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KEIBA 2014



KEIBA winners 2014

Pictures: Darren Small FM32618/48

Spotlight on the best in business

A medical manufacturer was given the all clear to crack open the champagne after making a big impact at the Kent Excellence in Business Awards.

Ashford-based Integrated Technologies Ltd took home two gongs after being named Science and/or Technology Business of the Year and winning the New Best Manufacturer category.

Now in their sixth year, the awards honoured the great and good of Kent's commercial world at the Kent Event Centre at the Kent Showground, Detling.

The event also presented an award for Outstanding Contribution to the Kent Business Community to Nadra Ahmed, chairman of the National Care Association.

The social care champion, who lives in West Malling, graciously accepted the honour for her work with numerous organisations, mostly voluntary.

Among her roles she is a board member of Parkinson's UK and a trustee of the Royal British Legion, learning disability charity MCH and Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services in Gravesend.

A charity prize draw was held in aid of children's hospices group Demelza and Abigail's



The Integrated Technologies Ltd Team, winners of the Science and/or Technology Business of the Year award and the new Best Manufacturer category

Footsteps, which supports the parents of stillborn babies.

Four fifths of entrants to this year's awards had never done so before. Two categories saw their highest ever entry levels and many had significant increases on previous years.

Run by Kent County Council and the KM Group, the awards recognise businesses leading the way in innovation, leadership and achievement in the county.

KCC cabinet member for economic development Mark Dance

said: "Each and every winner of a KEIBA award this year deserves the spotlight.

"They do a cracking job in setting high standards, stretching what it means to achieve in business, and acting as a showcase for the strength that Kent has across all the different business sectors represented in the county. It is a privilege to have a chance to meet so many of the leaders that will take Kent forwards in the future."

KM Group managing director

Richard Elliot said: "KEIBA is, without doubt, a landmark in the life of the county and an unrivalled opportunity to stand out in Kent's business community. "The achievements of the winners really do make them stand out. The gala presentation and its amazing line-up underlined just what a great place Kent is for business performance and growth. I congratulate all the winners and finalists.

"The KM Group is delighted to be involved. I thank my team, the organisers, sponsors and judges for all their hard work and making the 2014 awards such a resounding success."

Chairman of judges Geoff Miles said: "Many congratulations to all this year's winners – and indeed to all the finalists who ran them so close. "After my third year as chairman of judges, and as a regular visitor to other parts of the UK, I am convinced that KEIBA is the nation's best regional business awards scheme.

"It is robust, testing and all encompassing. Many of the businesses that competed for these prestigious awards have adapted energetically to harsher times and are well equipped to make the most of the better ones."



Nadra Ahmed, winner of the Outstanding Contribution to the Business Community of Kent award

FM32618/63

Turn over to see this year's winners

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Emma Reynolds and Jason Hall of Reynolds Group Ltd, with sponsor Jon Cooper of Aon Risk Solutions FM326901

LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR The Reynolds Group Limited
This family-run business operates fitness spas in Sittingbourne, Rainham and Dartford Heath as well as a retreat in Borough Green and a training academy in Dartford. Judges were impressed with its ability to change strategy to compete with well-equipped budget gyms. It rebranded with a health and wellbeing focus, boosting sales by more than 30% in the process.



The Elastex team FM326827

SME BUSINESS OF THE YEAR Elastex

When you stay in a hotel, you may dry down with a towel supplied by this young and rapidly growing Strood company with an ethical philosophy. Named Medway Business of the Year 2013, the firm earned plaudits when it saved a Bangladesh factory from closure by buying a 50% stake. The textile supplier has high hopes of breaking the £10m barrier by 2016.



Bob Dench of MidKent College with Gary and Ben Bartlett and Nick Gabay of Thomson Snell and Passmore FM326792

START UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR Bush Grub

The sight of B-listers tucking into insects on I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here created a unique business opportunity for this pioneering father and son duo. Selling insect treats as novelty food items, Ben and Gary Bartlett's company is officially licensed by the ITV show to sell a Bush Tucker Trial Gift Set. Delicacies include mealworm paste and cricket sandwich spread.

Here are the winners c



The Integrated Technologies Ltd Team FM326824

BEST SCIENCE AND/OR TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS Integrated Technologies Limited (ITL)

Judges were impressed that this hi-tech company has boosted turnover by 26% and profitability by 116% since 2012. This is thanks to a growth in Far East activity from its China base and setting up a facility in Virginia, USA. Clients range from start-ups to blue chip businesses and a host of overseas companies.



The Fourayes team FM326807

LAND-BASED BUSINESS Fourayes

Set in 100-acres of apple orchards, this firm is the UK's largest grower and processor of Bramley apples, processing more than 1,300 tonnes of its own fruit and another 10,000 tonnes from other farms. It supplies produce for pies, desserts, fillings, jams, mincemeat, and various other products. It aims to double turnover over the next five years.



Peter Stringer and Caroline McBride, of Golding Homes, with centre, Stuart Butler-Gallie FM326893

BUSINESS COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY Countryside Recycling

After significant growth through acquisition, this waste collection business has raised recycling rates of plasterboard, increased tonnage of wood and cut rubbish going to landfill. It has doubled turnover in the past five years and renewed 75% of its vehicle fleet to improve environmental performance.



Matt Wilkey and Steve Daly of ID&C FM326798

SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS ID&C

Also a finalist in the Science/Technology category, this pioneering business supplied 120,000 radio frequency identification wristbands to Coachella music festivals in California. The product has also been sold in New Zealand and Japan and the Tunbridge Wells company joined a UK Trade & Investment mission to Brazil, generating new opportunities.



Anthony Klokou, Sleeping Giant Media with sponsor Roger Pitt, Healday Brothers FM326204

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMITMENT Sleeping Giant Media

In just five years, this Folkestone-based digital marketing agency has established itself as a key player, thanks in no small part to its expertise in SEO. It has a 90% retention rate of core clients and a recent survey found 100% of clients happy to recommend them to another firm. The company has nearly doubled its workforce in the last year with plans for further job growth.



Rob Knight of Ecoegg with, left, Emma Roberts of Creaseys and Sharon Black of IoD FM326882

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR Rob Knight, Ecoegg

When Rob Knight's girlfriend could not find a washing detergent that didn't irritate her skin, he quit his job, determined to find a green solution. He has since developed 32 eco-friendly, hypoallergenic and money-saving household products for use in laundry and cleaning. He said: "I believe a successful business should contribute to society."



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Mark Knowlton, Manufacturing Advisory Service with Tom Le of ITL and Russell Bell, ASB Law

MANUFACTURING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR Integrated Technologies Limited (ITL)

ITL has double award winner for 2014 has designed and manufactured more than 300 medical, diagnostic and analytical devices on a sub-contract basis since 1977. The Ashford-based company has invested £100,000 in modernisation and automation. It is expanding test facilities.



James Rosser and Graig White of Whiting and Hammond

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY OF THE YEAR Whiting and Hammond

After investing £100,000 in the Chaser Inn in Tonbridge in 2003, owner Brian Whiting now has eight pubs. The firm's talent is to take on bankrupt or run-down pubs and transform them into thriving enterprises. The firm expects to add two more pubs within the next three years.

of KEiBA 2014



Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, Howard Lee and Tracey-Anne Barker of Hadlow College

BUSINESS COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT Hadlow College

Even an outstanding rating by Ofsted, this college is notably behind the £40m Betteshanger Sustainable Parks Scheme to regenerate the former colliery site. It carries out energy audits, has low energy appliances and makes staff share transport for settings. It even has 10 bikes to encourage staff to cycle to campus, thought to have saved 10,000 fuel miles in four months.



Campbell Todd and Aurelle Arnaud of EISL with, right, Russell Simpson of Kent Reliance

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR EISL - European Insurance Services Ltd

This insurer puts a premium on team-building, multi-cultural encouragement and work-life balance. A Code of Conduct promotes diversity and a forum in which people can speak about discrimination or other activity without fear of reprisal. The Tunbridge Wells firm constantly celebrates success with an Extra Mile Award for transformational contributions.



Mark Sandher of Hectic Lifestyles with Mark Hill of Canterbury College and Clive Morris of Lloyds Bank

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR Bal Sandher, Hectic Lifestyles

Bal Sandher's sports nutrition and supplements firm is on track a million pound turnover in just four years. He founded the chaste company after an accident meant he could not work. day, he has customers in 150 countries after teaching himself website design, online marketing and accounting.



Adam Calver and Adam Barlow of Allpark

APPRENTICESHIP OF THE YEAR Adam Calver/Allpark

Street furniture manufacturer Allpark has taken on four apprentices in four years and put forward Adam Calver, 21, for his willingness to work long hours and ability to deliver. On course for a career in project co-ordination, Adam has repaid his bosses for giving someone with little experience a chance to show his ability. He said: "I feel like an important member of a close team."

WINNERS AND FINALISTS

LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Sponsor: Aon Risk Solutions
Lead judge: Jon Cooper
• **WINNER:** The Reynolds Group Limited
• **FINALIST:** Markersstudy Group
• **FINALIST:** Hectic Lifestyles



SME BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Sponsor: RIFT Group
Lead judge: Sue Nelson
• **WINNER:** Easotec
• **FINALIST:** West Kent Extra
• **FINALIST:** Amelix Group
• **FINALIST:** Hectic Lifestyles



START UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Sponsors: MidKent College and Thomson, Snell & Passmore
Lead judges: Michael Smith and Nick Gabay
• **WINNER:** Bush Group
• **FINALIST:** Finch House Cafe
• **FINALIST:** The Strength and Conditioning Institute



Thomson Snell & Passmore

MANUFACTURING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Sponsors: asb law and Manufacturing Advisory Service
Lead judges: Russell Bell and Mark Knowlton
• **WINNER:** Integrated Technologies Limited (ITL)
• **FINALIST:** M.P.
• **FINALIST:** Ardo



TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY OF THE YEAR

Sponsors: Southeastern
Lead judge: Barbara Thomas
• **WINNER:** Whiting and Hammond
• **FINALIST:** The Aspinall Foundation
• **FINALIST:** Ashford International Hotel



BEST SCIENCE AND/OR TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS

Sponsors: Cripps and University of Kent
Lead judges: Peter Kenyon and Carole Barron
• **WINNER:** Integrated Technologies Limited (ITL)
• **FINALIST:** 8Point3
• **FINALIST:** ID&C



LAND-BASED BUSINESS

Sponsors: Hadlow College and Brachers
Lead judges: Mark Lumsdon-Taylor and James Bullock
• **WINNER:** Fourayes
• **FINALIST:** Romney Marsh Woods
• **FINALIST:** Wintredale Cheesemaker



BUSINESS COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Sponsor: Golding Homes
Lead judge: Caroline McBride
• **WINNER:** Countryside Recycling
• **FINALIST:** Z&B Vinters
• **FINALIST:** Port of Dover



BUSINESS COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Sponsors: KCC Sustainability and UK Power Networks
Lead judges: Jennie Colville and Clive Steed
• **WINNER:** Hadlow College
• **FINALIST:** Cycloped
• **FINALIST:** The MJ Allen Group of Companies



EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Sponsor: Kent Reliance
Lead judge: John Eastgate
• **WINNER:** EISL Ltd - European Insurance Services Ltd
• **FINALIST:** Automotive Distributors Limited (ADL)
• **FINALIST:** Abbott Diagnostics Dartford



SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Sponsors: Kent International Business and HSBC
Lead judges: Steve Samson and Emeric Debourblaux
• **WINNER:** ID&C
• **FINALIST:** Automotive Distributors Limited (ADL)
• **FINALIST:** Sontay



CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMITMENT

Sponsor: Headley Brothers
Lead judge: Roger Pitt
• **WINNER:** Sleeping Giant Media
• **FINALIST:** Avenue Lettings
• **FINALIST:** The Better Body Shop



ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Sponsors: IOD and Creaseys
Lead judges: Sharon Black and Emma Roberts
• **WINNER:** Rob Knight, Ecoegg
• **FINALIST:** Simon Hagger, Holiday Extras Short Breaks/miDrive
• **FINALIST:** Louis Hurst, Amelix Group



YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Sponsors: Lloyds Bank and Canterbury College
Lead judges: Nick Christodoulou and Mark Hill
• **WINNER:** Bal Sandher, Hectic Lifestyles
• **FINALIST:** Matt Parkinson, VooServers
• **FINALIST:** Chris Wharton, The Better Body Shop



APPRENTICESHIP OF THE YEAR

Sponsor: KCC Skills and Employability
Lead judge: Chris Homewood
• **WINNER:** Adam Calver/Allpark
• **FINALIST:** Terri-Jane Harris/Elastex
• **FINALIST:** Christopher Phillips/JC Rook & Sons



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