

# business matters

the fortnightly bulletin for members of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry 30 Sept '97 **issue 82**

**The** London Chamber of Commerce is the voice for London business - it's official. In an independent survey among a representative sample of 400 non-member London companies conducted by leading pollsters NOP, LCCI emerged as the organisation most recognised as representing the interests of the capital's business community.

The results confirm the long-held view that the London Chamber, with its diverse membership and close links with companies, is the most suitable vehicle in the capital to represent business. It also reflects LCCI's strength in being part of a national and international network. The results will help the London Chamber's lobbying activities as it seeks to harness the attention of government on the wide range of London-wide issues such as transport, environment and the role of business in the proposed strategic authority.

Since the demise of the GLC in the 1980's, business has contributed significantly to the running of the capital. However this has largely been through a mish-mash of formal and informal government forums, partnerships and other ad hoc mechanisms. It has also led to fragmentation and duplication with an increase in the number of bodies speaking on behalf of different parts of the business community.

However, the new arrangements for governing the capital should mean that the vital relationship between government and business is formalised and streamlined, enabling the interests of business to be better articulated than at any time over the past decade.

Armed with these findings, the London Chamber will continue to speak with local and national decision-makers confident in the knowledge that it is, indeed, the voice for business in the capital.



Glenda Jackson, Minister for Transport in London, and Derek Turner, Traffic Director for London, launch the bus lane enforcement cameras

## London news

### Crackdown on bus lane blocking

A campaign to stamp out illegal parking in bus lanes has been launched by Minister for Transport in London, Glenda Jackson. Blocked bus lanes are estimated to cost bus companies a total of £20m a year. In the next two weeks tow trucks will be on hand to remove unlawfully parked vehicles and the police will be kept on alert. Video cameras will also be installed on buses to record drivers who drive or stop illegally in bus lanes. Curbing illegal parking in bus lanes could, according to the Department of Transport increase bus speeds by 50%. Offenders can face fines of up to £60.

for further information contact London Transport press office on 0171 918 4239

### Rising groundwater threatens London

Groundwater under London is rising at a phenomenal rate and could cause damage to major London landmarks, according to the British Property Federation (BPF). Layers of chalk and clay beneath London's structures are crumbling under the pressure of rising groundwater. The BPF suggest that the areas most affected in London include the City, Westminster, Mayfair and those that lie in the route of the Circle Line Tube, west from Tower Hill to Paddington and east to Liverpool Street. The

London Underground system and other underground structures are most at risk say the BPF. Organisations such as the GARDIT focus group and BPF estimate that structural damage is likely to occur in the next five years and will cost London properties millions of pounds worth of damage. The GARDIT group have written to the Deputy Prime Minister with cost-cutting solutions and have requested a meeting to discuss the recommendations.

for further information contact Richard Kauntze at the BPF on 0171 828 0111



## answering all your business questions

### Road tax evaders' cars crushed

Following a campaign to encourage motorists to pay their road tax, a pilot scheme in five London boroughs: Islington, Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Enfield and the City of Westminster has resulted in 60% of illegal vehicles being impounded and crushed. The Driver and Vehicle Licence Agency (DVLA) is pursuing a hard-line policy against road tax dodgers. Contractors are patrolling the streets and have been authorised to clamp untaxed vehicles. Releasing a clamp can cost car owners up to £68. Furthermore, if drivers fail to produce a valid tax disc they will have to pay up to £100 deposit. If the car is not picked up within five weeks it will be crushed or sold. Owners of unlicensed vehicles can also face the prospect of prosecution with fines up to £1,000.

for further information contact DVLA on 01792 783900

# business news

### Factory workers' role transformed

A new report published by the Institute for Employment Studies has found that new skills must be adopted by factory workers to adapt to new working conditions. According to the IES report, traditional factory work in the food industry is changing as employers want workers to perform a wider range of tasks. The report found job rotation exercises are being introduced and monotonous tasks are being phased out. The report also found that it is no longer efficient for process workers to operate only one piece of machinery. In addition, employers are reportedly giving factory workers more responsibility and customer skills.

for further information and to obtain a copy of the report contact Grantham Book Services on 01476 541080

### Radical change in equipment laws

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) is planning to overhaul work equipment laws by discarding numerous redundant acts and regulations. Under the proposals, set out in five consultation documents, the 1995 *European Amending Directive to the Use of Work Equipment Directive* would be implemented. The new legislation would

replace a range of complicated sector-specific rules with simpler, targeted legislation across industry.

details of the free consultation document are available from HSE Books on 01787 881165

### Help for green industries

A plan to help green industries boost exports and increase competitiveness has been published by the Government's Joint Environment Markets Unit (JEMU). The environmental industry covers areas such as air pollution, environmental services, water, waste treatment etc. JEMU have put forward a consultation document which ensures that activities within 'green' industries are properly focused and are suitable to the needs of industry. The proposals include: increasing the industry's knowledge of markets, encouraging them to exploit market opportunities, improving the interaction between the government and suppliers, enhancing training opportunities, education and research, promoting benchmarking, performance monitoring and producing suppliers guides. The consultation period runs until the end of September.

for further information and to obtain free copies of the consultation document contact Duncan Egerton at JEMU on 0171 215 1665

### Get your digital ideas turned into products for free

The "Information Society Creativity Awards" (ISCA) are offering SMEs involved in creating digital products the chance to develop a promising prototype concept into a product. Any company in the digital field with less than 250 employees could get half of the costs paid by ISCA to develop its product. The awards are open to

businesses with an idea for and who need help with resources, expertise or finance. The deadline for applications is 20 October. Ten awards worth up to £25,000 will be on offer for the winning companies. Winners will have their product publicised on the internet and in the media.

for further information and to obtain an entry form contact the ISI Information Helpline on 0345 15 2000



Barbara Roche, Small Firms Minister, and business people, launch the "Information Society Creativity Awards".

### Train times improve

Train punctuality improved in 1996/97, according to recent findings from the Department of Transport, with 92.5% of services arriving within ten minutes of scheduled times. This compares with 89.5% of trains arriving on time in 1995/96. The figures also show that the number of 'passenger kilometres' travelled rose by 6% in the first quarter of this year, compared with the same period last year.

for further information contact the Bulletin of Rail Statistics at the Department for Transport and the regions on 0171 271 4800.

### New BSI standard on machinery safety

This new standard provides safety requirements and guidance on the principles for the design of safety-related parts of control systems and is concerned with risk reduction. Included are electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic and mechanical systems and the standard also covers

programmable systems for machinery and for related protective devices.

to obtain a copy of BSI Standard EN 954-1 contact the LCCI Bookshop on 0171 203 1863, cost £48.70

### How to improve profit in overseas markets

What is trade finance? How can it improve a company's success in an overseas market? These and other questions are answered in a free new booklet, published from NatWest bank. *The Guide to Trade Finance* explains the range of services available to help improve cashflow and enhance financial management.

to obtain a copy contact your local NatWest Branch

### Poor training costs lives

According to recently-published research, accidents on building sites are occurring because staff are not properly trained. Research conducted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Symonds Group discovered that poor training



standards and inexperience also led to the failure of safety laws being implemented. The figures show that accident and death levels have hit a five-year high. HSE report *Safety Statistics 1996/97* show that 98 construction workers were killed on site in the year to March 1997, compared to 82 deaths in

the previous year. The research also found that supervisors with insufficient experience and qualifications were being appointed to managerial positions.

to obtain a free copy of the report Ref: MISC083 contact HSE Bookshop on 01787 881165

## international news

### Eu to adopt Green Paper on patents

The EU has adopted a Green Paper aimed at improving the European patent system. The paper is part of a consultation process with interested parties to see whether users' needs are currently being met. The paper will also assess whether new measures should be taken at community level. The present patent system in Europe requires individual applications in different languages under different legal jurisdictions. After consultation, it is hoped that member state patent laws will be harmonised and that questions regarding the system of fees and charges will be resolved. The consultation process is to end with a hearing in November.

for further information contact Veronica Segura at LCCI on 0171 203 1838

### Ukraine business forum

The Ukraine "Intechmart '97" forum will be held in Kiev from 23 to 26 September. Sponsored by UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organisation), it is intended to enable Ukrainian entrepreneurs to meet potential partners in the fields of science, technology and investment. The North West Regional Technology Transfer (NIMTECH) is coordinating the British participation. At this stage UK companies can still ask NIMTECH to display company literature and samples.

for further details contact Paul Richardson at NIMTECH on 01744 453366 or Fax 01744 611610

### Saudi Arabia opportunities

Saudi Arabia's International Trade Fair "Lifestyle '97" will take place in Jeddah from 2 to 7 November. The fair will feature the World of Interiors and Giftware. A buoyant domestic market exists for good quality household products in Saudi Arabia for both Saudi families and the large expatriate workforce.

The fair is an opportunity to show what is new and best in the Arab world's most high profile market. If your company is interested in this part of the world but has other products and services to offer, LCCI is organising a general trade mission to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia from 22 November to 4 December which could provide another opportunity to investigate this market. Also, the Jeddah Motorshow will be held from 30 November to 5 December and the mission could give a very cost-effective way for companies to visit the Motorshow. The DTI travel grant is £440; interested companies should get in touch as soon as possible.

for details of the "Lifestyle" show contact Amanda Whetsone, Al-Harithy Exhibitions UK on 0171 223 3431 or by Fax on 0171 228 4229, for details of the mission contact Rachael Enoizi at LCCI on 0171 203 1827

### Will Hong Kong drive Asia's future?

A half-day seminar, entitled "Hong Kong: Driving Asia's Future", organised by the



'Hong Kong: driving Asia's Future' - seminar on 22 October

Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), will take place on 22 October at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London. In addition to giving an overview on Hong Kong's current economic outlook, the seminar will focus on Hong Kong as a financial services centre and on its role in developing the region's infrastructure. Experienced speakers from Hong Kong will give presentations and the seminar will be chaired by Mr Michael Sze, HKTDC Executive Director. LCCI is intending to run a trade mission to Hong Kong and Guangdong in 1998.

for further information on the seminar, contact HKTDC on 0171 8281661

### Inspection on imported waste

In an attempt to stop harmful waste materials which pose a threat to public health or the environment from entering their country, the Indonesian government have issued decree 231/MPP/Kep7/97. The order directs importers to obtain independent certificates of inspection before coming into Indonesia. The Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Indonesian Board for Control of Environmental Affairs (BAPEDAL) have authorised SGS to carry out inspections of exports from the UK.

to obtain lists of defining waste materials which are prohibited and those that are not, contact the Export Liaison Centre, Camberley on 01276 697826

### Sell jewellery to Japan

The British Jewellery and Giftware Federation (BJGF) will be organising the British participation at the 9th Tokyo International Jewellery Show on 28 and 31 January 1998. The Japan jewellery market is the second largest after the US market; consumers are interested in new products and buyers want jewellery with unique quality. There is also a demand for good quality antique jewellery. In order to succeed in this lucrative but competitive market it is necessary to study what Japanese customers want to buy rather than try to sell them what suppliers have. British jewellery manufacturers who are successful in Japan advise that the key to success is to visit the market frequently to "tune" into what the Japanese customers want, as it is different from what sells in the West or in the Middle East. There will be DTI support for UK companies in the form of construction and travel grants. Companies wishing to take part in the show should contact the organisers urgently

contact Rachael Smith at BJGF on 0121 237 1117 or by fax on 0121 237 1118

### Third country projects with Japan

Much of Japan's huge overseas aid effort is untied, which means that foreign companies are free to participate in these projects. A quarterly report, available in the Information Centre, details the projects and activities of the Overseas Economic Cooperation



Fund (OECD), the Export-Import Bank of Japan (Ex-Im Bank) International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The report is compiled by the British Embassy in Tokyo and is called *Third Country Opportunities*. It is too long to be copied in bulk but members can consult the report in the Information Centre.

for further information, contact Steve Simmonds at LCCI on 0171 203 1826

### Mexico directory

The British Chamber of Commerce in Mexico (Mexico City) are developing their list of importers to Mexico and exporters to Britain. This will be included in their membership directory which is distributed within Mexico. Inclusion in the directory is free and contributors are welcome.

if you would like to be included, please contact Ms Rachel Taplin, Managing Director, Camara de Comercio Britanica A.C., Rio de la Planta No 30, 06500 Mexico DF, Mexico Fax 00 525 256 09 01

### Uruguay public tender for water treatment

Administración de Obras Sanitarias del Estado has invited companies to register their interest to participate in a public tender for public sewerage works and water supply services in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Details of the bid (in Spanish) are available at LCCI and interested companies should get in touch as soon as possible.

for further details contact Marilyn Potter at LCCI on 0171 203 1825 or Dr Fernando Marr, Embassy of Uruguay on 0171 584 8192

### Uruguay development projects

Programmes worth US\$177m were approved by the government under the "national interest" scheme in the first six months of 1997. Industries included are: dairy products, paper manufacture, automotive components, chemicals, pig production, tobacco, textiles and cold stores. In addition, projects worth US\$720m are being negotiated by the Uruguayan government with the IDB and World Bank. They will include road construction, assistance to

small and medium enterprises, agricultural technology and hospital facilities and strengthening of government and municipal organisations. The various schemes should provide opportunities for British companies active in the area which could combine a visit to Uruguay with the LCCI mission to Peru, and Argentina next March.

for further information on the Uruguay projects contact the Commercial Department, British Embassy, Montevideo or Darren Haworth at DTI on 0171 215 4746. Details of LCCI Latin America missions from Marilyn Potter at LCCI on 0171 203 1825

### Openings in South Africa water industry

The DTI has issued a report *Market Opportunities in the Water and Sewerage Industries*, which outlines potential openings for UK exporters. The report assesses the size, scope, needs and development for exporters region by region. According to the publication, there are excellent prospects for companies which can supply small pumps, automatically controlled valves and electric components. Containing the addresses of authorities responsible for water supply, details of new projects and tariffs, the book is a good source of information.

for further information and to obtain a copy of the book contact the DTI Publications Orderline on 0171 510 0171



The DTI's new publication, a wealth of information for exporters.

# members news



Glenda Jackson CBE MP, speaks at the President's Lunch

### President's Lunch with Glenda Jackson

The Minister for Transport in London, Glenda Jackson, will be speaking on 21 October to Chamber members and their guests. In her speech at the President's Lunch at the Lanesborough Hotel, Hyde Park Corner she will outline how the government proposes to tackle the problem of congestion and improve public transport. Before becoming an MP, Ms Jackson won several film awards including two Oscars. She has also campaigned for the Anti-Apartheid Movement, Shelter and Friends of the Earth. She was elected to Parliament in 1992 and was appointed Minister for Transport in London in the new Labour government elected this year.

for further information contact Kim Taylor at LCCI on 0171 203 1874

### Shoestrung library

The next information centre booksale will take place on 9 October to coincide with a membership evening. Plenty of old library stock will be available at a fraction of its original price. A list will be available a week before the sale takes place.

for further information contact Rebecca Greenwood at LCCI on 0171 203 1836

### Wine tasting evening

Muscadet, Chablis, Beaujolais and Claret are wines that most people are familiar with, so why not expand your taste buds and try sampling some of the lesser known wines of France? The Women in Business Group will be holding an evening's presentation about French wines. The evening includes a buffet and guess-the-wine competition, with a winning prize of a bottle of champagne. The event takes

place on 24 September at Davy's wine bar 'Bangers Too' and guests will have the opportunity to network with other members.

for further information and to book tickets contact Kim Taylor at LCCI on 0171 203 1874

### Golf day

LCCI's third golf day will be held at the London Golf Club on 16 October. The day begins with brunch followed by a round of golf, a reception and dinner when prizes will be given to competition winners.

for further information and to obtain tickets contact Melanie Dewitt at LCCI on 0171 203 1875

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