorsport Valley', such as Fiona Leggate, a young and extremely talented British Touring Car Championship driver who is totally dedicated to energy efficiency and acts as an excellent ambassador for renewable fuel in motorsport. Then

"Motorsport in the South East is a massive industry."

SEEDA Head of Manufacturing & Competitiveness, Peter Taylor

there is Team Nasamax, which was specifically created to develop and apply the use of energy efficient, renewable and sustainable technologies in international motorsport. And there is Ricardo in Shoreham, West Sussex, one of the biggest mechanical engineering companies in the world, with its mission to help alternative fuel cars become fairly treated within motorsport, leading to their general acceptance in both the racing and commercial worlds.

But SEEDA is doing more than funding established motorsport companies through MDUK. It has also recently awarded a £1.3 million grant to Oxford Brookes University, which has been used to part-fund a new state-of-the-art Motorsport/High Performance Engineering Education Centre. The

Centre, which will be fully operational by September 2006, aims to become a key educational hub to teach specialised industry skills.

"We also want the Centre to bring together all the region's motorsport education institutions, so we can focus their different skills here, as well as working alongside other regional initiatives," says Denise Morrey, Dean of the School of Technology. "Together we can form a real resource centre for the industry, push R&D and exploit young people's fascination with motorsport to bring them into engineering and related subjects. It's a great way of addressing skills shortages and future educational and training needs."

SEEDA's Head of Manufacturing & Competitiveness, Peter Taylor, agrees wholeheartedly: "Motorsport in the South East is a massive industry which

generates a lot of wealth and is also an important driver of innovation in advanced engineering. We are very proud of our world leading motorsport industry and particularly proud to be associated with Oxford Brookes in this venture."

The motorsport industry, it seems, is being well marshalled – and it needs to be. Because just like in racing, it is much harder to catch up than it is to stay in front. But with a useful pit stop in the form of the Motorsport Competitiveness Panel, it seems that our global rivals are going to have a hard time catching us now or in the future.

For more information on motorsport, call Peter Taylor on 01483 484286



READY FOR TAKE-OFF

The UK aerospace industry is second only to the United States in terms of global sales, but the Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (FAC) is working hard to make sure it flies even higher.



Ross Bradley of the FAC

"The UK turns over roughly £18 billion a year, of which £7 billion is in the South East region – and in five years' time we want to make it £10 billion." Ross Bradley, Chief Executive of the Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (FAC), is talking to us about the future of the UK aerospace industry – and he seems confident about it. "We want the South East to be a globally recognised centre for specific technologies, so we need to concentrate on growth. With China and India chasing our high-value markets, it's the best way to maintain our position as a key global player."

This need for growth was first identified back in 2002 with the formation of the Aerospace Innovation Growth Team, led by Patricia Hewitt and the DTI. The Team focused on ensuring that, 25 years into the future, the UK would still maintain a major share of the global aerospace market. SEEDA recognised

the importance of the industry in the South East, since it was (and is) home to over one third of all UK aerospace and defence businesses, and looked around for an organisation to steer the development and advise on funding. They did not have to look far.

FAC was formed as an umbrella group in 1996, bringing together a loose confederation of aerospace and defence businesses to help compete better in the global market. It was mainly an umbrella group. So in 2003,

"SEEDA was very prescriptive in its funding – and rightly so."

Ross Bradley, Chief Executive of FAC

with SEEDA's support, FAC looked to employ somebody to drive its development. "And they found me," Ross says. "At the time I was working with EuroFighter, but I couldn't resist

a fresh challenge. I've worked in the industry all my life, so this was a great opportunity to help it grow." Ross did not waste any time. He immediately began to evaluate the possibilities for growth within the industry and soon realised that the only way it could survive as a global leader would be through its ability to innovate and then convert the technology into commercial applications. "It became clear that we needed to do this faster than anyone else. We couldn't compete with, say, the Chinese, in terms of cost.

So we had to get our technology to the commercial market as soon as possible. The FAC looked at which parts of the sector could be developed this way to match the possible growth areas and

we came up with sectors in which the region had academic strength." The areas identified included Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs), advanced systems, air traffic management, defence and composites. "Investment in these sectors could be exploited in other areas of strength in the region such as boats, cars and even wind turbines. The applications are endless."

On FAC's advice, SEEDA began to divert funding into the identified areas. But they weren't just given a cheque. "SEEDA was very prescriptive with its funding – and rightly so. Its experts didn't want all the money to go to the larger companies; they wanted to see it filtering down through the entire industry so that every business, from multi-national to SME, was able to benefit from it. Take the UAV programme, for example – the overall

funding is £2 million. And although BAE Systems, the programme leader, takes a slice, funds also go to 28 regional SMEs." The same is true of the £3 million funding put into the development of advanced system diagnostics – in layman's terms, the ability of an aeroplane's system to check itself for potential equipment failure and report any faults not only to the ground, but also directly to the system designers. "Investment in this is vital," Ross explains, "since it ensures a longer life for the equipment itself and cuts down on operating costs. And the funds provided by SEEDA are once again evenly spread among both the key developers and the SMEs involved." SEEDA's funding is also helping to bring SMEs and academic institutions together. "The bigger aerospace businesses no longer want parts delivered by hundreds of suppliers

any more. They want larger systems provided by fewer suppliers. And our business models are uniting SMEs and research centres so these systems can be supplied to meet that demand.

"Some global businesses such as Boeing have already bought into this, so we know it's working. All we need to do now is push onwards and upwards, to make sure that the South East becomes globally recognised. Just like Seattle is the home of Boeing, we want the South East to become the home of the aerospace technologies we're developing, and SEEDA's funding is essential in achieving this."

If you are coming to the Farnborough International Air Show (17-22 July), come and meet SEEDA and the FAC in Hall 4, Stand E14.

For more information on FAC, call Ross Bradley on 01252 375600

WORKING *on water*

For many people, washing a car is work enough. So how would you set about washing a 60ft yacht? We asked the inventor of Sealift2™, whose technology is about to change the face of ports in the UK.



Don Thom, inventor of Sealift2



In 2000, New Zealander Don Thom left the tiny Pacific island of Tahiti where he had been building a marina and came to England to see a relative. On a whim, he decided to stay – but he is laid-back like that. Now, six years later, he is still here and running a hugely successful business venture at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. His business owes its success to boat-cleaning technology that he himself designed – but he is smart like that.

The technology is Sealift2, a floating dock that has been designed to lift yachts and motorboats at sea, allowing

a freelance marina consultant and began to work around the world, designing and building marinas. “They say sailors have a girl in every port. For me, it’s marinas,” he says.

It was soon after he arrived in Britain that he resurrected his Sealift concept, except this time he had in mind a version that worked on a slightly different lifting principle and was consequently more stable. “I won’t go into the details,” he says, “but it was generally a new and much improved version. So to avoid any confusion with the original, I decided to call it

through SEEDA’s Enterprise Hub and who would bring in investment to the Island. He’d already had a successful idea, he knew what he wanted to do with it and he had the confidence to achieve it. With SEEDA’s help, we made sure that he had the support he needed to move the project on. Since then, he’s never looked back.”

Indeed, Don is very much looking forward. “I’ve got a great team working with me. And in four or five years we intend to be operating 12 to 15 new units along the South Coast alone. We’ve had a lot of interest from overseas, including France, Australia and Dubai. We’re even considering opening a manufacturing plant in Barbados to service the US and Canadian markets. I’m pretty excited about the business potential over there, as well as having the chance to take a few days’ holiday from time to time.”

From the sound of it, Don deserves a holiday. After just two and half years in existence, his business is booming and he and his team have worked hard to make it happen. “It’s been suggested that we sell the technology to others, since it’s so easy to assemble and control. But we want to operate them wherever they’re based, certainly in the UK. That way, we make sure it’s done quickly and it’s done right. And that’s what helped us succeed – that and the launch pad we were given here in Cowes. I hope I’ve repaid their faith in me.” No worries there, Don.

“With SEEDA’s help, we made sure that he had the support he needed to move the project on. Since then he’s never looked back.”

Matt Hill, Economic Development Project Manager at IWEP

them to be cleaned and repaired quickly and efficiently. “I actually invented the system 30 years ago,” Don explains, “or at least a simpler version of it. This was back in New Zealand where I started in the marine business – and believe me, once you’re in, you’re in for life.”

It was while working in (Port Opua in the North Island) that Don first hit upon the idea of using a floating dock for raising yachts and motorboats. “Well, why not, I thought. It’ll go anywhere, it’ll be easy to put together and launch and it’ll fit into any harbour you like. What more do you need?” And with that the original Sealift was born. Don designed it, built it himself and put it into service with what turned out to be great results.

The only problem was lack of space for double dock technology. The single deck version was just not enough. It was soon after this that Don became

Sealift2, since the first version was – and still is – operating in New Zealand.”

Casting around for somewhere to develop the idea, he came into contact with the Isle Of Wight Economic Partnership (IWEP) and SEEDA. “They couldn’t have been more helpful,” says Don. “They listened to me from the start, understood what I wanted to do and made it easy for me to take the designs further. I needed an office to work in, so they gave me one at Cowes Waterfront – Venture Quays. I needed space to develop the design and build it, so they sorted that out too. Short of supplying me with funds, they did everything they could to help me make the project happen.”

Matt Hill, Economic Development Project Manager at the Isle of Wight Economic Partnership, said: “When we first met Don, we saw him as just the kind of man that we could help

For more information on Sealift2, please call Don Thom on 0870 765 8001

WATERBORN KILLERS

With the outbreak of bird flu, the establishment of a SEEDA-funded team to combat viruses is a timely intervention. We talk to the man leading it.

"We're not looking for a cure – I want to make that clear," says Dr Paul Reip. "We'd love to, of course, but that's not what we do. What we're doing is to produce materials at the nanoscale that kill viruses. It's not as likely to cover us in glory, but it's just as effective for saving lives."

Dr Reip knows what he is talking about. As founder and Chief Technology Officer of QinetiQ Nanomaterial Limited (QNL), he is the man leading the pioneering work of Team AVNP (Anti-Viral NanoParticles).

But he is the first to admit that it was not his work that started it all off. "That was carried out by Dr Guogang Ren at Queen Mary's University of London, who came to me one day when I was lecturing there and asked if he could have a word. I agreed, of course, and he explained to me how he'd discovered that at the nanoscale – imagine the smallest scale you can think of – certain inorganic materials kill viruses such as SARS and avian flu on contact."

However, from that brief conversation came the potential for a seemingly

intensive testing but for this funding was needed. "Ren had been able to involve Professor John Oxford and his company Retroscreen Virology, but with such huge potential we needed to get some funding in place to move it forward," Dr Reip explains. "I talked to SEEDA about acquiring funding to help carry out the development. And the timing was perfect: SEEDA was about to embark upon a new initiative in nanotechnology – its largest single investment in science and technology to date. Personally I can't thank the Agency enough.

"With Queen Mary and Retroscreen on board to do the testing of the materials made by QNL, I went to Dr Peter Allan at the Wolfson Centre at Brunel University to ask for help with polymer development and characterisation," Dr Reip explains, "and then to the Pall Corporation and Sun Chemical to find help in developing the applications that could use the technology. It was an extremely busy time for me, but the programme came together surprisingly quickly."

Dr Reip helped steer the project

"We're not looking for a cure. We're producing materials that kill viruses. it's just as effective for saving lives."

Dr Paul Reip, founder & Chief Technology Officer, QinetiQ

endless range of antiviral products, such as face masks, air filters and anti-viral coatings. "I've been working on R&D at QinetiQ since 1982, when it was the Ministry of Defence Research organisation, so I often look at how ideas can be developed and exploited!"

The next step was to develop Dr Ren's ideas and put them through

through to winning the SEEDA project funds, but the difficult job now begins – developing the materials that can expand the initial research and yet be used in real applications. "The team we've assembled so far is truly world class. At the initial planning meeting, there were so many ideas flying about, so many possibilities, different products to which the coatings to be applied,

spin-offs from the early work and so on – it was a wonderful moment and we've got so many ideas to work on."

The team will be testing the antiviral materials in at Retroscreen's new laboratory for at least nine months before passing the results onto the Pall Corporation and Sun Chemical for applications development. "We'll be examining the power of the antiviral materials and which viruses they can kill – which, so far, appears to be mostly everything applied. However we will also be assessing the toxicity of the materials themselves, making sure they are safe to use. The principal focus will be on products in the three areas of filtration, medical devices and coating. Once these are moving, we will see if some of the new ideas can be followed up. The initial funding is for two years, but if we're successful, I believe that this will just be the start. And we're going to make every minute and every pound of investment count."

When it comes to his feelings about the exploitation of academic research, Dr Reip is realistic. "People have to make money somehow, of course, and if they're going to do it while potentially saving lives, then I'm all for it. But with a consortium that is designed like this, we can rapidly pull through from the basic academic research, directly into the more commercial and industrial aspects. And our joint success can only mean a brighter future for the South East economy and a safer future for its population."

***For more information,
call Jason Wiggins, SEEDA
advisor on nanotechnology
on 07855 262765***

SE AHEAD

PAPER OVER

Goodbye to wasting paper in Accounts; hello to healthier profits and a more environmentally-friendly planet. South East VIEW talks pulp facts with the highly successful Paper2Data.

While most of working life has become electronic, the vast majority of accounts and transactions remain stranded on paper. Meanwhile, it has been suggested that paper wastage can cost as much as 2.7 percent of a company's annual turnover – which translates as £27,000 if your company turns over £1 million a year. And we are all aware of how wasted paper is inextricably entwined with damage to the planet. So what is to stop you from converting your paper accounts to electronic ones? With Paper2Data working for you, the answer to that is 'absolutely nothing'.

Paper2Data started life two years ago as an epiphany in the mind of James Enstone. At the time, he was working in the IT Division of an investment bank and had realised that most invoices were being sent by post, processed then archived using a scanner. Surely, he thought, there had to be a better way? Why not set up a system by which these documents could be handled electronically from start to finish? Why not establish a solution to take care of those transactions for you? It was about this time that he got talking to a couple of contacts, one from the IT sector and the other in Customer Relations Management, both of whom shared his interest in finance and technology.

"We were introduced by a business acquaintance of ours," says Robin

Colla, the first of these contacts, "and we understood each other straight away because, while we'd all worked in IT, we'd been involved in different parts of it. So when we came together, something clicked and we began to talk, to plan and to formulate. James had a great idea, and Roger Cotton (the third partner) and I brought skills and perspectives that James had not considered. We both knew the idea could be big."

Neither Robin nor Roger expected it to be easy. "Look how long email was around before it got picked up by millions of people," Robin says. "We knew we had a very strong idea, but we also knew it would take time for people to realise its value. So we took our time, talked a lot, went away, reviewed the situation, came back and talked again. Every conversation we had, we were getting closer to making the concept happen. And then we approached Business Link."

The three of them still wanted some outside advice before they launched. "We needed a sanity check, really. Was this really going to work or was it just a good idea in our heads? We wanted someone to see its potential and tell us we were doing the right thing. That's when we approached Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Business Link in High Wycombe."



Robin Colla of P2D

With the help from their Business Link Account Manager, Ian Proddow, the company accessed an Innovations Grant from the DTI which helped it to investigate the market carefully in terms of potential rivals. "Part of our grant application was to draw up a project plan, which we did," explains Robin, "and this was real training on the job. We knew our offering was unique, but could someone else do it cheaper? We did a lot of research and after winning the grant, we were in a position to set up a successful pilot scheme.

"They seemed pretty confident to me," says Jacqui Hogan of CoCreative in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. "As a result of the grant, I became their mentor, which meant giving them advice and guidance on anything from sales and marketing to risk assessment and the creation of a sound business plan. They took on board everything I said and made it work for them – and I believe this was because they had such a strong idea that they applied themselves wholeheartedly to making it happen. They're certainly going places now."

Gradually all the advice and research helped them turn their unique solution into an extremely attractive offer.

"Lots of companies out there offer scanning solutions. But we do much more," Robin explains. "Without any upfront payment or capital outlay, we set up the network by which not only you, but also your clients can trade electronically. So it saves time and money on the document side and also creates efficiencies and an invisible supply chain and electronic financial community that brings together clients, suppliers and, to a lesser extent, consumers. And if your client buys into us, for example, you as a supplier wouldn't even have to pay for set-up – you just pay the individual transaction charges. It just makes sense."

You can tell from talking to Robin that he really believes in his product. And right now, you can understand why – the company, now based in Reading, has recently won contracts to connect Guardian Media Group and high street retailer New Look to its network. "We couldn't believe it when that happened," Robin says. "Until then, it had been a long, hard and sometimes frustrating first 12 months. We'd been wondering if we were ever going to land a major contract. And when it did happen, we tried to celebrate but just ended up sitting there, looking at each other. None of us could believe it."

Even now, with more work pouring in, they are surprised at their own success. But on paper, their idea was a winner from the start. And with hard work, good advice and helpful funding, they have made it work off paper too.

*For more information,
call Robin Colla
on 01189 255425*

THE EXPERTS

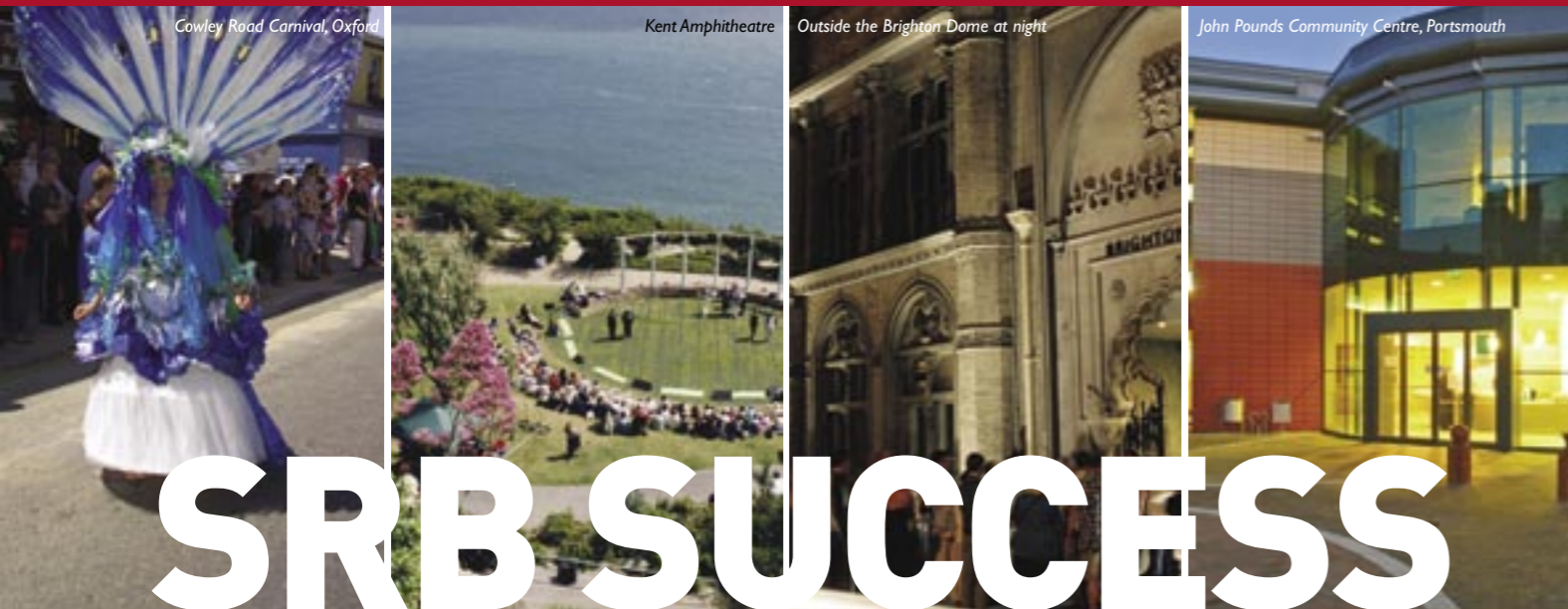
*Arthur Monks, Director
Angels for Growth*

When it comes to planning their funding, Robin Colla and his colleagues have got it right. When you are thinking about starting a high growth new venture, you know that nobody will support it initially, so, as happened here, the founders first, then friends and family, put up the initial funding.

That in turn will give confidence to Business Angels when approached for funding as the business starts to grow. In this case, an Angels' syndicate put £200,000 into the company in exchange for equity. With backing, it was easy for P2D to approach high street banks for £50,000. The company could seek a further £100,000 under the SEEDA Accelerator Fund run by Finance South East, which has a £10 million fund to support potentially high growth small and medium-sized businesses. That may well be all they will need as the business will start to generate cash enough to fund further investment.

The Angels and founding shareholders could expect to sell out within three to five years and then the founders may even become the Business Angels of the future. If there was a perfect model for funding a new business, this is it. They have done the right things in the right order and been very happy to seek advice. There are lots of financing options for small businesses but many fail to find out about them and don't build the right funding profile.





SRB SUCCESS

The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) is coming to an end, but leaves a living legacy for people and places in deprived areas of the South East.

“SRB funding may be ending but what it leaves behind is a lasting legacy of real regeneration success across some of the region’s most deprived areas,” says Liz McSheehy, SEEDA’s Area Director for Surrey and Sussex.

The 10 years of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding, and the extra investment from other sources it attracted, has transformed the lives of people and the places they live in. Putting a sparkle back in seaside towns, re-engaging the community, raising skills and supporting small businesses are just some of the success stories.

The SRB programme has delivered benefits to the region, its economic footprint and contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) which will last for years and be a strong foundation for the future. The money has catalysed a whole host of projects leaving many areas of the region hugely enhanced,” added Liz.

Latterly operated by SEEDA, the SRB was set up in the mid 1990s to make it easier for eligible communities to get assistance. Regeneration would be driven by long-term funding stimulating community-based local strategies, which, in turn, could attract matched

funding from other sources. Successful SRB cases are many and varied. From North Kent through to Brighton and West Sussex to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as well as north to Oxford, projects have transformed the scene in the region’s deprived areas.

One of the largest was The Brighton & Hove Regeneration Partnership, investing £42 million SRB money and leveraging over £90 million of other funding in its 10 years. Partners included Brighton and Hove City Council, business, the voluntary sector, the Police and the NHS.

Projects run by the Partnership have helped to create or safeguard 656 new jobs and delivered half a million hours of training, from which results include 1,764 people obtaining vocational qualifications. 3,000 businesses have been advised while 78 new businesses have been helped into existence.

The Brighton Dome was a core project using culture to promote the City and is now one of the South East’s premiere venues for music, drama and dance. Chief Executive, Nick Dodds, says: “Redevelopment of the Dome certainly wouldn’t have happened without the SRB funding, which was an enormous

contribution to the project. Since the re-opening, we have staged over 4,000 events, attracting 2.5 million visitors.”

Typical of the social programme is a Community Safety project involving the Police, the council and representatives of black, minority and ethnic support groups to help reduce crimes against these communities. Nationally acclaimed as a trailblazing initiative, there has been a real reduction in the targeted crimes.

To the west, major SRB funding through the South East Hampshire Partnership, which covers the Cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, has helped many young people and families in need as well as the unemployed and excluded via over 200 exciting and innovative projects. These include the John Pounds Community Centre and The Technopole (incubator accommodation for high-tech start-up businesses). SRB projects have helped create and safeguard over 1,100 jobs, 12,700 people have gained qualifications and 225 businesses started. Many of the schemes have demonstrated a vision and commitment to reducing the level of deprivation in areas such as Leigh Park in Havant and Outer Shirley in Southampton.

To the north, SRB-funded East Oxford

Action provided an alternative centre for the City, winning a 2005 Sustainable Communities Awards for its work in regenerating the Cowley Road area of the City. Environmental improvements, economic development projects and, above all, the creation of a sense of community were the main successes. Cultural activities such as the Cowley Road Carnival, plus community and voluntary sector development have created a positive and forward-looking image. Deborah Wharton, SEEDA’s Area Director responsible for Oxfordshire, said: “The good news is that The East Oxford Action Partnership will be sustained post-SRB, reforming into a Social Enterprise company, as a consultancy specialising in regeneration management. This is

development. The Business Support strategy brought together partners as diverse as the Prince’s Trust, Business Link Kent and local libraries to boost enterprise by helping growing companies and giving members of the community the chance to run their own businesses. By providing advice, helping to source grants, and offering courses and ICT services, some 315 jobs have been created or safeguarded and 65 businesses have started up (and survived their first 12 months). Project Manager Jill Tipping says: “When TBSS was started, Thanet was the poor relation of Kent – now it’s one of the county’s most exciting areas.”

Believing in Folkestone was a programme to regenerate East

Worthing, have benefited from SRB funding. Typical of the projects was WIRE, the Wick Information, Recreation, and Education project, in Wick in Littlehampton, the most deprived ward in the county, set up to deal with issues such as pre- and post-school provision, youth work and social exclusion. Former Head of the Project, Paul Sanderson, says: “It gave us the seed funding, without which the project could never have got off the ground.”

SRB funding has helped to fund youth workers to tackle hard-to-reach young people, otherwise deterred from going to Social Services offices. The project was so good that it is to be mainstreamed by West Sussex County Council. Chair of the West Sussex Coastal Partnership, Jane Claxton, says: “Some projects like the extension at the Women’s refuge and the Worthing Churches Homeless Project just would not have happened. Equally, the three towns now have community resource centres, initially funded by SRB, now so successful they have generated the income to carry on themselves.”

Helping to bring together communities and seed projects that can continue into the future through effective and imaginative exit strategies have been driving forces of SRB. As Liz McSheehy concludes: “SRB has empowered partners to work together and we can celebrate its success. We can look back to see what a real difference it made and just how many of the projects set up with SRB, have evolved into long-term and sustainable ventures.”

“SRB has empowered partners to work together and we can celebrate its success. We can look back to see what a real difference it made”

Liz McSheehy, SEEDA Area Director

the ideal exit strategy for a post-SRB project.”

Huge investment has been seen in deprived areas of Kent, covering almost every ambition of SRB funding. From a contribution towards fighting drug abuse as part of the Kent Initiative on Drugs, to helping ‘Community Action in South Kent’ deal with rural community issues such as transport accessibility, diversifying the economy and managing the environment, projects large and small are helping to transform the county’s underperforming areas.

Thanet Horizons was one of the first SRB programmes and had three main strands: a community development trust, business support and spatial

and Central Folkestone. Jeremy Whittaker, Regeneration and Economic Development Manager of Shepway District Council, explains: “In the early 1990s, Folkestone was pretty much on its knees in economic, social and environmental terms but SRB injected £10 million, which attracted £20 million matched funding which we wouldn’t have got otherwise. SRB also helped pay for the revival of Coastal Park which now hosts an amphitheatre and has the largest free adventure playground in the South East. SRB really has been fantastic for Folkestone.”

In Coastal West Sussex two programmes, Littlehampton 2000 and its successor Turning the Tide, which added Selsey, Bognor Regis and

***For more information, call Helen Hudson,
SEEDA Area Team Liaison Officer
on 01483 470141***

THE RURAL FILE

Over 80 percent of the South East's landmass is rural. Conserving this key factor of the region's quality of life is vital but so too is inspiring the regeneration of the rural economy. How is the 21st Century rural South East faring?

The fact that the rural South East has a population of two million and is the base for some 100,000 businesses, including 24,000 farm holdings, makes it economically very significant. At the same time, the region's quality of life, cited as a major competitive advantage, depends heavily on the countryside and, especially, on its rural towns and villages. So maintaining and protecting the countryside, while ensuring that there is a strong and sustainable rural economy, is the challenge that SEEDA and the region's rural stakeholders are taking head on.

SEEDA's Rural Sector Director, Valerie Carter, explains: "The rural South East is a huge asset which we must sustain. We will achieve this through an integrated programme which will, among many other strands, see resurgent farming and horticultural sectors, the creation of new types of business to diversify the economy, and by ensuring our rural towns and villages are thriving and inclusive."

The range of activities underway is diverse. The South East Sustainable Farming and Food Action Plan is designed to revive the farming, horticulture and food sectors. The scope of this programme includes helping farmers to achieve

better returns on their land, farm diversification, and building better connections along the food chain including promoting public sector purchasing. Innovation, too, is vital. For example, the pressure to reduce dependency on fossil fuels is driving projects to grow 'crops' to produce biofuels, or using wood for renewable energy to fire power stations or local heat/power schemes.

Energy from wood is just one illustration of the huge value and significance of the region's woodlands, to be developed through the agreed Regional Forestry Framework 'Seeing the Wood from the Trees'. Making them accessible, developing their economic potential as a renewable resource, enhancing biodiversity and ensuring the future of woodlands by providing the skills needed to manage them, will secure their long-term viability.

Economic diversification is very much at the heart of SEEDA's role in rural regeneration. The Enterprise Hubs at New Romney in Kent, Faringdon in Oxfordshire and the Chilterns in Buckinghamshire are focused on helping farm based businesses as well as new businesses in the rural economy to prosper. Other programmes include using existing

assets of redundant buildings, targeted at the rural regeneration areas around the coast and on farms, which is helping to turn unused buildings back into productive use as facilities for new businesses. 180 schemes have already helped create 807 full-time jobs and 311 part-time.

But the regeneration is as much about sustaining rural communities. Rural towns, too, are benefiting from the Market Towns Initiative, where SEEDA funding is concentrating on rural towns, providing these communities with the resources to achieve their regeneration priorities. Local partnerships assess their own needs, develop local solutions and deliver actions. SEEDA is also a co-funder of the European Leader Plus programme which has provided funding for local action groups to develop their own programmes.

"If we can help rural businesses and rural communities," says Valerie, "the rural South East will be rejuvenated, the traditional industry sectors will have a new spring in their step as the economy becomes more diverse. At the same time, all our communities - village or town - can expect a more vibrant future."

MISSION 1: SUSTAINING



Apples and pears from Blackmoor Nurseries



Asparagus from the Hampshire Food Festival

Sustaining farming and horticulture is at the top of the rural agenda. And it is not just about how farming can remain a contributor to the rural economy but how it is the custodian of the landscape and the environment. Poul Christensen CBE, SEEDA Board Member for Rural Issues explains the farmer's challenge: "You have to get out, diversify or become more professional." But anything is possible he says, "because the only boundary to what we can achieve is within the limits of our own skulls."

A pacesetter for the industry - developed by the region's Farming and Rural Issues Group, SEEDA and the Government Office for the South East - is the 'Sector' approach, where individual 'Champions' have been awarded £20,000 each to develop projects which could lead to profitable market opportunities.

Ian Mitchell is determined to show how British fruit growers could promote their produce more imaginatively to make more profitable sales and avoid the supermarket price war treadmill. "Growers are neglecting a potentially much more profitable market through the wholesalers who supply the independent retailers and caterers," says Ian. But the wholesalers say the producers and their marketers were not doing their job. "Growers are reluctant to move away from the comfort of the supermarket business even though they complain about poor results," says Ian. "Some wholesalers say they are not even being offered English fruit." His project will set out to show his fellow growers about the potential and how they might take advantage of it. "There's a big market through the wholesalers if we meet what they want in terms of quality, price and

presentation. That way we can increase our margins."

"Plants grown in Britain are more likely to survive in Britain," is the mantra of Dr Bill Godfrey as he seeks to promote the sales of home-grown plants. "TV gardening programmes have made the preference for the exotic all the rage but while an olive tree may appeal, it will still have a tough time performing," he says. He is going to research the market to determine attitudes to British plants and then devise a marketing programme complete with logo with which his nursery and others locally will promote the benefits.

Two of the champion projects are about influencing public sector procurement. Hampshire Cheese Maker, Mike Smales, and Isle of Wight Dairy Farmer, Judi Griffith, are taking different lines of attack. Mike is working

SUSTAINING (cont)

with Hampshire Fayre, the county's promoter of local food producers to get their produce on the shopping list of County Councils, hospitals and the armed forces. The main tool will be a website which will be promoted to all the buyers while Mike will be helping his fellow producers understand the procurement process. He is hoping that Jamie Oliver's intervention in the school menu will eventually prove a powerful ally. "Initially, 15 percent less school meals were served," he says, but "now demand is rebuilding but for better quality food. I just hope funding doesn't run out before the demand is there."

Judi Griffith's approach has been to take the health path extolling the calcium advantage of milk for growing children and in combating diseases like osteoporosis. She has worked with a local school to supply their milk and has written a milk recipe guide for promotion by the local primary care trust. Her project will now widen the partnership to develop her healthy milk offer.

A special SEFishcake has been leading other work to promote local sourcing amongst public sector buyers. A school must now serve a product high in Omega 3 at least every three weeks. The fishcake using fish from South Eastern waters plus local vegetables is being trialed this summer and the organisers, the South Eastern Food Group Partnership, hope it will become a regular on school menus from September.

All of these producer positives are also helping to achieve one of the core objectives of improving the reputation of farming and attracting new people to come into agriculture. Shaun Leavey, Chairman of the Farming & Rural Issues Group comments: "The way the Group is working with SEEDA is designed to bring forward people from within the land-based industry who can 're-connect' with the public. Part of the process of reconnection involves getting a better understanding of agriculture and horticulture by young people. As such, our Group has been delighted to recently support a new Champion, Ian Jones of the British Agricultural & Garden Machinery Association, in his project to take farm tractors into schools and use them as an educational tool geared to the national curriculum. The enthusiastic reception from teachers and pupils alike shows we're backing a winner."

Similarly, in Sussex, a Fresh Start Academy has been set up to create a network for prospective farmers to learn about, and develop, new farming opportunities. The future for land based industries may not be straight forward but there is clearly a new sense both of what might be achieved and how it can be done.

*For more information,
call Valerie Carter
on 01483 484211*

MISSION 2:



An example of Alchemation's stunning 3D work



Making woodchips



Oilseed rape

DIVERSIFYING

With oil prices high and with finite reserves, the race to find renewable energy is quickening. The Government is looking hard at how biomass could play its part in this brave new world. In the South East, an increasing number of projects are starting to create and serve the renewable energy market.

One of the Sector Champions, Andrew Martin, is exploring the potential for growing crops to create biodiesel. He is building a business model to assess the economic viability of producing the fuel from oilseed rape by producer groups, growing commercial volumes sufficient to sustain supply. Andrew met Dr Stephen Ladyman, then Department of Transport Minister responsible for new fuels, to discuss his project when the Government's positive response to The Biomass Taskforce Report was published in April.

SEEDA's regeneration project at the former Kent Coalfield at Betteshanger has been used to pioneer power from biomass. When new buildings started to replace the old colliery buildings, the nearest gas main was miles away so

the first office unit was powered by a small wood pellet burner to assess the technology. Now the main development is complete, two 500 kilowatt boilers have been installed to run on wood chips to provide heating with the excess sold to a nearby salad grower to heat its greenhouses. The next step will be to source the chips from local woodlands. In the Thames Valley (TV Energy), a renewable energy consultancy, has developed a short rotation coppice which is starting to supply the wholly wood-burning Slough power station, the only one in the UK. The group, which includes local farmers and landowners and TV Energy themselves, aims to have 2,800 hectares planted by 2008, supplying 10 per cent of Slough's fuel requirements. TV Energy has just received a £40,000 grant from SEEDA to supply schools and community centres with wood chip burning stoves

One of the core aims of the SEEDA strategy is to provide focused business support through Business Link and the Enterprise Hubs for just this type of business. Several of SEEDA's

Enterprise Hubs have a specialist rural bias with Faringdon in Oxfordshire, Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire and New Romney in Kent especially dedicated to diversification.

JJ Brophy and Jodie Hancock, who have set up a digital animation company, Alchemation Studios, in Littlestone on Sea, praise the help of Jason Martin at the New Romney Hub. "We're producing 3D and 2D animations for the architectural, design and web markets – we'll bring anything from a trophy to a civic centre to electronic life," says JJ. "We wanted to be in a rural location, we had a great business idea and the Hub has helped us achieve it – we've been shortlisted as a 'Shepway Business to Watch' and with all the help we've had, we'll make it."

Alchemation is typical of the kind of knowledge business which can now enjoy a rural location thanks to Broadband. The South East is now 100 percent Broadband accessible, even in more remote areas. Take-up is still at only 30 percent however and SEEDA is now mounting a major programme to

encourage more businesses to expand their use of it to improve productivity and competitiveness. It will become increasingly attractive for businesses to take the cost advantage of the rural South East.

Returning redundant buildings to use, and helping to provide the base for these new businesses is another part of the strategy. Typical is the barn dating from the 1830s at Salts Farm in East Guldeford in Sussex which has used a £50,000 investment from SEEDA to create a facility for three small but growing businesses which between them will provide 12 full and 12 part-time jobs.

It is very likely that the face of the rural economy will change radically in the next few years but as this change takes place, it is critical that the asset of the South East's quality landscape is maintained.

*For more information,
call Valerie Carter
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New Milton, Hampshire

MISSION 3: REVIVING

New Milton in Hampshire is a small rural town lying between the seaside resort of Bournemouth and the major port of Southampton 20 miles to the north east. The New Milton Town Partnership is typical of the kind of community the SEEDA programme is designed to help.

The town has a proud history and an excellent infrastructure but lacked a sense of inclusive community. By bringing everyone together through this project, an action plan which everyone can share has been put together and is being delivered. The Partnership, backed by New Milton Town and District Councils, New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council Economic Development Office, has been awarded £240,000 from SEEDA's Small Rural Towns programme.

It all started in 2002 when the Town Council's "Community Healthcheck" looked at every aspect of community life from the economy, to the environment, at transport and social life. There were plenty of ideas for action which resulted in the Partnership

registering as a charity to champion development projects proposed and to be organised by the community. Local voluntary organisations and businesses as well as the local authorities all became involved in producing an action plan.

An early project was to see how the town centre could be regenerated. In partnership with the local authority, a Design Framework was drawn up to develop an improvement plan which is now being put into effect with the help of the SEEDA funding. The Partnership is also working with other stakeholders to see what can be done to improve the town's railway station.

A key amenity close to the town centre, Ballard Water Meadows, was neglected and in danger of losing many of its

environmental assets. A voluntary group was set up which has gradually cleaned up the entire area making it a much visited local nature site. The Partnership has also set up Milton Movies to bring the latest films to a cinema-less town.

Hampshire's Market Towns Co-ordinator Anne Harrison says: "The New Milton project's effectiveness is being mirrored across Hampshire. The Market Towns Healthcheck was devised to be a catalyst, to stir people and things up, get people looking at things in a new way, and to bring about a 'can-do' culture which is starting to happen."

For more information, call Anne Harrison on 01962 846558

RURAL: THE SOUTH EAST FACTS

- 82.6 percent of the South East region is rural
- One in four of the population people live there
- 170 rural towns and over 1,400 villages
- 100,000 rural-based businesses including 24,000 farm holdings
- One national park and 10 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- England's four most wooded counties
- One third of England's meadows and lowland heaths are in the South East

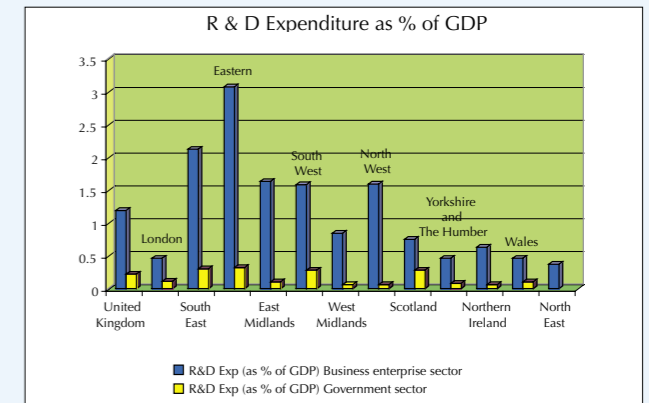
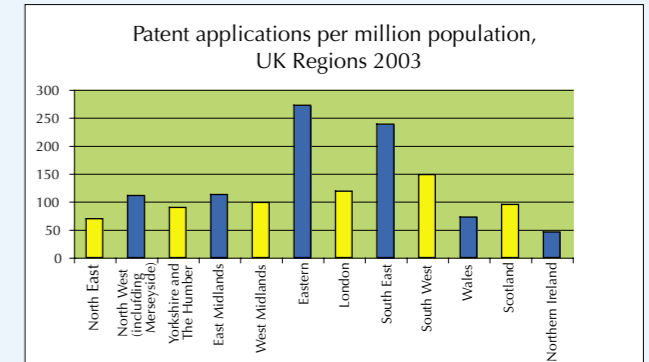
ESSENTIAL SE

This issue, we bring you statistics from the technology sector as well as news on the latest appointments and upcoming dates for your diary

Statistics

Technology & Innovation

- South East has highest number of UK patents granted. In 2004, 21% (820) of UK total. (Source: Patent Office Facts & Figures, 2004-05)
- South East has highest R&D expenditure of any UK region. In 2003, £4.66 billion, nearly one quarter of UK total. (Source: ONS, Research & Experimental Development (R&D) Statistics, 2003)
- Businesses in the South East spent over £3.4 billion on R&D in 2003. (Source: ONS, Research & Experimental Development (R&D) Statistics, 2003)
- South East-based Government establishments spent £583 million on R&D in 2003, UK's highest. (Source: ONS, Research & Experimental Development (R&D) Statistics, 2003)
- There are 45,800 R&D personnel in the South East (nearly 25% of the UK R&D workforce), highest in the UK. (Source: ONS, Research & Experimental Development (R&D) Statistics, 2003)
- South East has over 92,000 people working in engineering activities, including research and experimental development. (Source: SEEDA 2006, derived from ONS data)
- Over 4,100 students graduated in mathematical, sciences, engineering and technology related subjects in the South East 2003-2004. (HESA, 2005)



Aerospace & Defence

- South East has some of the world's most successful and innovative aerospace and defence companies, employing over 86,000 people. (Source: Experian, 2005, derived from ONS data, 2005)
- Seven out of the top 10 US aerospace and defence companies have located in the South East. (Source: Fortune 500, Jan 2006)
- Over one fifth of UK aircraft and spacecraft manufacturers are based in the South East, employing nearly 10,000 staff. (Source: SEEDA 2005, derived from ONS data)
- Over 20% of UK companies involved in the manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft are based in the South East. (Source: SEEDA 2005, derived from ONS data)
- 25% of aerospace and defence companies in the region are undertaking R&D, investing more on R&D than capital equipment. (Source: Farnborough Aerospace Consortium, Mapping Aerospace Capabilities in the South East, March 2004)

Automotive

- There are over 480 individual business sites in the South East operating in the automotive industry, approximately 13% of the UK total. (Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2004)
- Six of the world's top 10 automotive companies have their UK headquarters in the South East. (Source: Datamonitor, 2004)
- Approximately 17,000 people in the South East are employed in the car and parts manufacturing sector. (Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2004)
- The South East is a global centre for motorsport. Five of the 11 Formula One teams are based here – Renault, McLaren, Williams, Redbull and Super Aguri.

For regional data and intelligence, visit the South East England Intelligence Network (SEE-IN)

Visit the site at www.see-in.co.uk or contact at info@see-in.co.uk

Marine

- South East marine sector is estimated to be worth £5 billion, contributing almost 5% of the region's gross domestic product. (Source: www.marinesoutheast.co.uk, 2006)
- There are over 2,500 marine companies in the South East. (Source: www.marinesoutheast.co.uk, 2006)
- South East's 11 ports provide easy access to continental Europe, most having industrial sites alongside for Marine companies. The region has two of the seven UK Free Trade Zones - Southampton and Sheerness.
- The Solent is internationally renowned as the centre of the UK's marine industry. (Source: www.marinesoutheast.co.uk, 2006)
- South East leisure marine sector is the largest UK region by industry revenue; £769.2 million recorded in 2004 (38.6% of UK) with over 9,000 employees, 31.8% of the country. (Source: www.marinesoutheast.co.uk, 2006)

APPOINTMENTS



SEEDA Board's Christensen appointed Natural England Deputy Chair

Poul Christensen CBE, SEEDA Board Member for Rural Issues, has been appointed Deputy Chair of the Natural England, the new statutory body responsible for managing and enhancing the natural environment. Prior to his new appointment, Mr Christensen was Chair of the Rural Development Service. Former Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Margaret Beckett said: "Poul is a dedicated champion of conservation issues and the natural environment with a proven track record of service on public bodies."

Paul Hudson moves to DCLG

SEEDA's former Executive Director for Development and Infrastructure, Paul Hudson, has joined the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as Chief Planner. Paul was with SEEDA since its creation in 1999 and was responsible for the Agency's physical development, urban renaissance, statutory planning, housing and utilities programmes. He led many of SEEDA's flagship regeneration projects including Chatham Maritime, the Kent Coalfield and Cowes Waterfront on the Isle of Wight. SEEDA's Chief Executive, Pam Alexander commented: "We are extremely sorry to see Paul leave SEEDA, as I know all his colleagues across the region will be. However, his new appointment is a demonstration of the high personal standing he has developed and his professionalism; I am sure that he will make a great success of this new role."

Planning Strategy Director

Catriona Riddell has been appointed as Planning Strategy Director for the South East England Regional Assembly. She will be managing the Assembly's

planning policy function and play the lead role in taking the South East Plan through its Examination in Public later this year.

New Chief Executive for English Partnerships

John Callcutt, formerly Deputy Chairman of Crest Nicholson plc, has become the Chief Executive of English Partnerships, the national regeneration agency.

A Positive Response...

The recent call for new SEEDA Board Members was greeted with a very positive response and applications were of an especially high quality. Interviews will shortly be taking place for five Board Member vacancies, which consist of three business positions, one voluntary sector position and one local authority representative.

SEEDA would like to reiterate its thanks to Peter Read CBE, Mary McAnally, Liz Brighouse and Sarah Hohler, who are all stepping down in December, for their hard work over the years. A replacement will also be appointed for the late Terry Mills.

DIARY DATES

Useful dates for your diary (also available at www.seeda.co.uk under News & Events)

7 July 2006

Isle of Wight Learning and Guidance Event
Cowes High School
suethomason@seeda.co.uk

17-22 July 2006

Farnborough Airshow 2006
francescafogell@seeda.co.uk

19 September 2006

Greater South East Reception at the Liberal Democrat Annual Conference
Brighton Metropole Hotel
debbiecatt@seeda.co.uk

26 September 2006

Greater South East Reception at the Labour Party Conference, Radisson Hotel, Manchester
debbiecatt@seeda.co.uk

2 October 2006

Greater South East Reception at the Conservative Party Conference
Highcliffe Marriott, Bournemouth (tbc)
debbiecatt@seeda.co.uk

31 October 2006

SEEDA Annual Open Public Meeting and the launch of the new RES
Reading Town Hall
lisahayward@seeda.co.uk

Sustainability Snapshot

With many areas of the South East suffering from hosepipe bans and drought orders, SEEDA's Sustainability team has come up with some tips on how to be a drought-beater:

- Take a shower rather than a bath
- Don't run the tap when brushing teeth
- Fit a water saving device on your toilet
- Only use the washing machine when it is full

Save more water by visiting www.beatthedrought.co.uk.

Help beat the drought by joining South East Water Resources Forum by contacting SEEDA's Environmental Resources Manager, Simon Richardson on simon.richardson@seeda.co.uk for more information.