

## XMAS SOCIAL/NETWORKING EVENT

The Chamber held its annual Xmas social/networking event in Montgomerys on 8<sup>th</sup>.December. An excellent turnout of Chamber members and guests was present.

This is always an informal evening and Alison Moore, Chamber President welcomed everyone. She then went on to present the trophies for the 2009 Xmas window dressing competition. The three prize winners were:

**Harrison.co.uk, Ballymoney Street**  
**Sally's Floral Studio, William Street**  
**Greer's Travel Office, Linenhall Street**

### Congratulations to the three winners!

A presentation was also made to the NI Hospice. A raffle was held at the 2009 Business awards and the magnificent total of £3516 was raised. Chamber would like to thank the following businesses who donated prizes for the raffle: Galgorm Resort and Spa, Alexander Bonar and Co. Ltd., The Thatch Inn (Broughshane), Stephen Moore Farm and Garden Machinery, Michelin Tyre PLC, NI Hospice, firmus energy, Barrs Butchers and Tullyglass House Hotel. Chamber Vice President Raymond Ruck completed the Belfast marathon in May raising £401 making the total donation to the NI Hospice £3917.

Mairead Black (Michelin) was presented with a gift voucher in recognition of her excellent work in maintaining and updating the Chamber website.

Montgomerys hospitality as always was excellent – Chamber would like to thank Steven, Richard and Timothy.



# Ballymena

Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

## Newsletter

May 2010  
Issue: 1

### President's Message



Welcome to the May issue of the Chamber Newsletter.

The past few months have been very busy in Chamber – we organised several events, welcomed new members and at the AGM in April, I was elected President for 2010/11. This is a great honour and I will endeavour to represent the Chamber and all its members to the best of my ability. Planning is already well under way for the 2010 Business Excellence awards – the date for the Gala Evening is Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>.October so get this in your diary now. Don't forget that you can always keep up to date with what is happening in Chamber on the website

[www.ballymenachamber.co.uk](http://www.ballymenachamber.co.uk)

I hope you enjoy the Newsletter.  
Raymond Ruck  
President

### Chamber of Commerce AGM

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held its AGM in the Adair Arms Hotel on 14th.April. A large number of members were present to hear outgoing 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.

Steven Montgomery, High Sheriff of County Antrim gave an interesting talk on the duties and responsibilities of being High Sheriff. He congratulated the Chamber on what had been another very busy year and then chaired the meeting for the election of officers for 2009/10.

The following were elected:

President: Raymond Ruck

Vice President: Thomas McKillen

Hon. Secretary: Audrey Wales MBE

Hon. Treasurer: William McKean

Management Committee: Alan Stewart, Paul Muir, Roy Bonar MBE, Neil Holland, Robin Cherry MBE, Martin North, Tim Montgomery and Alison Moore.



## Business awards winners honoured at Stormont

The winners in the 2009 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence awards were honoured at a reception held in Stormont on 18<sup>th</sup>. March. The reception was hosted by Ian Paisley Jnr MLA. Ian gave the group a tour of Stormont and then officially welcomed everyone.

"I am delighted to welcome you all here to Parliament Buildings – the centre of our local government. Tonight we are here to celebrate the achievements of the business community in Ballymena. The last twelve months have been extremely difficult for those involved in business, but we can take pride from the success and achievements of our local business sector in Ballymena.

Events like this help us to recognise good news on the economic front. Positive achievements unfortunately are not so readily picked up and profiled in the media as bad news is.



Local government at Stormont, responsive to local needs and standing up for Northern Ireland's interests is better for business than unaccountable direct rule manned by people who have no stake in seeing this place succeed. Already we have seen the massive difference that local people with their hands on the levers of power can make.



## Patton Construction wins two prestigious awards

Congratulations to Patton Construction, part of the Patton Group, on being recognised once more for its excellence in construction by winning the "Overall Award" at the CEF/Specify Construction Excellence Awards 2009 for its work at the new Wellington Presbyterian Church in Ballymena. The company also won a second prestigious award when it was selected as winner of the "General Construction – Social/Community" category.

Patton Construction beat off strong competition from over 100 other high profile projects to emerge as winner of the "Overall Award" for 2009. This award was presented to the category winner that, in the opinion of the judges, best exemplified dedication to the pursuit of excellence in construction.

## Retail Crime Seminar

Around 60 people from all across the Borough attended a seminar on retail crime in Montgomerys in October. The seminar was jointly organised by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ballymena District Policing Partnership (DPP) and Ballymena Retailers against Crime (BRAC). The event was sponsored by the DPP.

Audrey Wales (DPP) welcomed everyone saying "There has been an increase in retail crime in Ballymena in recent months. The Christmas period is traditionally the busiest retail period of the year and the aim of this seminar is to help retail businesses minimise losses over the Christmas period".

The first speaker was Ciaran Rooney from First Trust Bank. He gave an excellent presentation on how to detect counterfeit bank notes, cheques, debit and credit cards and documentation used to verify identity.

Sergeant Alison Wylie from the PSNI explained many of the current methods being used in retail crime and what sales staff should be looking out for to foil the thieves. She also gave an assurance that the PSNI would be supporting retailers over this busy period by having a presence in the town especially at times when retail crime tends to peak.

Trevor Parker, Operations Manager from BRAC reiterated the importance of being a member of Radio Link, explaining the best methods of using the radio. He also explained that no matter what technology stores employed, vigilance by staff was the most important and effective way to foil thieves.

William McKean from the Chamber of Commerce thanked everyone for attending, the speakers for their presentations, the DPP for their sponsorship and Montgomerys for hosting the event. He wished everyone a very busy and crime free Christmas trading period.



## Montgomerys – Home of Radio Cracker

Radio Cracker has been broadcasting to the Ballymena District during the Christmas period for 19 years and it now occupies a custom built studio provided for them by Montgomerys, Ballymoney Street.

The success of the venture can be seen in the fact that local businesses and individuals have subscribed over one million pounds to Third World Charities in the name of Ballymena. Among the projects that have been funded and who carry the name are the Ballymena Wing of a hospital in India and the MV Ballymena that sails in the upper part of the Amazon river reaching places that are only accessible by water.

Hugo Duncan, (the wee man from Strabane), who is one of the most popular presenters on Radio Ulster, prepares to sample one of his favourite delicacies, "a crame bun". in Montoomervs Restaurant. He called in



## Church Street Open Day

Church Street was buzzing on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November when the Church Street traders held their annual open day.

This event was started back in the late 1980s by James Loughridge of McFetridges Hardware Store. In the first few years it was held from 7-10pm. James had a marquis outside the shop, Ballymena Silver Band were present and he used this opportunity to demonstrate the specialist equipment he sold. It quickly became an established event with people travelling from far and near.

James realised the potential that this could have not only for his business but for others in Church Street. He invited other businesses to take part and it then became an all day event.

Thomas Wallace (Wallaces Fashion and Footwear) said "James invited other shops to get involved and we were one of the first to come on board. No-one in those early days could really imagine that it would become such a huge event. People travel from all over Northern Ireland, from Donegal and this year there were also visitors from Scotland".

McKillens Footwear has also been involved for many years. Thomas McKillen said "We completed a major renovation many years ago and initially we saw this as a way to thank our customers who had put up with all the hassle. At the beginning we had fashion shows and children's entertainers, but the day has now become so busy that this is no longer practical".

This is without doubt now one of the busiest shopping days in Ballymena. It has evolved over the years and plays an important role in cementing Ballymena's position as the premier shopping town in Northern Ireland. The businesses in Church Street, especially the independents, invest heavily in promoting the open day. Those who visit have a great day, leave Ballymena with a feel good factor and they spread the word.

The Chamber wishes Church Street Open Day continued success for many years to come.



## Business awards winners honoured at Stormont

Over the last 18 months we have seen a £1/2 billion investment in Shorts- the largest inward investment ever, New York Stock Exchange bringing 400 new jobs to Belfast, GEM 900 new jobs, £60m investment in Seagate- the largest ever investment in Research & Development in Northern Ireland and a £200m contract for Thales. This is just a snap-shot of the difference that devolution can make.

Your businesses will be crucial to our efforts in the period ahead. One of the real advantages of devolution is the accessibility you have to those who will take the decisions. We will do all that we can to help you in your endeavours and I hope that by working together we can all make Ballymena, and indeed all of Northern Ireland a better and more prosperous place".

Alison Moore, Chamber President thanked Ian for his invite and hospitality.

The winners then all enjoyed an excellent meal and everyone present agreed that the visit to Stormont had been a great way to round off the 2009 Business Excellence awards.



## Chief Constable Guest of Chamber of Commerce

The PSNI Chief Constable, Matt Baggott visited Ballymena on 9<sup>th</sup>. March as a guest of Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Chamber President, Alison Moore, welcomed everyone, with a special welcome for the Chief Constable. Mr. Baggott then addressed over 50 Chamber members at the breakfast which was held in Montgomerys. He said he was delighted to be in Ballymena and although he had only been in Northern Ireland a short time he was well aware that Ballymena had an excellent reputation as a business and shopping town. In fact the Chamber's invitation to come and speak in Ballymena had been the first letter on his desk when he arrived.

His topic for the morning was "The Future of Policing in Northern Ireland". He told the audience how he had found things since his appointment as Chief Constable, highlighting areas which needed to be addressed, how he had already introduced change and how he planned to address many of these issues in the future. Whilst a very serious issue, he certainly proved to be a very entertaining and humorous speaker. At the end of his address he answered a number of questions from the audience.

Alison Moore then presented the Chief Constable with a Chamber of Commerce plaque and a tie and everyone then enjoyed an excellent breakfast.



## Invest NI Business Breakfast

Ballymena Business Centre, Women on the Move and Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently held a joint business breakfast. Melanie Christie Boyle, Chief Executive of the Business Centre welcomed everyone and after breakfast the guest speaker was Gren Armstrong, Regional Manager of Invest Northern Ireland. The theme of the breakfast was "What Invest NI can do for your business".

Gren gave a very interesting talk and using a number of case studies illustrated the wide range of schemes and assistance that Invest NI can provide for all sizes and types of business. He emphasized the importance of export and innovation, not only to the individual business but also to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Northern Ireland economy is relatively small and any business that competes only internally is therefore targeting a small marketplace – exporting to the ROI and/or the rest of the UK can open huge new markets. He gave several examples of how innovation in developing new products and services had helped local companies compete at the highest level. He concluded his talk by saying that Invest NI can provide tailored innovation and export advice to small and medium sized companies, regardless of whether this is their first attempt or they already have a proven track record.

Gren then answered a number of questions from the audience.

Alison Moore, Chamber President and Joanne Brown Kerr, Women on the Move both thanked Gren for his presentation. Gren Armstrong can be contacted at Invest NI's office in Mill Street, Ballymena.



## Chamber welcomes new members

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held an informal meeting in March in the Adair Arms Hotel to welcome new members.

Alison Moore, Chamber President and some of the Chamber management committee were present to meet the new members and to tell them about Chamber and what it can do for their business. Alison said "I am very pleased to welcome you all here today. New members are vital for any organisation. I hope you enjoy your time as Chamber members and that you find your membership to be beneficial"

She then presented membership certificates to Jenny Bristow, Focus Photography, Norbev Ltd and Fire Compliance and Safety NI (Ballymena) Ltd.

Any business which is interested in Chamber membership can contact Chamber at [office@ballymenachamber.co.uk](mailto:office@ballymenachamber.co.uk) or phone Chris Wales on 07876 758797.



## Welcome to Beau Beauty

We are very happy to welcome Beau Beauty as new Chamber members.

Beau Beauty's designer beauty boutique opened in Ballymena in October 2009. Their aim is to make everyone look and feel great by offering them the most luxurious options in skin care, beauty and relaxation.

Proprietor Denise Montgomery said "If you are looking for somewhere special to treat yourself or a loved one to a well deserved slice of pampering and luxury, with the guarantee of top quality products and service at an affordable price, then you need look no further than Beau Beauty. We are Ballymena's newest and most luxurious location for all your beauty needs. Our salon has been decorated to the highest standards and offers a relaxed welcoming atmosphere. We have installed only the finest equipment in our treatment rooms including luxurious pedicure chairs and electronic massage beds.

Beau Beauty offers a fully comprehensive range of treatments – manicures and pedicures, facials, waxes, massages and tanning all delivered by fully trained therapists who guarantee to make your experience with us memorable".

The boutique is centrally located at 29 Ballymoney Street, tel. 028 2563 8668. If you want to relax, indulge, beautify and spoil yourself, Beau Beauty ticks all the boxes.

