



Face Behind the Firm

Family financial advice

A COMMITMENT to personal service was the guiding principle of Derek Baker when he founded Horbury Financial Services Limited over 30 years ago.

Today this commitment to customers remains at the heart of the family business as it is taken forward by his son Paul, wife Jeanne and long-time colleague Simon Knee.

Based on Wakefield Road, Ackworth, Horbury Financial Services Limited provides both commercial and personal insurance, accountancy services and independent financial advice to individual and corporate clients, with a particular emphasis on small and start-up businesses.

Clients find it especially convenient to deal with a company which covers three distinct serv-

ices under one roof, with Paul specialising in insurance, Simon looking after accountancy and both overseeing the financial advisors.

Paul said: "Our aim is to provide a reliable, trustworthy and personal service to all our clients, whether that's an individual or a big commercial customer, just as it has been for the past 30 years."

Simon added: "That means taking a hands-on approach and being there to help whenever we're needed. We're not merely interested in, say, selling an insurance policy and then forgetting about it until it's due for renewal: we aim to be of service at all times."

To find out more, or to contact them for a free initial consultation, go to www.horburyfinancial.co.uk or call 01977 617975



COMMITMENT: Simon Knee, left, and Paul Baker of Horbury Financial Services Limited.

Firm is a grass act

GREENING up the world is probably the throwaway answer that Grass Concrete's Bob Howden would give, if asked what he did for a living.

The truth isn't too far removed however. With a passport full of stamps, Grass Concrete's owner is a seasoned world traveller, establishing a network of international licensees for their unique Grasscrete paving system.

The running count at the moment is 23 such licensees who are able to supply into 60 countries.

Grasscrete is a cellular reinforced concrete structure with pockets infilled with soil and grass. This provides a naturally grassed appearance but, at the same time, enables heavy traffic loads. It is also equally at home as an erosion control system and is shortly to be used on the Alverthorpe Beck flood project in Wakefield.

With 30 years behind him at Grass Concrete, Bob remains as enthusiastic as



ever towards the product.

He said: "I'm working with a product I believe in. Meeting new people and cultures around the world has, I feel, been a major benefit to the business and to me personally."

It's a background such as this, perhaps, that also helps this former racing cyclist in his other role as vice chair of British Cycling.

Palmers do it again

ONCE again, David Palmer Travel have proved what their customers already know, by scooping the UK Coach Tour Operator of the Year prize at the 2011 Coach Tourism Awards.

That makes it twice in three years for the Normanton-based company, which was awarded the same prize in 2009.

Managing director Lisa Palmer, pictured, said: "Everyone here is thrilled to have won the award for the second time in the last three years."

"The judges were looking for a company that demonstrates a commitment to quality and that's



something we've always considered to be the most important thing we do."

The judges comments said: "Our winner is a first class example of the way a smaller operator can punch above its weight, displaying a commitment,

not only to delivering a high quality of customer service, but also to raising awareness of the benefits of coach tourism across a wider audience.

"The judges were impressed with this operator's training programme, and with its involvement in the local community."

As well as winning Coach Tour Operator of the Year, David Palmer Travel was also a finalist in the best brochure category.

To find out more about the great range of tours, excursions, coach and vintage bus hire services, telephone 01924 895849 or go to www.davidpalmercoaches.co.uk

Astra business is safety

WAKEFIELD-based Astra Access Safety Training is an independent company dedicated to ensuring safe working at heights.

It provides a wide range of courses, including PASMA, IPAF and Ladder Association schemes, either at its training academy on Flanshaw Way or on site.

Directors Mick Aston, pictured, and Mandy Netherwood established Astra three years ago and it has grown steadily during this time, winning business from customers such as Kirklees, Leeds and Hull City Councils, as well as private sector clients including several multinational companies.

Mick said: "We can provide set courses or we will tailor training to a customer's specific needs, whether they send their staff to us or we go out to them."



"Our staff have travelled all over – including the Falklands to carry out training for the MOD – and we're currently dealing with enquiries from India, Saudi Arabia and Norway."

The Wakefield centre is set up to provide training on scaffolding, scissor lifts, cherry pickers and mobile towers, as well as on working in confined spaces.

Risk assessment, site management and management safety training are also among the many courses available.

Mick continued: "Maybe 2008 wasn't the best time to start a company like this given the state of the economy at the time, but we've done well."

"We've opened a second branch in Southampton and now employ eight staff plus freelance tutors."

In recognition of this success, Astra was named Business of the Month for November 2010 by Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

To find out more, go to www.astratraining.co.uk or telephone 01924 364147.

Firm's sparkling service

FOR 30 years, if you've had a big cleaning job to deal with, the best answer has been Clean Up Time.

This family-run business was established in Wakefield in 1981 and is still going strong, thanks to a flexible approach to meeting customers' needs.

It's a contract cleaning company which doesn't ask customers to tie themselves down to a long-term deal, while if you've got your own cleaners, Clean Up Time is happy simply to supply you with the materials for the job.

Whatever the size of the job and whatever the nature of your premises, Clean Up Time's experienced staff will get to grips with the task in hand efficiently and very effectively.

They have carried out work for Mid Yorkshire Chamber of



Commerce, the prison service, for building companies and in commercial premises of all kinds, so you can rely upon them for safety, security and your peace of mind as a customer.

The company has recently introduced a mobile car valeting service, working to the same high standards as in the rest of their operations – and at an affordable price, too.

The standard of office and workplace cleaning are regularly checked by supervisors, while relief cleaners, employed by the company, are deployed when regular staff are on holiday.

So whether it's a regular contract or a one-off deep clean, get in touch with Clean Up Time for the very best in service.

Call them on 0845 644 4847 or go to www.cleanuptime.co.uk

End-to-end support

LESS than two months after moving into the corporate market, Techmonkeys is on the verge of winning a contract to provide IT support for a major national company across more than 40 sites.

That would be a remarkable achievement for this fast-growing IT solutions provider, which has come a long way since business partners David Smith and Darren McCabe started a home computing advice forum in 2004: "from bedroom to boardroom" as David characterised it.

Wakefield-based Techmonkeys provides an 'end-to-end' service for IT users: everything from



supplying hardware and servers through to ongoing maintenance and support.

"Our aim is to be a single point of contact for every aspect of a company's IT," said David.

"We're here to take all the hassle out of running and using IT, giving customers the right kind of solutions within their budget, effectively making

us their internal IT team."

Even without the contract referred to earlier, Techmonkeys already has clients across Yorkshire and is picking up more business almost daily.

However, despite the growth of their corporate business, David, Darren and their team of technicians remain committed to the private users who have been the basis of their success since 2004.

David said: "We still have our information and advice forums on the website, which have around 2,500 members, and will continue to provide a service to home users."

To find out more, go to www.techmonkeys.co.uk or call 0845 621 6660.