

Kyle autoline

Kyle Insurance Brokers – Celebrating 125 Years

Kyle Insurance Brokers was established in 1884 by James Kyle as one of several businesses he owned in Ballymena. The insurance brokerage remained in the Kyle family for four generations until it became part of the Autoline Insurance Group in 2008. Its history as part of the business life of Ballymena and the involvement of the family in many areas of commerce, education, sport and the arts reflects the changing times of the 20th century.

James Kyle was Mayor of Ballymena in 1910. He was also the first secretary of the Co Antrim Agricultural Society in 1898 and the family remained in that post until 1974. After his sudden death in 1915, his son John took over at the early age of 17. He developed the insurance brokerage after selling off some of the other businesses. He was also active in many organisations from the church to Ballymena Academy where he was Chairman of the Board of Governors at the time the present school was built. He remained active in the business until his death at the age of 81 in 1978.

Sean Kyle became senior partner at his father's death and is well known in sporting circles. In 1963 at the request of George Sloane the Chamber of Commerce was revived and he became Secretary/Treasurer. He held these positions and the Chamber met in Kyle's offices until 1996. His daughter Shauna joined the business in 1978, becoming a partner in 1981. She qualified professionally as an Associate of the Chartered Insurance Institute and a Chartered Insurance Broker. She was also the first woman in the UK to become a regional chairman of the British Insurance Brokers Association.

Kyle Insurance Brokers has always enjoyed and maintained a reputation for professionalism and sound advice at the most competitive price. It is mainly a commercial brokerage serving the needs of many businesses in N Ireland from construction to retail. It also specialises in professional risks and cover for the voluntary and charity sector. Kyle Insurance Brokers was one of the first brokerages in the UK to achieve Chartered Insurance Brokerage status reflecting the professional qualifications and standards of its staff. With professional advice, personal service and competitive pricing Kyle Autoline remains at the forefront of NI's independent insurance brokerages. It continues to be an active member of the Chamber of Commerce with a wide range of services to Chamber members providing today's solutions for tomorrow's insurance needs.

Forthcoming Events

8th. October: Joint Breakfast with Ballymena Business Centre and Women on the Move
Guest Speaker: Gren Armstrong Invest Northern Ireland

22nd. October: Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards 2009 Gala Evening
Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena at 7.00pm

A retail crime seminar is also being planned for September/October

An event with the Equality Commission is also being planned

As planning progresses, further details can be found on www.ballymenachamber.co.uk



Ballymena

Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Newsletter

Issue 11: Sept 2009

President's Message



Welcome to the September issue of the Chamber Newsletter, double the size of previous issues. We have included profiles of some Chamber members – if you would like your business included please let us know. It has been a very busy summer, the highlight being the Chamber's 90th anniversary celebration.

The 2009 Business announced at the Gala Evening to be held on Thursday 22nd. October in Tullyglass House Hotel – I have no doubt that this will be another superb evening so get your tickets booked now.

There are many other events planned for the coming months – you can always keep up to date with what is happening in Chamber on the website www.ballymenachamber.co.uk. I hope you enjoy the Newsletter.

Alison Moore
President

Visit by our Sister City Morehead 2009.

The Chamber was delighted to participate in a visit by eighteen people from Ballymena's Sister City, Morehead, Kentucky from 30th July to 4th August. This visit coincided with the 10th anniversary of the signing of the agreement and at a BBQ at Arthur Cottage to celebrate this Dr. Dudley Herron presented a gift of a dulcimer, hand made from wood from a walnut tree which came from a village close to Morehead, to the people of Ballymena. Mayor James Currie reciprocated by giving Dr. Herron a painting to take back to the people of Morehead.

On Saturday our visitors were treated to a morning of local crafts in the Braid and joined by delegates from Sister Cities Conference as well as many local people. All our visitors then attended a reception in the Mayor's Parlour and a buffet lunch. The afternoon was spent shopping followed by music and 'crack' in the Front Page, and judging by the number of carrier bags which returned to the Adair a good day was had by all.

Gracehill was the venue for Sunday afternoon as they had requested to visit the Moravian settlement and see the village. On Monday it was the turn of Broughshane with a visit to Houston's Mill before going on to Carnlough and the Giants Causeway. The visit was excellent for the economy of our town as they stayed in the Adair Arms Hotel and had time to spend around town. It was with some sadness as we said goodbye on Tuesday morning as Dr Herron will be resigning as Sister City co-ordinator but we were delighted that his replacement Ashley had made the trip ensuring continuity.



2009 Business Awards Launched

The 2009 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards, which are organised by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry have been officially launched at a reception held in the Braid Centre.

Chamber president Alison Moore welcomed everyone. She said "I am very pleased to see so many sponsors and guests here today for the launch of the 2009 business awards. This clearly demonstrates the high esteem in which the business awards are now held. This is the seventh year of the awards and they are now recognised as one of the premier events of this type in Northern Ireland. The awards aim to recognise and reward all that is best in business in the Borough. Therefore I think it is especially fitting that the launch is being held in the Braid Centre – this excellent facility is the envy of many towns throughout Northern Ireland and something of which the Borough can be very proud. I would like to thank all the sponsors because without their support there would be no awards. We are especially grateful to Invest Northern Ireland who is our major sponsor this year".



Gren Armstrong, Manager of Invest NI'S North East Regional Office in Ballymena said "Invest NI is delighted to be the major sponsor for this year's business awards. This has been a very difficult year for many businesses, but there are many excellent businesses in the Borough and generally speaking Invest NI has found the businesses in the North Eastern region to be very resilient. As well as being major sponsor Invest NI are also sponsoring the Innovation award. Innovation is essential if you want your business to stand out from the crowd".

The Mayor, Councillor James Currie MBE congratulated and thanked the Chamber for organising the awards once again this year. He said "There have been vast changes in the business scene in Ballymena in recent years.

Ballymena is very progressive and the Council and the business community work very closely together. This is essential if we are to keep Ballymena moving forward. I have no doubt that in Ballymena we have some of the best business people and businesses in the United Kingdom. We must all work together to ensure a solid foundation for the next generation. Finally I would like to wish every success to all those who enter the awards".

The Gala evening where the winners are announced will be held on Thursday 22nd.October in the Tullyglass House Hotel. The evening commences with a sparkling wine reception and the compere for the evening will be Jackie Fullerton. Following dinner the winners will be announced and the entertainment for the evening will be provided by the Chevys.

To book your tickets please contact Chris Wales at office@ballymenachamber.co.uk or telephone 07876 758797.



Patton Group wins top awards



The Patton Group featured prominently in one of the province's top business awards ceremonies held in Belfast recently.

The local company picked up top prize in the Innovation category of the NI Business awards, sponsored by the Belfast Telegraph and BMI and was commended in the Corporate Social Responsibility category. However there was a surprise in store for representatives of the Patton Group when chairman, David Patton was revealed as the inaugural winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

David Patton received another surprise in June when he was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to the construction industry. Congratulations from everyone in Chamber and very well deserved.

Credit Crunch: Opportunity or Obscurity?

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held a business breakfast in May in the Adair Arms Hotel. This was part of a series of very successful breakfast meetings held in recent months.

There was a good turnout of Chamber members and guests and Chamber President Alison Moore welcomed everyone.

The guest speaker was Chamber member Johnny Black from Black Advertising and his topic for the morning was "Credit Crunch – Opportunity or Obscurity". In a very informative presentation he outlined several marketing essentials vital to make a company brand more valuable. These included knowing your customer, focusing on family values, increasing market share and opportunities, communicating with shareholders, having a post credit crunch plan and getting the right marketing mix. He concluded with a quote from the Harvard Business School "Successful companies do not abandon their marketing strategies in a recession; they adapt them".

The meeting concluded with Johnny answering a series of questions from the audience, and everyone present agreed that it had been an excellent event.



Sister Cities Conference 2009

Audrey Wales represented Chamber at the 53rd Sister Cities conference which was held in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast 29th.July to 1st.August. This was a very historic occasion as this was the first time this event has been held outside America.

There were 850 registered delegates but as many delegates brought up to 4 family members the number of visitors the event brought to Northern Ireland was indeed significant.

Audrey said "This was the fourth conference I have attended and would like to thank Ballymena Borough Council for including me in their delegation. It was great to meet friends made over the years and make many new ones. I found the seminars on fundraising, engaging Elected Officials and citizens making a difference in regions of conflict extremely interesting and informative. One group has raised 1.4million dollars to support their Sister Cities program (they have 25 Sister Cities), and the Mayor's Office from Cincinnati wanted tips on how to engage their Chamber of Commerce. There were many opportunities to network and I attended as many of these events as possible. Ballymena also had taken a stand in the Waterfront Hall to advertise our Borough and the trip we had organized for Saturday. I am glad to say we were successful and those who came to Ballymena left with quite a few shopping bags, some of the crafts they had made in the Braid, good stories of the entertainment they had enjoyed in the Front Page and great memories of their visit to Ballymena".



Established in 1989 as a Social Enterprise, Ballymena Business Centre celebrates 20 successful years.

The centre was established to provide vital enterprise support at a grass roots level to the community of Ballymena. In the early days the Business Centre was located in the LEDU offices at Mill Street and subsequently moving to Greenville Street in the town centre.

In 1993 with a substantial funding package from Ballymena Borough Council, Local Enterprise Development Unit, European Regional Development Fund and International Fund for Ireland work began at the Fenaghy Road site just outside the village of Galgorm.

Foundations were laid and the new business complex was officially opened in June 1994. This complex provided a major boost to the promotion of enterprise in Ballymena through the provision of business units, administration base, business support services, business training and conference facilities.

With a mission to contribute to economic and enterprise development Ballymena Business Centre continued to expand over recent years and today has a total of 54 business units hosting a diverse range of new and developing businesses.

With a total investment of £3 million the Business Centre provides a full range of business programmes supporting those thinking about starting a business through to those growing an existing business and those embarking upon exporting opportunities.

Committed to economic and enterprise development the Business Centre has the strategic leadership of a voluntary Board of Directors representative of the local statutory, business and education sectors. Current Directors include Ald PJ McAvoy, Company Chairperson, Ms Audrey Wales MBE, Company Vice Chairperson, Ms Aileen Graham OBE, Ms Mary Hamilton, Mr Mervin Rankin, Cllr. Joseph McKernan, Mr John Stewart, Mr Jim Briggs, Mr James Perry and Mr Stewart Ballentine.

The success of any business is down to the commitment of people. The team at Ballymena Business Centre includes Ms Melanie Christie Boyle, Chief Executive, Mr Stephen Scullion, Project Manager, Ms Patricia Elliott, Business Advisor, Ms Yvonne Marks, Accounts Officer, Ms Hilary McMillan, Facilities Co-ordinator Ballykeel Complex, Ms Lynn Stewart, Facilities Co-ordinator Galgorm Complex and Ms Adeline Wright, Receptionist.

The Company Directors and Executive Team would like to thank all the organisations who have supported the Business Centre over this 20 year period and look forward to their continued future support as we continue to support economic and enterprise development.

Award Winning Business Centre
 Quality Business Units
 Excellent Conference Facilities
 Professional Business Advisors
 Specialist Business Mentors
 New Business Support
 Business Growth Support
 Extensive Business Networks

20 Years at the heart of the local business community 1989 - 2009
www.ballymenabusiness.co.uk : info@ballymenabusiness.co.uk : 02825658616



FAIRHILL STREAMLINES AND STRENGTHENS

Fairhill Shopping Centre has grown not only in size but in popularity with the local community and beyond since it first opened its doors to shoppers in 1991.

This bright and airy Shopping Centre houses over fifty stores including Marks & Spencer, Next, Desire by Debenhams, River Island, New Look, Game, Vera Moda, Oasis, Topshop/Topman, Evans, H&M, Okaidi plus many more.

In recent weeks Fairhill Shopping Centre has launched a number of exciting new retail developments including a brand new, New Look while Next will be relocating their store with a grand opening taking place on Thursday 10th September. In all, these two openings encompass over an impressive 50,000 sqft of new retail space, a coup for Fairhill.



Not only has Fairhill opened its doors to new retailers (with more to come) it has also under gone recent changes to its Centre Management structure. We would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce the new Centre Management Team to the Chamber of Commerce.

Martin North is very experienced in the retail industry and has been working in Fairhill Shopping Centre for the last 6 years and took on the role of Centre Operations Manager in April 2009. From April until August this year, Martin has single handily ran the day to day running of Fairhill Shopping Centre and improved its daily trading environment, making it a great destination in Ballymena for both retailers and customers alike.

On 10th August this year, Natalie Jackson took on the role of Marketing and Commercial Manager within Fairhill Shopping Centre. She is very experienced both in the retail and advertising industries, and brings to the role a wealth of knowledge and creative flair to successfully implement Fairhill's marketing and commercial strategy.

The newly established Centre Management team, Natalie and Martin, will both be responsible for facilitating the smooth running of the shopping centre and to assist with the day to day management of the centre and supervision of its entire staff. They will both represent the shopping centre at the Chamber of Commerce and the Ballymena Town Centre Management.



Chamber Celebrates 90th Anniversary

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry celebrated its 90th Anniversary on Thursday 6th August at a reception and BBQ held in the Mulberry Garden, Galgorm Resort and Spa.

Chamber President Alison Moore welcomed Chamber members and a number of invited guests to the celebration. She said "The Chamber was formed in 1919. The businesses who were involved in the formation of the Chamber 90 years ago sadly are no longer in existence today. However I believe that whilst business life has changed dramatically the aims and objectives of Chamber are every bit as relevant today as they were 90 years ago.

Ballymena is widely recognised as the best shopping town in Northern Ireland. It is the aim of Chamber to help ensure that the Borough as a whole continues to be a vibrant commercial and industrial centre".

Alison then asked George Leith to cut the birthday cake. George was awarded Life Membership of Chamber a few years ago in recognition of his work and support for Chamber over almost 50 years. George is a baker by trade and the birthday cake was baked in Leith's Home Bakery, still going strong after all these years.

The Chamber would like to thank all those who attended and special thanks must go to Galgorm Resort and Spa for hosting the reception. Everyone present agreed that the location, food and service were all excellent.



Chamber of Commerce AGM

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held their AGM in the Adair Arms Hotel on 8th April.

A large number of members were present to hear President Alison Moore give details of what had been another very successful year for Chamber. Members of the Management Committee also gave reports on the projects and working groups in which they had been involved.

David Hutchinson, a lecturer from the Northern Regional College who had been working with Chamber for 12 weeks, handed over his report and gave a brief summary to the meeting on his findings.

Rev. Robert Coulter MLA chaired the meeting for the election of officers for 2009/10. The following were elected:

President: Alison Moore

Vice President: Raymond Ruck

Hon. Secretary: Audrey Wales

Hon. Treasurer: Thomas McKillen

Management Committee: Alan Stewart, Damien McGinley, Paul Muir, Roy Bonar, Neil Holland, Robin Cherry and William McKean.



B_{allymena} **R**_{etailers} **A**_{gainst} **C**_{rime}



We are fast approaching the most important trading period for the retail industry and everyone is hoping that the Christmas Shoppers will be out in force this year. Unfortunately the one thing that can be guaranteed is that the retail criminals will certainly be at their most proactive over the festive period. This year has seen retail crime increase in Ballymena in line with other areas of Northern Ireland and this had been predicted as a direct result of the current economic climate.

It is now more important than ever to focus on this problem over the coming months in order to minimize loss of profits. There are positive steps that can be taken now to help tackle retail theft and below are some actions that will help protect profits.

1. Staff training to improve alertness and observation skills is vitally important. This training is free for members of Radio Link. This applies particularly to part time staff being used over the Christmas period.
2. Staff should be aware of procedures in dealing with suspected retail criminals and company policy.
3. Security tag door alarms should be checked to make sure they are working properly and that staff respond immediately if they are triggered. We are aware that retail criminals have, in the past, checked whether store alarms are working by deliberately triggering the detectors.
4. Frequent checks should be carried out for security tags being hidden in other clothing, fitting areas and behind shelving etc. We are aware that there are a number of de-tagging devices being used by criminals.
5. Consider reversing every other hanger on a rail which makes it difficult to grab several items and run off.
6. Keep an ear out for the hotspot times announced over the Radio Link. These times have proved to be very accurate in relation to thefts occurring and staff should be made aware and encouraged to be extra vigilant during the hotspot times.
7. Report anything suspicious immediately over the radio link.
8. Make sure staff are aware of counterfeit notes being passed at busy times and alert everyone over the radio link if you receive one.

It's not all bad news in relation to retail crime in that the local Police are achieving a 70% detection rate at present. This is being achieved with the help of the partnership between Police/Ballymena Borough Council CCTV and the Radio Link scheme.

Contact Trevor Parker, BRAC Development Manager at 25646050 for information of the Radio Link Scheme and training for members.