

THE SCENE

#08



an eye on the **FUTURE**



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Round Table

THE SCENE

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/ Welcome /

an eye on the FUTURE

Rhys Thomas / Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to Thomas Carroll's business and lifestyle magazine, The Scene. We're celebrating our 45th birthday with a new look.

Just in the way Thomas Carroll is constantly evolving to meet the needs of our clients, we felt it was time to do the same with our magazine.

In this revamped edition, we are focusing on a future theme. Here's a taster of what you can look forward to in this issue:

You will discover inspiring client stories of businesses grasping tomorrow's opportunities, like the Real Wrap Co. who are providing entrepreneurial food for thought and Techniquet, who are helping to create the next generation of scientists. A thought-provoking Brexit discussion, hosted by Professor Brian Morgan and discussed by a leading panel of industry experts, highlights the challenges it brings to Welsh businesses.

We're also delighted to feature an insightful interview with the Chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union, Gareth Davies, on creating success on and off the pitch.

Plus, see how the Stephens & George Print Group are leading the way in looking after their loyal workforce to ensure future growth and how Abergavenny Fine Foods rose from the ashes after a devastating fire,

with a regeneration project that allowed the business to refocus for greater success.

That's not all. Thanks to a big win at the Aviva Community Fund competition, the students of Islwyn Special Resource Base are now going out and about in a new minibus!

Like I said at the beginning, Thomas Carroll is constantly looking towards the future for our clients, putting their business first.

We were proudly awarded twice at the recent Royal Mint Supplier Awards, including Supplier of the Year, which is a credit to our team.

We invest in people, recruiting and engaging the local talent. Our Graduate Academy gives the next generation the opportunity to develop and progress at an accelerated pace, and succession planning is always at the forefront of our minds.

It is also why we are investing in new and exciting technologies and online platforms with particular focus on streamlining our services.

I hope you enjoy the future-themed issue and thank you for your ongoing support.



@thomascarrollgp



[linkedin.com/company/thomascarroll](https://www.linkedin.com/company/thomascarroll)

Email hello@thomas-carroll.co.uk to receive future issues of *The Scene*

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Celebrating Our 45th Birthday with Thomas Carroll's Got Talent



The Chicken Supremes.

PHOTOS: GWENLIAN THOMAS



On 27 October, under the bright lights of Taff's Well Ex-Service & Social Club's main stage, we celebrated our 45th birthday with Thomas Carroll's Got Talent – a night to remember!



Our birthday wish for the year was to raise £10,000 to sponsor a chemotherapy chair in Tenovus' new Mobile Support Unit, through various fundraising activities, dress-down days and Thomas Carroll's Got Talent, we're almost there!

It wasn't until 'lights, camera, action' that we realised how many talented individuals have been hiding in our offices. Hosted by Brynmor Williams and Rob Jones MBE (our very own Ant & Dec)



Will the Real Mike Davies Please Stand Up?



Thomas Carroll employees enjoying the show

seven acts consisting of musicians, singers, dancers and a comedian took the stage.

The celebrity judging panel consisted of Thomas Carroll's John Moore MBE, Evan Thomas, Lina Iannucci and Sarah Jones, who did their best X Factor-inspired Simon, Lewis, Sharon and Cheryl impressions.

Comedian Mike Davies, known better by his stage name 'Will the Real Mike Davies Please Stand Up?', had the crowd roaring and took home the trophy following a winning clap-o-meter result from the audience.

A hard one to call due to the sheer level of talent, The Full Ponty and The Chicken Supremes came in joint second place with Get Set for Jeanette coming third.

The Cover Notes, Sweet Carolyn and 1 Song Simon were named runners up and a charity raffle brought the entertainment to a close before everyone hit the dancefloor.

Thank you to everyone involved and those who supported the event in aid of Tenovus Cancer Care, a cause close to our hearts. What a way to celebrate our birthday.



The Full Ponty



To watch the Thomas Carroll's Got Talent video and make a donation to Tenovus Cancer Care, visit www.thomascarroll.co.uk.

PROUDLY SUPPORTING TENOVUS

Tenovus Cancer Care is a British cancer charity that supports cancer patients, funds cancer research and works to raise awareness around how to prevent cancer.

The charity's Mobile Support Units bring cancer treatment and support closer to local communities across Wales, saving cancer patients around 45,000 miles of travelling to and from hospital every year.

Currently, two units operate in Wales but demand is growing and Tenovus urgently need to build a third unit to expand the service. To design, build and equip a third Mobile Support Unit and implement a new service delivery model, Tenovus need to raise £1 million in total.

Visit www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk
for further information



Rob Jones MBE, Brian Hawkins and Simon Lawrence, Thomas Carroll with Peter Devonald, Puncheston Farm (right)



Protecting our rural and farming communities

When you're miles from the nearest city, where do you turn for professional advice? Thomas Carroll Countryside ensures that the advice you need is on your doorstep.

PHOTOS: DEREK PHILLIPS

Located on Victoria Place in Haverfordwest, Thomas Carroll Countryside offers business owners and families linked to agriculture and leisure sectors an independent, alternative solution for rural insurance, special risks, inheritance tax planning and more.

The new division is headed up by Haverfordwest Branch Director Simon Lawrence. Announcing the expansion, Simon commented:

"Thomas Carroll Countryside represents a significant investment, enhancing our work and support of rural communities in Wales.

"Over the years, we have made several key decisions around appointments and training to support our clients with unique trades, farming operations and complex

risks, providing insurance solutions where traditional remedies are not adequate.

"Ultimately, it's about offering a competitive, independent, alternative option for local businesses and their families."

Peter Devonald, Puncheston farm owner and Thomas Carroll Countryside client, commented:

"Owning a dairy farm with 400 stock comes with complex risks. It is reassuring to know that expert advice is close by when I need it.

"I have been a client of Thomas Carroll for four years. The team takes care of the insurances for our family farming business as well as our personal insurances. During this time we had to make a claim and it was resolved smoothly with minimal disruption to the business – which is vital."



thomascarroll
COUNTRYSIDE

- Farm and rural business insurance
- Succession planning
- Personal insurance
- Health and safety

GET IN TOUCH
01437 770 847

A masterclass for growing businesses

Looking to take your business to the next level? A new specialist hub enables local business owners to benefit from key accounting, legal, insurance and finance advice under one roof.

PHOTOS: MARTIN ELLARD



Rob Jones MBE, Thomas Carroll and Chris Jenkins, Gerald Thomas (right)

Swansea professionals – including Gerald Thomas Chartered Accountants, Thomas Carroll Group plc, Lloyds Bank, Development Bank of Wales, Douglas-Jones Mercer Solicitors and Swansea Bay Futures – have teamed up to launch a masterclass series for growing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Each masterclass is made up of a series of interactive sessions. These have been specifically developed to help individuals overcome the hurdles associated with successfully growing a business.

The Business Growth Masterclass identifies and addresses the specific challenges faced by business owners who are on an upward trajectory. Chris Jenkins, Practice Development Manager at Gerald Thomas Chartered Accountants, said: “We decided to launch the Business Growth Masterclass after identifying a great need for a specialist hub, where local business owners can benefit from expert professional advice, assistance in growing their business, share their experiences with other growing businesses, and develop

their network – all at the same time.

“The sessions are designed to identify the areas often overlooked when growing a business and provide practical solutions that will work for the business. With the intention to run these masterclasses on a cyclical basis, we hope that a large number of businesses will benefit from this initiative for many years to come.”

Rob Jones MBE, Business Development Director at Thomas Carroll Group plc, added: “Our clients often tell us that they feel isolated when running their own business. The Business Growth Masterclass provides the opportunity to discuss real business issues in a confidential, yet constructive environment.

“The sessions will allow attendees to gather key accounting, legal, insurance and financing knowledge that will make the day-to-day management of their business more informed. It’s our goal to ensure Swansea businesses grow and be successful.”



- Barriers to growth
- Innovation
- Accessing new markets
- Developing management skills
- Legal considerations
- Mitigating risks
- Financing
- Future security

If you’d like to make sure your business is ready for tomorrow, please email chris.jenkins@geraldthomas.co.uk for further information, or to register your interest.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

/ Director promotions in Swansea

Congratulations to Charlotte Gwenter, Jeff Partridge and Mark Sullivan who have been appointed Directors of Thomas Carroll Brokers Swansea.





ANDREW GOODING
(NEW BUSINESS ACCOUNT BROKER)



LAWRENCE CLOSER
(ACCOUNT BROKER)



CERI EDWARDS
(GROUP ASSISTANT PA)



JACK COATES
(ACCOUNT BROKER)



CLAIRE RICHARDS
(CLAIMS EXECUTIVE)



JONATHAN DAVIES
(CLAIMS EXECUTIVE)



EMMA CHILDS
(HEALTH + SAFETY CONSULTANT)



ALEXANDER SPICER
(ACCOUNT BROKER)



CLEMENTINE JENKINS
(ACCOUNT MANAGER)



HANNAH JONES
(ACCOUNT BROKER)



MURRAY JAMES
(ACCOUNT BROKER)



EMMA WALTERS
(SME ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)



NAOMI PREECE
(EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
CO-ORDINATOR)



IAN MILLER
(NEW BUSINESS
ACCOUNT MANAGER)



TIM PUTIN
(ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)

/ Group new starters

Across our regional offices, Thomas Carroll combine the employment of experienced and Chartered industry professionals with investment in local university graduates, who join the Group's structured trainee programme. Say hello to some friendly faces who joined the Group in 2017.



Jane Watts and
students from Islwyn
Special Resource
Base with Gareth
Cotty, Thomas
Carroll
Photo: Laura Eedy



Helping Islwyn Special Resource Base get out and about

Great news for Islwyn Special Resource Base! Taking home the top prize at the UK Aviva Community Fund competition, Thomas Carroll Group secured a £25,000 grant for a new accessible minibus.

Islwyn Special Resource Base, a facility at Islwyn High School in Blackwood, takes care of young adults in secondary education who have specific learning difficulties and care requirements, including life-limiting conditions.

Sadly, they had no minibus of their own for going on regular outings. Securing this grant meant they would be able to use the new minibus for day-to-day trips, personal development activities and much more. The ability to get out and about is important as it helps to provide fundamental life skills and positive learning outcomes for the young adults.

Together with pupils and staff at the school, Thomas Carroll employees encouraged clients, professional contacts, friends and family to vote for Islwyn Special Resource Base's entry in the competition. The entry eventually gained over 18,500 votes from the public, securing

it a place in the competition final where it went to a panel of judges.

Thomas Carroll Director, Gareth Cotty, was the driving force behind the initiative and understood first-hand the impact a new minibus would have on the Base:

"As a family, living with the day-to-day challenges of our son Harvey's autism, it is a huge benefit that the Resource Base can support us in both Harvey's academic development and life skills. The new minibus will make a huge difference by helping them get out and about in the community."

Jane Watts from Islwyn Special Resource Base said:

"We cannot thank Thomas Carroll enough for representing our cause and Aviva for the amazing contribution. The £25,000 grant will be used to buy our very own minibus and we can't wait to go out in it!"



S.E. Wales Cricket League's Rodney Jones (Vice Chairman) & Jonathan Wellington (Chairman) with Dougie Spencer, Thomas Carroll (front)
Photo: Steve Pope



Backing up Welsh cricket

Longstanding supporters of cricket in South and West Wales, Thomas Carroll have expanded our support of the game as the new sponsor of the South East Wales Cricket League.

Jonathan Wellington, Chairman of the South East Wales Cricket League said:

"It is important for cricket throughout Wales that the game is supported at community level. Thomas Carroll's sponsorship is fantastic for the league and will help encourage the grass roots development of the game."

Dougie Spencer, Thomas Carroll Account Executive said:

"Thomas Carroll have enjoyed supporting Welsh cricket for years; it is all about putting something back into the local communities that have been so loyal to us.

"We are excited to expand our sponsorship with the South East Wales Cricket League and are looking forward to working with the clubs, members and local cricket talent during the season."



Follow @SEWCLLeague
on Twitter for updates



HAVE YOU GOT THE BRAIN POWER?

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A FUTURE SCIENTIST? SEE IF YOU CAN SOLVE THIS PUZZLE.

A scientist used a rain gauge to measure the amount of rainfall over six days. It rained every day, from the start to the end, and each day the amount of rain in the gauge doubled. By the end of the sixth day, the rain gauge is completely filled. On which day was the rain gauge half-filled? **Answer on next page >**

► **TECHNIQUEST** /

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS



LESLEY KIRKPATRICK
CEO
Technquest

SINCE IT OPENED IN 1986, OVER FIVE MILLION BUDDING SCIENTISTS HAVE WALKED THROUGH THE DOORS OF **TECHNIQUEST**. BUT WITH THE EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPE, WE ASK **LESLEY KIRKPATRICK, TECHNIQUEST CEO**, THE SECRET TO ITS SUCCESS AND HOW THEY ARE ENSURING ITS FUTURE.



Stephanie Powell
and Deborah Chew,
Thomas Carroll with
Lesley Kirkpatrick,
Techniquist (centre)

It's all about making science fun," says Lesley. "It's our goal to ensure Wales develops a scientifically-literate society, and our mission is to embed science in Welsh culture through interactive engagement."

Ensuring people return and attracting new visitors means constantly updating exhibits. Luckily, Techniquist has the know-how. "We have a talented production team who have built engaging, intuitive and memorable exhibits for over 30 years, as well as supplying more than 800 exhibits since 1986 across the world."

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Over the last 18 months, Techniquist has invested heavily to improve the experience for their audiences. Some of the exciting

new exhibits include Animate It, the Body Hub, and a new Virtual Changing Room – which allows you to dress in different costumes, so you can see yourself as an astronaut or even a big bear!

They have also just launched a new app called 'Look Closer', which brings to life some of the exhibits, allowing you to delve deeper making them even more engaging. Lesley added: "It's about constantly looking at new and exciting ways to ensure visitors have the best experience. After all, science is all about pushing the boundaries."

SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S SCIENTISTS

From its early days situated in the old gas showroom in central Cardiff, to the current purpose-built science centre site in Cardiff Bay, its goal has remained the same:

"To inspire the next generation of Welsh scientists, engineers, mathematicians and technicians, encouraging more young people to take up a career in STEM* and help grow a prosperous Welsh economy."

TIM PEAKE LANDS

It's not just everyday people who walk through the doors of Techniquist – some important people also drop in from time to time. In fact, some have come a VERY long way! Last year, astronaut Tim Peake touched down at the start of his post-flight UK tour. "It was just a brilliant experience, not just for us, but for the schools attending plus stakeholders and VIPs – everyone adored him," says Lesley. "He was truly inspirational and engaging, spending time with the school children and learning of their involvement in the Principia mission."

* STEM aims to achieve a world-leading education for all young people in science, technology, engineering and mathematics

SECURING THE NEXT 30 YEARS AND BEYOND

Ensuring its goal continues has now become a huge focus point for Techniquest – especially since the Welsh Government announced their grant would come to an end in 2021. What's more, given that Techniquest is in fact an educational charity, there's a need to reposition the brand. Lesley highlights that their way forward is to “generate new income streams and develop new business strategies”.

One of these includes applying to the ISF, a joint initiative between the Wellcome Trust and the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, for a capital grant to support the development of a brand new extension. Lesley believes: “This new building will house innovative new content and will enable us to extend our audience – increasing our visitor numbers. The space will also be versatile to enable us to use it for corporate and private hire, another new strand to our business strategy.”

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

As well as being a fun and exciting place for the little ones, it's also a great place for big ones too. Lesley explains: “We can host conferences, launch events and award dinners on the exhibition floor for 300+ delegates, as well as smaller networking events where you'll get to interact with the exhibits whilst you're here. We've also got a newly-refurbished boardroom and break-out room too.” It's a corporate and private hire venue that really does offer people a unique experience they'll never forget!

READY FOR TOMORROW'S BUSINESS

- **Interactive exhibition floor that can hold 300 delegates**
- **Newly-refurbished boardroom**
- **Break-out areas ideal for hosting successful meetings**

- **Science theatre – perfect for award and launch events for around 80 people**
- **In-house events team that can plan everything for**

WORKING WITH WELSH BUSINESS

Techniquest is also looking to cultivate long-term relationships with businesses and other stakeholders, including universities in Wales. Lesley says: “It's about working with them to showcase the latest science and technology, to educate people of all ages about the science that is relevant to everyday life.”

THOMAS CARROLL & TECHNIQUEST KEEPING TOMORROW'S SCIENTISTS SAFE

Thomas Carroll provides Techniquest with insurance broking, health and safety consultancy and a death in service employee benefits scheme. Techniquest uses the Online Health and Safety Management System, with tools and a support service to advise and empower managers and employees to manage health and safety.

As Lesley says, “Health, safety and the right insurance cover is a big thing for us – we're not just a visitor centre, there are chemicals and laboratories, so everything has to be stored in the right way. So it was great that Thomas Carroll could spend so much time with us, auditing our business and identifying an action plan to ensure we remain safe and compliant.”

Lesley continues: “With our future evolving, we're happy to have the trusted advice from everyone at Thomas Carroll.” 



NEW EXHIBITS NOW AVAILABLE TO EXPLORE

- ◆ **Animate It**
Think you're the next Nick Park? Create your own animation from scratch then watch your creation on a 55 inch screen and share...
- ◆ **Body Hub**
Discover more about your body by exploring just how things function. It's time to take a closer look into your brain!
- ◆ **Look Closer App**
Delve deeper into the concepts behind the exhibits, engaging further with STEM subjects with your mini scientists.
- ◆ **Virtual Changing Room**
Ever wondered what you'd look like as an astronaut? Try on different costumes from fairy-tale creatures to professionals.



BRAIN TEASER

Answer: The fifth day.



PHOTOS: MIKE HALL

SUCCESS

On and off the pitch

Being Chairman of the WRU means you have to please a lot of people, in fact the whole of Wales. The Scene caught up with Gareth Davies at the Principality Stadium, to see how he's settling into his role and what the future holds.

Q What would you say was your most memorable moment in your playing career?

A I suppose it depends what stage of life you're at. The first would be winning a Sevens tournament at 11 years of age. The second is winning the UAU rugby tournament with Cardiff University, the first Welsh university to win it. Then the obvious ones, your first cap for Wales and getting on the Lions tour – so there isn't one answer.

What was it like being picked for the Lions tour?

I suppose that's the pinnacle of your career. Being the best of the best in the UK. Thing is, I was a bit injury prone so in the first game I bust my shoulder and missed the first test. Then I got back for the second test but ruptured my knee ligaments, so I had to come home. I wouldn't say it's the greatest moment but it's definitely the greatest achievement of my career.

Did you have a rugby idol when you were growing up?

I was a big Llanelli fan and there were three players that I looked up to.

As a child, my uncle used to take me down to Stradey Park and I thought Dai Watkins, the Welsh outside half in those days, was brilliant. I think I cried when he went to Rugby League! Then Barry John came along, but he left for Cardiff to be followed by Phil Bennett – so three idols.

What would be the top three tips you'd tell your 11-year-old self?

From a sporting point of view, I'd say to try your hand at everything. I know it's more difficult today as kids are forced to do rugby or football at such an early age – everything has become a lot more focussed and professional and at an early age.

What is the WRU doing to encourage young children to get into the game?

We employ about 100 school club officers that the WRU and schools contribute towards. It's their job to set up fixtures between schools, helping to encourage rugby and ensuring kids have the opportunity to play. It means schools that didn't have a team, now have regular games.

There are also a lot of academies in Wales now for kids who want to develop. I know some people aren't fans of

encouraging performance too early. If you don't push them down this pathway they may miss out on a contract. It's pretty serious stuff at a very early age.

What advice would you give people in sport nearing the end of their career?

It's a tough one these days. We're laying on a post-career pathway, trying to get the players to do something voluntary in the sense of a future career. We're also putting the guys through psychological testing, to see what makes them tick and discover what they'd like to do in the future.

When you finished the game, did you know what you wanted to do?

I didn't really have future goals when I was younger because we were marrying up playing and working. During the day I'd be working in the bank, then playing rugby in the evenings and weekends. I don't think that did me any harm because it taught me how to manage myself.

I'm a competitive animal, I've always wanted to be the best I could. I've also been very lucky, but I believe you make your own luck. People said that I was mad leaving BBC Sport to join Cardiff



I STILL THINK RUGBY HAS MORE VALUES THAN MANY OTHER SPORTS

Rugby Club, but it worked out alright. I just think that the more moves you make, the more opportunities come and present themselves.

For example, I gave up my post as Director of Royal Mail in Cardiff and moved to Australia for a fraction of my income. But then, by moving to Sydney I got head-hunted for a great job back in the UK – now I wouldn't have had that job if I'd still been in Cardiff because it was the Chairman of the Australasia head-hunters that put my name forward. So the message is, if you just stay in one place that's fine, but I believe you'll find more opportunities if you move around.

People think I've got it all mapped out. Trust me, I haven't!

It must have felt a great honour becoming Chairman of the WRU. What's it like since you took over?

The circumstances under which I got the job weren't great. At the time I was working with the Dragons, then there was a great civil war with the Union. Although I wasn't right in the middle of the debate, I did a number of TV interviews on behalf of the regions. By virtue of this, people thought I should get involved in the Union. So I agreed to put my name forward, purely to get a representative from the regions on the

board of the Union, because there wasn't one. Then suddenly I end up as Chairman!

Yes, it was difficult at first but luckily I knew a lot of faces in the organisation, one or two who were around when I was playing. So it's been good, but it's also a real challenge because you've got so many layers of people to keep happy – National Team, the professional game and of course the community clubs together with all the Welsh supporters. All equally passionate.

At the moment we are trying to make some governance changes just to make the organisation more streamlined and more united. Being on the board of other external organisations like the Lions, Six Nations, World Rugby and Rugby World Cup gives me a good idea of what's happening globally.

If you hadn't ended up being Chairman of the WRU, what else would you have liked to do?

I'd probably be a good golfer by now. Honestly, I don't think there's one answer to that. Whether it's consciously or by fate, I've always come back to sport, where oddly enough I consciously made an effort to get away from sport, not to be pigeon-holed.

Are there similarities between the rugby world and business world?

Yes. Hard work, integrity, and being a team member – some of those ingredients are very similar. Also, the way you behave and respect each other. All sport is good for that, but I still think rugby has more values than many other sports.

What with Wales' success in the World Cup, the inclusion of so many Welsh players in the recent Lions tour and the Scarlets winning at the Pro12, do you think Welsh rugby is now truly a force to be reckoned with?

We're competitive, nobody is going to walk over us. I know the coaches are plotting our Rugby World Cup 2019 plans at present, hopefully to win it. We've got two years for all the new guys who won caps this summer to be ready, so it's managing the younger ones and the more experienced players in the right way.

What was your opinion of the Lions tour this year?

I think it was fantastic and some of the players don't realise what they achieved. The All Blacks side right now are arguably one of the best sides ever fielded by New Zealand. In terms of their record, nobody else gets near them. So for the guys to do that, especially under the circumstances of playing within three days of getting there, plus Super Rugby sides in New Zealand are almost test match standard, it's almost like playing 10 test matches!

And Pro12, with the Scarlets winning it last year, do you think there's more respect now for Welsh club sides?

I think Welsh regions have perhaps underperformed so it was great to see the Scarlets perform so well. More importantly the way they played, it was fantastic stuff. Our aim is to get four competitive sides playing in the Pro14, and competing in Europe. Yes, we're a little bit behind due to finances, but we're actively discussing with the regions how we can close the gap.



You have been a client of Thomas Carroll Club Signature for some time, how have you found working with them?

It's been excellent, especially having one point of contact which makes a big difference. Thankfully I've only had one claim, which was losing my watch when at the gym. The process was very quick and simple. I phoned Claire at Thomas Carroll and she sorted out everything and organised a replacement watch. That was great service!

They look after me well. For example, I bought Fiona, my wife, some earrings recently and all I had to do was make a quick call and give Claire the value. That's the convenience bit, cover is arranged straight away.

What would you say is your most prized possession?

One of the few things I've got left from my parents is a large leather-bound Bible. But it wasn't the Bible itself that was interesting, but what was inside. I found personal things written about my family I didn't know about, because back in the old days people didn't talk about personal things. It's probably an antique by now too and it's something that just can't be replaced. 📖



CLUB SIGNATURE

Insurance Service

Protecting the finer things in life

Club Signature is a tailored high value insurance service designed by Thomas Carroll for clients whose financial position and lifestyle require high levels of individualised cover.

Visit www.clubsignature.co.uk to watch the video

clubsignature@thomas-carroll.co.uk | 02920 887733

► BRIGHTWELLS AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS /

the art of collecting

*What makes a good collectible? The Scene asked **Philip Keith** from **Brightwells Auctioneers & Valuers**, a Club Signature partner, art and antiques expert, for some pointers on purchasing and protecting collectibles.*



PHILIP KEITH
Brightwells
Auctioneers & Valuers



CLUB
SIGNATURE
Insurance Service

What to look for?

"Collect what interests you, not what you think might be a good investment," says Philip. "A true collector amasses objects that he or she is passionate about and for the joy of ownership."

"Appreciation of value should be thought of as a secondary bonus rather than a certainty, as the value of antiques and fine art can go down as well as up."

Where to buy?

"Buying at auction can be fun and affordable. Most auction houses publish a catalogue, with a description of the lots, a date and an expected price."

"Auctioneers also provide condition reports and advice to prospective buyers," Philip adds. "The items are displayed for viewing in person a few days before the sale – this is your opportunity to carefully examine the items you are interested in," Philip adds. "But beware of auction costs! Some can be quite high!"

How do you protect items on the move?

The last thing you want is to have bought something special, only to find it has been damaged during transport.

Philip gives some good advice: "Always ensure items are adequately packed during transport. Plenty of newspaper will often do. Pack delicate things snugly so they can't rattle around, and double box large, valuable items."

Other items need extra care. "Take special care of gilded wood, gilded china and oil paintings when using sticky tape – it will cause damage if it touches the surface," Philip suggests.

"Remove clock pendulums and weights, if they have them, and always keep barometers upright as they usually contain mercury which is hazardous when spilled. Canvas pictures should be packed in cardboard, front and back, then wrapped. Always stack pictures upright, with frames touching frame."

TOP TIPS ON PROTECTING YOUR VALUABLES

It is important to work closely with your insurance broker to ensure your valuables are adequately protected. **Alison Davies, Managing Director of Thomas Carroll Private Clients and Club Signature**, offers the following tips to help you maintain the right cover for your collections:

- 1 At your insurance renewal date, or sooner, inform your account broker of any new items you have acquired
- 2 Remember, the value of collectibles may go up over time. Regular valuations will ensure that you are covered for the correct value of your possessions so you don't end up out of pocket if you have to make a claim in the future
- 3 Bear in mind that many 'contents' insurance policies have a 'single article limit' that assumes that no single item covered by the policy is worth more than the stated limit
- 4 If you own or acquire good quality items either through the trade, at auction or from family inheritance, it is worth considering the uniqueness of your item(s) and their subsequent worth
- 5 It's important to organise and monitor your art and collectibles when in transit to ensure you are adequately insured in the event of damage or theft. Especially today, since cybercrime targets transit companies!

Give it the insurance it deserves

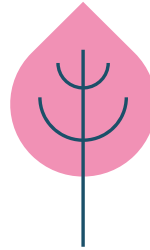
If something means a lot to you, it is important to choose the right insurance cover. Whether it's fine art, jewellery, antiques, wine or watches, an off-the-shelf contents insurance policy is likely to fall short in the unfortunate event of a claim.

Discover how Club Signature can give your collectibles the insurance they deserve. Contact the team on 02920 853788 and take a look at our list of trusted partners at www.clubsignature.co.uk for exclusive Club Signature discounts.



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GILES THORLEY
CEO, Development
Bank of Wales

► DEVELOPMENT BANK OF WALES /

Ensuring the future of **Welsh business**

There may be uncertainty around Brexit, but the Welsh Government is committed to supporting business growth across Wales with the launch of the new Development Bank of Wales.



Giles Thorley, Chief Executive of the new Development Bank of Wales, says: "It's about supporting growth and unlocking the potential in the Welsh economy by increasing the provision of sustainable, effective finance." Launched in October,

it was created after a Finance Wales consultation and review.

One example is Hilltop Honey. In 2014 they took out a micro loan. They then came back for further investment this year. Business is flourishing, so they're moving to bigger premises, creating jobs and successfully listing their products on supermarket shelves.

Another business that's benefited

HOW THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF WALES HELPS WELSH BUSINESS

- ◆ Flexible finance from £1,000 to £5 million per investment round
- ◆ Easy to apply, it just takes a few minutes online
- ◆ Investing over £400 million/£1 billion in the next five years
- ◆ Over 245 businesses benefited from investment last year



is Nutrivend. Run by former rugby internationals Scott Morgan and Barry Davies, they applied for a micro loan in 2012 to set up the business. Specialising in health and nutrition vending machines, they were successful in applying for follow-on equity investment, enabling the business to go from strength to strength.

“In the last financial year we made 267 investments in 245 businesses across Wales. In the next five years, the Development Bank will step things up again and invest over £400 million, trebling our lending to

micro businesses,” added Thorley.


“With private sector investment and funding through Help to Buy - Wales more than doubling this figure, the Development Bank will invest £1billion into the Welsh economy and support 1,400 businesses who will then create or safeguard more than 20,000 jobs here in Wales.”

Funded by the Welsh Government, they are committed to delivering the Government's promises for the economy today, as well as growth for Welsh businesses tomorrow. And the great news is, as these businesses thrive and repay the loans, the money is reinvested. So it's not just today's Welsh businesses that benefit, it also funds the next generation of success stories.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WELSH BUSINESSES?

“Firstly we have the finance to support you, whatever your business stage,” said Thorley. “And secondly, since the Development Bank is a flexible funder, we can offer you a range of loans and equity investments, which can be paid back over periods of up to 10 years as well as finance from just £1,000 to £5 million per investment round.”

It's so simple to apply, you can check your eligibility online in minutes. And with over 40 account managers across Wales, you'll enjoy a tailored service from someone who truly understands your business needs.

So if you're thinking about launching a business, or need some funds to expand, visit developmentbank.wales and find out how the Development Bank of Wales could help your business succeed. 



Development Bank of Wales plc is the holding company of a Group that trades as Development Bank of Wales. The Group is made up of a number of subsidiaries which are registered with names including the initials DBW. Development Bank of Wales plc is a development finance company wholly owned by the Welsh Ministers and it is neither authorised nor regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) or the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Development Bank of Wales has three subsidiaries which are authorised and regulated by the FCA. Please note that neither the Development Bank of Wales plc nor any of its subsidiaries are banking institutions or operate as such. This means that none of the Group entities are able to accept deposits from the public. A complete legal structure chart can be found at developmentbank.wales.

Real Estate Acquisitions, Development and Investments



GARETH COTTY
Director
Thomas Carroll Brokers

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To aid transactions, our experienced property risk services team specialise in providing a range of insurance and legal indemnity solutions. From complex developments to the refinance of existing assets, we support professionals at all stages of acquisition, capital investment, design, planning, construction and occupation of property assets.

Tailoring your insurance protection to reduce risk and exposures identified in the project stages, will provide you with peace of mind and satisfy all stakeholder requirements. Speak to one of our professional and friendly experts to see how we can help you.



Here's how we can help you

Every real estate professional wants to make sure that projects work to plan and complete on time.



Site Identification, Feasibility & Due Diligence

Consultancy Services

Contract Review

Flood Insurance Mapping & Advice

Defective Title Advice

Project Team Liaison

Insurance Solutions

Warranty & Indemnity Insurance

Environmental Liability Insurance



Finance

Consultancy Services

Finance Contract Review

SIPPs

Lender Insurance Requirements Audit

Collateral Warranty Guidance

Insurance Solutions

Existing Structure Insurance

Surety Bonds

Latent Defects

Risk Wrap Provision

Warranty & Indemnity Insurance

Pre & Post Planning
Defective Title Insurance

Search Insurance



Exchange / Acquisition

Consultancy Services

Contract Review

Legacy Issues

Defective Title Advice

Project Team Liaison

Insurance Solutions

Existing Structure Insurance

Property Owners Liability

Search Insurance

Existing & Development Use
Defective Title Insurance

Pre & Post Planning
Defective Title Insurance

Property Fraud & Crime All
Risks Insurance



Design & Planning

Consultancy Services

Risk Engineering Review

Contract Review

Project Team Liaison

Insurance Solutions

Right of Light Insurance

Judicial Review Insurance

Village Green Insurance

Pre & Post Planning
Defective Title Insurance

Professional Indemnity

Latent Defects



Contract Tender & Award

Consultancy Services

Construction Contract Insurance Review

Insurance Cost Analysis

Lender Insurance Requirements Audit

Contractor Insurance Review

Insurance Solutions

Construction/Erection All Risks

Owner or Contractor Controlled
Project Insurance

Employers & Public Liability

JCT/NEC Requirements

Surety Bonds

Credit Risks

Professional Indemnity

Collateral Warranties

Latent Defects



Construction, Maintenance & Testing

Consultancy Services

Claims Monitoring & Analysis

Health & Safety Training
and Consultancy

Insurance Solutions

Terrorism Insurance

Advanced Loss of Profit/Rent

Future Tenant
Alternative Accommodation

Contractors Plant

6.5.1

Existing Structure Insurance

Liability Certificates

Bonds

Professional Indemnity

Collateral Warranties

Latent Defects



Completion, Occupancy & Asset Management

Consultancy Services

Claims Monitoring & Analysis

Health & Safety Training
and Consultancy

Lender Insurance
Requirements Audit

Insurance Solutions

Real Estate Insurance

Terrorism Insurance

Loss of Rent Insurance

Property Owners Liability

Statutory Inspections

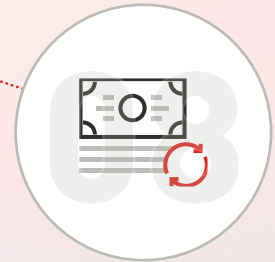
Rent Guarantee Insurance

Tenant Premium Allocation Certificates

Unoccupied Property Cover

Professional Indemnity

Directors & Officers Liability



Asset Refinance

Consultancy Services

Finance Contract Review

SIPPs

Lender Insurance Requirements Audit

Insurance Solutions

Defective Title Insurance

Right of Light Insurance

Real Estate Insurance

Property Fraud & Crime
All Risks Insurance

*Why choosing the right
insurance was so important for
Abergavenny Fine Foods*

PROJECT *cinders*

*Seeing your company engulfed
in smoke following a factory fire
would feel like the end for most
businesses. But **Abergavenny
Fine Foods** turned an
unfortunate accident into a
proactive regeneration project
– with a little added help from
Thomas Carroll, Lorega and the
right insurance cover.*

PHOTOS: STEVE POPE

On Sunday 5 July 2015 at 3.55am, the unthinkable happened to Abergavenny Fine Foods. Their Blaenavon site caught fire. Smoke spread quickly through the factory, and by morning, the extent of the damage became apparent. Where most

businesses would have struggled to bounce back, determined Abergavenny Fine Foods pulled together as a team. By 6:30am they had called Claire Humphries from Thomas Carroll who joined them on site with a loss adjuster.

The next day they called all 105 employees and told them what had happened and without a moment's delay, everything went into top gear. Fuelled by devotion to the family business, colleagues, directors, insurance professionals and financial advisers pulled together. Two days later, Thomas Carroll was on the scene surveying the damage in detail and Abergavenny Fine Foods found out that all their losses and interruption were covered.



MEL'S TIPS

*on choosing the right
business interruption insurance*

Review, review, review

always take the time to consider whether your insurance has kept up with your business

Re-evaluate your cover

make sure you have got enough cover to get started again. Abergavenny Fine Foods reviewed their business interruption insurance and extended it to 24 months

Use the right broker for you

be sure to get one who understands your business and manufacturing needs

Build partnerships

knowing your insurance broker will make it easier should you need help

Seek expert advice

insurance language can be complicated so expert advice is invaluable



MELANIE BOWMAN
Managing Director
Abergavenny Fine Foods

THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS...

Remarkably, in just six weeks, with the help of the local community, they had refurbished the production factory and managed to secure six third-party suppliers.

This allowed them to get production fully up and running so they could continue to supply the likes of Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Waitrose and also fulfil export orders.

Amazingly, they did such a great job maintaining business streams, they managed a turnover of £14.5 million that year as well as receiving an award from Tesco for Technical Excellence – all without a factory!

REBUILDING FOR TOMORROW

With quick progress being made, it was time to concentrate on building a new factory. And they didn't hang around! After only one week, designs were approved and the team had reflected and spotted opportunities, allowing them to create space for future developments as well as improve staff facilities.

Virtually 12 months to the day, the new factory was celebrating its opening with a visit from HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles. This was all achieved through Abergavenny Fine Foods' close working relationship with Thomas Carroll, insurers and Lorega.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Seeing smoke at the family business was devastating but it gave Abergavenny Fine Foods the opportunity to review their ambitions for the future. Creating a new space allowed them to factor in areas for expansion, streamline production lines and improve storage options.

It also allowed them to make huge savings on utilities and overall operational efficiencies. They have even started making some of the packaging themselves. With a new, high-tech production facility, they can now push the boundaries, creating new and exciting lines.

Abergavenny Fine Foods have strived for quality and growth since 1981 and have only enhanced this following the fire, with even bigger and better products than before.

ABERGAVENNY AND BEYOND

In addition to the UK market, Abergavenny Fine Foods manufacture tasty treats for Australia, Asia and America and they are stacking up awards and accolades to prove their popularity. The sky is the limit! 

Autumn 2014

Insurance renewed

Spring 2015

Insurance review meeting. Adequacy of sums insured and business description discussed

5 July 2015 - Day of Fire

3:55am Fire broke out and firefighters in attendance

6:30am Thomas Carroll on site

12 noon Loss adjuster on site

Two days after the fire

9:00am Staff advised of the fire and ball rolling for replacement dairy production

/ Case Study / Abergavenny Fine Foods /



Helen Love and Claire Humphries, Thomas Carroll with Melanie Bowman, Abergavenny Fine Foods (left)



Three days after the fire

Full complement of insurer support on site including loss adjusters and forensics

One month later

Building starts on new factory

One week later

Plans drawn up for new factory

12 months from fire

New factory celebrates its opening with a visit from HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles



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THE ROLE OF AN HR PROFESSIONAL IS OFTEN CHALLENGING AND UNPREDICTABLE. IF YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EMPLOYMENT ISSUES WITHIN YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANISATION, IT IS IMPORTANT YOU STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED FOR ANY EVENTUALITY.

Employment law seminar for HR professionals

Employment law is challenging, so it is a good idea to keep up-to-date with the latest regulations to ensure your business is protected. Thomas Carroll run free employment law seminars that will provide you with the knowledge to manage human resources efficiently.

This free seminar is designed for individuals who hold accountability for employment issues within an organisation. During the session, we will review the changes in legislation and case law introduced over the past 12 months. We will also take a closer look at the forthcoming changes to employment law, discussing how they affect your business.

By the end of the seminar, we hope to have provided you with clear, practical advice on managing the following key issues:

- **Working time case law including holiday pay**
- **Implications of Brexit**
- **What we can expect from the newly elected Government**
- **Whistleblowing**
- **Social media**
- **Zero hour workers**
- **Living wage**
- **Disciplinaries**
- **Restructuring**
- **Recent case law of interest**



To register your interest and enquire about upcoming seminar dates, email lauren.dickinson@thomas-carroll.co.uk

Employment Law



254,000

claims logged between April and June 2013, prior to the introduction of the tribunal fees



£470,865

Highest award made for an **unfair dismissal** claim in 2016



5,100

claims logged between April and June 2017 with tribunal fees in place



£1,762,130

Highest award made for a **sex discrimination** claim in 2016



A substantial rise...

...in **claims** is now expected in the future due to the recent removal of tribunal fees



£257,127

Highest award made for a **disability discrimination** claim in 2016

*Recent employment law statistics from Ministry of Justice.

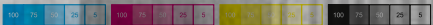
/ STEPHENS & GEORGE /

SUCCESS

It's all about the family

IN TODAY'S DIGITAL WORLD, RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL PRINTING BUSINESS ISN'T AN EASY FEAT. YET **STEPHENS & GEORGE**, A FAMILY-OWNED COMPANY IN MERTHYR, HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DOING IT FOR OVER 100 YEARS. SO WHAT'S THEIR SECRET? WE TALK TO ANDREW AND VANESSA JONES ON HOW CARING FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES HAS HELPED THEIR BUSINESS GROW.

PHOTOS: MIKE HALL





Andrew and Vanessa Jones, Stephens & George (left) with Tony Smith and Mark Eedy, Thomas Carroll



“We’re a family business through and through,” says Andrew, Chairman & Group Managing Director. “Since 1912, when my great-great-grandfather Mr George bought one of the first electric presses in the UK, to today where our children are learning the trade, our tight-knit family bond has helped Stephens & George thrive and we are now firmly established at the forefront of printing in the UK.”

Indeed, family-run businesses are now some of the largest in the world with the likes of Walmart, IKEA and Ford leading the way. Andrew says: “I joined the business in 1979 and by 1984 we had a turnover of £1 million a year. Now it’s nearer £28 million.”

The family bond stretches beyond just close relatives. Stephens & George also see their employees as part of the family. Andrew says: “It’s much easier to keep a

good employee than to find a replacement.” No wonder out of the 231 people employed, over 70% have been with the business for over 11 years.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX – INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE

Stephens & George believe that as well as the people who work there, innovation is important for the continuing success of the business. They are highly focused on being agile and efficient – even if this does mean a large amount of upfront capital investment. “Since 1995, we’ve replaced our Heidelberg presses about four times,” says Andrew. “In fact, only in the last 18 months, we spent £4.2 million on binders and stitching lines. At the time, this was the biggest expenditure in the country in the last 10 years for one single order.”

Diversification is also key for Andrew and the team: “We’ve just bought another sports programme company and we are

in the process of integrating it into our business. Sometimes, it’s about thinking outside the box.”

PRINTING FOR THE BEST

This progressive way of working has allowed Stephens & George to build a reputation that’s second to none. Today they are proud to have worked with some of the most demanding clients around the world. “We printed brochures for Christies in London, and we were selected to print the Opening and Closing Ceremony brochures for the London 2012 Olympics.” They have also worked with Royalty and printed William and Kate’s official royal wedding programme. Unfortunately, they didn’t get an invite themselves!

ENSURING THE LEGACY CONTINUES

What are Stephens & George doing to ensure their legacy continues? They know it’s not just good enough to invest in

**I JOINED THE BUSINESS
IN 1979 AND BY 1984
WE HAD A TURNOVER
OF £1 MILLION A YEAR
NOW IT'S NEARER
£28MILLION.**

**ANDREW JONES,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
& CHAIRMAN**



machinery; they also need to do the same with their skilled operators.

"We send our printers on a one-week course in London so they're fully up to speed with the latest equipment and software," says Vanessa. "Our mailer operators are trained in Italy and our binder operators in Switzerland." In addition to training, they also make sure their employees are well looked after. "We provide pensions, healthcare, insurance and income protection," says Vanessa. "It's why people stay with us so long – we've even got some third generation operators!"


"These people are our family," says Andrew. "They are the future of the business, so investing in them makes complete business sense. I'm looking forward to where the next generation will take the business."

THOMAS CARROLL AND STEPHENS & GEORGE – INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

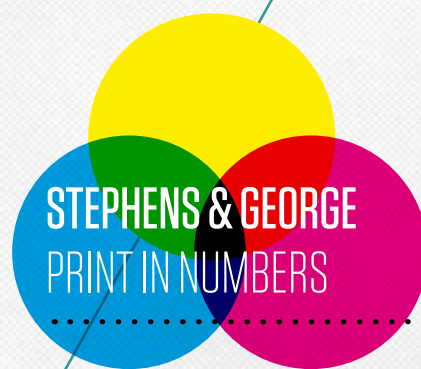
Thomas Carroll is helping to transform the way Stephens & George package their employee benefits. Mark Eedy, Managing Director of Thomas Carroll Employee Benefits says: "Good employees are vital to the success of any business and Stephens & George are a great example of a company that look after and retain their workforce.

"A well thought-out employee benefits package can aid recruitment, achieve higher levels of engagement and ultimately boost profits.

"We work with Andrew and Vanessa to manage a flexible package of employee benefits that includes private medical insurance, life assurance, income protection and workplace pensions.

"Cost-effective additional benefits help to keep employees happy and healthy, now and in the future." 

/ **Profile** / Stephens & George /



120,000
SQUARE FOOT FACTORY

13,000
TONNES OF PAPER

20,500,000
SHEETS PRINTED IN ONE MONTH

13,000,000
BOOKS IN ONE YEAR (BINDING LINE)

78,000
PAGES PROCESSED IN ONE MONTH

38,000
PLATES IN A MONTH

18,000
SHEETS OF PAPER PER HOUR

LARGEST
CONSUMER OF PLATES IN THE UK
OUTSIDE OF THE NEWSPAPERS

Financial Planning for Business Owners



STEPHEN FRANCIS
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www.thomascarroll.co.uk

Putting flexible financial plans in place now can help you ensure the security of your personal and business requirements in the future.

Business owners are often surprised by the strategies, allowances and benefits they can apply to their business and employees at very little additional cost.

At Thomas Carroll, we provide you with peace of mind so you can concentrate on the day to day running of your business, providing the ideal platform for growth.

Financial planning that complements legal, tax & accounting advice

Maximising lawful tax reliefs & allowances

Succession planning & exit strategy

Attracting & retaining employees

Investments & growth

Protecting key people, employees & shares

The various plans below offer an insight into the financial planning areas for business owners, to help you consider and develop the best possible programme for you and your business;

Plan	What is it?	Who does it apply to?	Who benefits?
► Business Loan Protection	Insurance to help repay business debt if someone dies or is critically ill	A key employee or anyone who has guaranteed the debt	The business. Debt repaid at a difficult time. Personal guarantees protected
► Key Person Protection	Insurance to provide funds to help the business if a key person dies or is critically ill	Any key employee	The business. Cash provided to help find a suitable replacement or replace lost profits
► Shareholder Protection	Insurance to ensure there are funds to help purchase shares if a shareholder dies or is critically ill	Business owners or shareholders	Remaining shareholders and family of deceased. Remaining shareholders retain shares and the family receives money
► Relevant Life Plans	Individual life insurance policy that can be taken out by a business	Employees	The family of the deceased director or employee. Premium is usually eligible for corporation tax relief
► Pensions	Profit extraction via the ability to lawfully defer income and tax through pension contributions	Directors and employees	Directors and employees. A qualifying employer pension contribution is usually allowable as a business expense, reducing corporation tax
► Pension Fund Property Purchase	The opportunity to buy and invest in commercial property directly as one of your pension investment options	Directors and employees	The investor(s). Pension funds can be pooled to buy a commercial property as an investment
► Employee Benefits Package	Flexible options include; life assurance, income protection, pensions and healthcare insurances	Directors and employees	The business owner and employees. Engaged employees and a business strategy to attract and retain a happy and healthy workforce
► Private Medical Insurance & Hospital Cash Plans	Healthcare insurance to ensure that business owners, their immediate family and employees are fit and healthy	Business owners, their immediate family and employees	Business owners, their immediate family and employees with the ability to deal with health concerns immediately

Ensuring peace of mind,
every step of the journey.

Unwrapped

*The secret behind
Real Wrap's success*



*In just seven years, **The Real Wrap Co.** has grown from a single late-night student food shop in Clifton in Bristol to a business making 150,000 products per week. **The Scene** grabbed a quick bite with entrepreneurs Jason and Phillippe to find out how their success story unfolded.*

Jason, Director at The Real Wrap Co. explains: “When we started the business in 2010 we were both working around the clock to make it happen. It wasn’t easy.

“We’d

identified a gap in the market and realised there was nothing healthy for students to eat late at night – the only choice they had were kebabs and greasy burgers. We wanted to offer filling and tasty fast food, but we saw no reason why it couldn’t be healthier... and more interesting.”

The instant success of Jason and Phillippe’s small shop on The Triangle in Bristol was great news, but it was exhausting and limited to the size of the premises. If they were to grow they would need to take the products to the students. The University of the West of England (UWE) agreed to stock their hot toasted wraps and it wasn’t long before they started supplying sandwiches too, with the same ethos –

products that were healthier and interesting, and that would appeal to the student market. Jason says: “We were working until 6am in order to deliver, so we knew there was a huge wholesale opportunity.” In 2012 their market had grown, so they sold the shop and moved into small

premises, making sandwiches, salads, panini and wraps, soon selling across the South West and into Wales.

The Real Wrap Co. is now based in state-of-the-art premises in Avonmouth and employs 125 staff, producing up to 30,000 sandwiches a day. Phillippe, Director at The Real Wrap Co. says: “We aim to always be all about health and well-being. We have the largest range of sandwiches under 400 calories compared to other UK producers.” The company now provides sandwiches to all NHS Wales hospitals, more than 20 universities around the country

and even supplies Premier League football teams like Championship winners Leicester. “It’s probably why they won the Premiership!” jokes Phillippe.



PHOTOS: MIKE HALL

SERVING GREAT FOOD TO THE GREAT AND THE GOOD

It's not just everyday people at universities, hospitals and airlines who enjoy their sandwiches and wraps. The Real Wrap Co. had the privilege of supplying sandwiches to the world's leaders for the NATO Summit in 2014 at the Celtic Manor. "It was a huge honour producing sandwiches for the world's leaders but also quite scary," says Jason. "We had to have background checks done by the CIA and there were armed guards to meet us at the venue. Everything got scanned and doubled checked – there was security everywhere!"

KEEPING IT REAL

What makes Real Wrap different from other sandwich makers is that they are heavily customer focused. "Anyone can make a sandwich," says Jason. "It's a market that has very low barriers to entry. In order to succeed and stay ahead it is important to focus on product quality and have an acute understanding of what the customer wants, perhaps even before they do when it comes to innovative new products." Phillippe explains: "Jason and I have known each other and been working together since we were toddlers and have always been customer-facing.

"As we've grown we've never forgotten what has been key to our success. Because of how we started, we know how important it is to stay in touch and maintain a strong bond with customers. As we've expanded Real Wrap, we know how vital it is to look after our staff – they are part of the family. At the end of the day it's how you deal with people and we treat them all with an equal amount of respect.



WITH REGARD TO OUR
PRODUCTS, WE'VE ALWAYS
SAID THAT **WE WANT TO MAKE
PRODUCTS WE'D BE PROUD
TO GIVE TO OUR MUMS. AND
WE'RE STILL DOING THAT.**

"With regard to our products, we've always said that we want to make products we'd be proud to give to our mums. And we're still doing that."

WASTE NOT WANT NOT

Being an environmentally-conscious brand, The Real Wrap Co. are always looking at ways to reduce waste and to recycle – even their bread. The pair teamed up with two local breweries and are now one of the first sandwich companies to supply waste bread for brewing. Phillippe says: "We weren't sure it was going to work but I have to be honest, it tastes pretty good!"

As well as the brewery partnership, The Real Wrap's waste also gets turned into electricity and gas, plus by-products like fertilizer. They also work with charity organisations to distribute any over-production or remainder sandwiches.

Jason says: "It's core to what we do, and the bigger the business has become the greater the need has been to ensure we do what is right. We never stop reviewing our practices and processes, particularly regarding food waste."

EXPANDING TO STAYING ON TOP

Keeping on top of the latest food trends is a full time job. As Phillippe says: "In the beginning it was just Jason and I doing everything, making the sandwiches, designing them and coming up with new menus. Now that we've grown, we have taken on a New Product Development Manager to ensure we are always adapting. Food trends shift all the time – they're ever-changing."

Jason explains: "Food-to-go can always be healthy and exciting. We take inspiration from all over the world to keep our recipes interesting. Our new expanded vegan range



Jason Howell and Phillippe Gill


is meeting growing customer demand but also allowing us to play with all kinds of unexpected but delicious flavours. As well as tasty and healthy we've always been playful.

"Additionally we include new vitamin-packed Coldpress juices and UFIT protein drinks in what we can supply to our customers. We understand the importance of constantly evolving the brand's offer to stand out in a competitive market. We try to stay ahead of the curve."

And it's a fast-moving curve. With business growing from strength to strength and new lines opening up almost every week, the pair are having to make some big decisions. "Currently we're producing 150,000 products a week," says Jason. "We were only doing half that last year so are

now looking at growing the factory again. It's an exciting time."

THOMAS CARROLL AND THE REAL WRAP CO. – KEEPING BUSINESS MOVING

Thomas Carroll has been supplying combined public liability insurance for The Real Wrap Co. for over five years. Phillippe says: "We have a growing fleet of vehicles travelling all over the UK so it's inevitable you get the odd bump. The great thing about Thomas Carroll is there's a dedicated person at the end of the phone that understands your business." 

A BITE SIZE OF THE REAL WRAP CO. SUCCESS STORY

Supplied products to attendees at the 2014 NATO Summit including 68 world leaders

Successful getting onto the NHS, TUCO and All Wales framework agreements

Suppliers to major airlines, universities and national food service provider

High levels of industry accreditation achieved (STS and SALSA)

One of the first sandwich companies in the UK to supply waste bread for the brewing of beer

Shortlisted for the Scale-Up award at the Great British Entrepreneur Awards 2017

With negotiations over the UK's departure from the European Union (EU) now well underway, the Scene invited a selection of South Wales' leading business people for a Brexit-themed breakfast discussion in Cardiff.

On the menu was the question: what are the implications of Brexit and how will it impact businesses now and into the future? Professor Brian Morgan was the host and asked those challenging questions we all want to know the answers to.

BREXIT

the *big* debate

PHOTOS: MIKE HALL

What's the STORY SO FAR?

Setting the scene...

Brian Morgan: The main factors Brexit will affect over the next 20 years in the UK are capital investment, investment in skills, and investment in infrastructure. When you look at when we entered the EU in 1973 and compare it to 2007, productivity has gone up. That's because it forced us to accept European goods; it forced British manufacturers to be more competitive; it forced us to look outwards for exports.

By 2007, we were the fast-growing G7 nation and our productivity gap had more or less closed. But could leaving the EU have the same positive effect? It would again force us to do something different, force us to be more outward-looking, force us to become more competitive, and force us to look for new markets. So could this shock of leaving make us even better than we are now?

Right now, only 12% of GDP relies on our trade with the EU. Let's say at worst

we lose 20% of that, it's only 2%, so are we really on a cliff edge and how disruptive will this shock really be?

Nick Revell: A lot of businesses don't see those figures, so how do we give people confidence so they don't delay investing in their future? The sooner we get some direction, the better.

Ken Poole: Employment levels announced recently are the highest since 1975. And NatWest recently said that from a mortgage perspective, confidence in the market has never been better. So the disaster that Carney predicted certainly hasn't been realised.

Vin Wijeratne: I'm really heartened by the numbers you've quoted in terms of trade, so why isn't this in the national press?



KEN POOLE

Head of Economic Development
Cardiff Council



KATY CHAMBERLAIN

Chief Executive Officer
Business in Focus



DEBRA BARBER

Chief Executive Officer
Cardiff Airport



JOHN MOORE MBE

Chairman
Thomas Carroll



VIN WIJERATNE

Chief Financial Officer
The Royal Mint



PROFESSOR BRIAN MORGAN

Professor of Entrepreneurship
Cardiff Metropolitan University



NICK REVELL

Managing Director
Ledwood Mechanical Engineering



DAVID STAZIKER

Investment Director
Development Bank of Wales





BM: *What kind of relationship is the UK going to develop with our partners? Will there be a deal? Is no deal better than a bad deal?*

David Staziker: I think global businesses will force a deal.

John Moore: It might be that businesses have to go out and get these deals themselves. That would take an awful amount of time where they could be concentrating on growing their business.

DS: That aside, Europe don't want this to look easy as they're worried that other countries might want to leave.

KP: The view from financial services industries is that what's mentioned in

the press about the loss of jobs is widely exaggerated. It's in fact less than 4%.

BM: *It's important to remember that the UK financial services dwarfs that of the rest of the EU — Canary Wharf on its own is bigger than Frankfurt. And yes, passporting is a convenience, but is it a necessity? Many other countries sell services to the EU.*

JM: Financial services are concerned that the Government has got nowhere yet with sorting out passporting. They are going to have to spend an awful amount of time getting licensing for trading, because emerging countries won't have us as a primary seller of insurance.

Debra Barber: Aviation has Open Skies

at the moment. It means UK airlines can have a base in let's say Corfu, and enjoy free movement throughout Europe. Third party members are subject to individual bilateral agreements. That's a huge concern for UK airlines because if they are no longer part of Open Skies, they'd have to get individual bilateral agreements with every country, even every city – which could be horrendous. Plus, the other issue is this transitional period because airlines sell tickets in advance and if there's no agreement in place, they won't be able to sell ahead – that will have a huge impact on their business. That's where I think business will step in and get deals done. After all, the airline business brings billions into every nation's economy.

BM: *So airlines face a huge risk and financial services does too, where else is there risk?*

KP: Construction. A lot of the UK's construction workers are EU nationals, which is a bit of a worry when in Cardiff we are aiming to build 40,000 new homes. The hospitality sector has told me that



BUT DON'T FORGET, THE UK IS THE SIXTH BIGGEST ECONOMY IN THE WORLD TODAY – SO WE HAVE SOME BARGAINING POWER HERE.

KEN POOLE

they've seen a significant decline in interest from EU nationals; universities too. 4% of Cardiff's university students are EU nationals. If that fell away it would mean about £10 million per annum loss of income from the university sector – so there are consequences.

But don't forget, the UK is the sixth biggest economy in the world today – so we have some bargaining power here. I want the UK Government to intervene now, to create a framework for the private sector so they can create more wealth and more jobs. Plus, what about intervening in tax? It's said that the UK could move towards offering the lowest corporate tax – globally. I'd like to see the UK Government map out some of these interventions, providing confidence to the private sector.

Katy Chamberlain: I agree in terms of what we'd like to see happen for business, but I can't see politically how it's going to happen. We had a Government that had a reasonably strong position from which to negotiate last year, but that's changed now. And we have a Labour Party that stands for employee rights and diversity, so are unlikely to support significant deregulation. So I just can't see how this desirable positioning is going to be achieved.

KP: Take procurement. At the moment I can't prioritise local companies, under the current EU procurement rules. Outside we would prioritise the regions that we feel need focusing on.

DB: The problem we have at the moment is that politics is getting in the way. It's all about political infighting; a weak government is then being exploited by other parties to hold another general election, and it's not just the UK, it's Europe too – it's not about the Brexit position it's all about political opportunism. Until we can get past this we're just going to be in this hiatus for the next year to 18 months.

BM: Other areas are fisheries and agriculture. We are a huge importer of fish, when in fact we have the most fish in our water than almost anyone in the world! Over the last 30 years we've become a huge importer of food and fish so I think those sectors are ripe for reform. In 20 years' time we should be huge net exporters.

WE STILL HAVEN'T HAD THE SEISMIC SHOCK THAT IT WILL BRING ABOUT.

DEBRA BARBER

Chief Executive Officer, Cardiff Airport

Most farmers voted to leave but why, when they were getting a lot of grants? It's because we are a huge importer of food, when in fact, we have a very intensive agriculture centre that could supply all the food that we need.

BM: Let's think about the long term. A point was made about construction, with so many industries relying on migrants coming in to do the jobs – surely that's an incentive for us to do far more with upskilling and investing, and invest in skills development for everyone here.

NR: I think it comes down to the economics, not the capabilities. In our business we can get good people and there are good training academies. But it's the economics that drives it. Unless regulation steps in and says this is a wage for that type of competence level, and it's adhered to throughout the different sectors in the UK, nothing will change.

We can employ the same competence of people for a cheaper rate but we don't do it because most of the sites we work on are regulated. The client will say to avoid any union issues, this is the rate of pay for these types of levels and it's all audited. Then you're on a level playing field.



BM: What do other countries feel about the UK leaving? Are they happy or is there a worry more of this could happen?

JM: I know our French friends are disappointed with where we are going and take the view that Europe is going to be a poor place without our leadership. How are they going to get on in the next five years, surely that's an important question for them too?

DB: There are huge issues in Europe and with us leaving we still haven't had the seismic shock that it will bring about. Also, the reason the negotiations are where they are, is all about punishment, ensuring other countries don't follow suit. So I think this is where potentially it could be a positive benefit for Europe. It could force Europe to take a step back and actually review what it's doing.

DS: I think with the inevitable EU budget cut post-Brexit, the remaining EU countries are already having to face discussion on what they are going to do and how they have to change.





BM: *Do we have a long transitional period, let's say five years, where we stay in the single market? Or do we leave as soon as possible and so we can start making deals with other countries?*

KC: It's a really difficult situation: if you have a longer transitional period, it gives Europe time to realise that the writing's on the wall, and therefore be more sensible about the negotiations. But it's a continued state of uncertainty for business – that will impact on the economy.

BM: *Also, at the end of the five-year period it only takes one of the 27 member countries to say no and the whole thing falls apart – where would we be then?*

DS: I was at a CBI dinner the other week and there were about 40 attendees and the feeling was, whatever it is we just want to know.

BM: *They seem to say we will stay in the single market and that's their public position. But is that their public position within that transition period?*

DS: They see that as the simplest way, but that's because a lot of businesses see it as the simplest way. If you start changing regulations, a lot of things become complicated when selling products. That's why the repeal act works, because all our products follow European requirements so you can sell straight in. Change the regulations around them and it could make it easier to manufacture but selling could be a lot more difficult.

BM: *It makes sense to keep all those regulations in place until we negotiate a trade deal that's right, otherwise it could have a huge impact on business. Plus, with so much in place we should be able to negotiate a deal quickly that everyone's happy with.*

JM: Trouble is, we need our best team to hold these negotiations and we just don't have that, do we?

KP: We were in discussion with a very large Chinese telecoms supplier and the Brexit vote came and we thought it was all over. What they were mainly concerned with was

the disruption in the cabinet. Once a new Prime Minister was in place and positions were filled they continued negotiations.

BM: *I think the argument is finely balanced on whether we'll need a five-year transition period or a much shorter one, outside, get on with it, and get the negotiations going. So if we are going to go for that shorter one as most people are predicting, why aren't they up there saying there's a fantastic future for the UK? We could be the biggest free trade nation in the world. Look at New Zealand, they got rid of all their tariffs in 1984. Now they're one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and one of the best to do business with. No wonder they've won two Rugby World Cups!*

BM: *To finish up, what are your parting thoughts and insights from today's discussion?*

NR: There's obviously some mixed views. I think we're heading in the right direction and business just needs to make the best of it.

CARDIFF IS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE CITIES IN THE UK THAT COULD BE HEAVILY IMPACTED BY BREXIT, DUE TO OUR DEPENDENCE ON EU MARKETS. THERE ARE RISKS THAT WE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH.

KEN POOLE Head of Economic Development, Cardiff Council

KC: From my perspective, I think about when my father was 18. Then we were on the brink of war in Europe and we had no idea what was going to happen. If we'd lost that war, and we could have, we'd have been invaded. Imagine the stresses my father had to face at the age my daughter is now. Every time I get worried about Brexit I think about that and I calm down.

VW: For me it's been enlightening. I leave a lot more informed, a lot more hopeful, a lot more inspired about what the future holds. But one thing I hadn't considered is what will Europe look like after we're gone? I think it's going to cause some tensions.

DS: From the Development Bank of Wales' perspective, this is just an opportunity now, we can't look at it in a negative way. For me the overall message is that Welsh Government is trying to secure up and take the uncertainty away from Brexit as far as possible. We are removing funding uncertainty because regardless of what Brexit looks like, there will be funding available for any viable Welsh business from the Development Bank of Wales.

Right now, my gut feeling is that smaller businesses don't know what to think. Some trade in Europe but it's just a small part of what they are doing. For those types of businesses they can't hold off on investment, they're just getting on with it.

JM: I think financial services have got some specific challenges, some of which are enormous. We don't want another financial crisis. Corporate governance, leadership of business thinking, the culture of that behaviour – it's got to stand through this hasn't it? I just hope it does.

DB: I think it's been a great discussion but there's still a lot of risk associated with it and we're certainly not at the end right now!

KP: It's been a great discussion. I'm just going to conclude with some issues about Cardiff that voted 60 to 40 to stay – the largest percentage of vote to remain in Wales. Cardiff is one of the top five cities in the UK that could be heavily impacted by Brexit, due to our dependence on EU markets. There are risks that we will have to deal with.

However, I think the building blocks have been put in this city to help us withstand any shocks. Population growth is predicted to be 26% over the next few years, the highest of any city in the UK. Levels of investment, both pension funds and infrastructure, are at an all-time high, so they're looking at the city over a 30-year period which suggests there's real confidence. 47% of our population has a degree or equivalent, the highest of any city in the UK. Key infrastructure is being put into place: Metro, airport, M4 – so I'm hoping those positive signs will carry us through. Lots of uncertainty but real signs of confidence.

BM: *Well thank you all and I do hope we can see there is a huge future for Welsh business. I think the feeling now is just to get on and do the negotiations quickly so we all know where we stand.*

My final thing to say, and I'm going to quote Bertrand Russell, is that 'the trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt'. So we are the intelligent people and it's right that we debate it, and I think we had a very good talk. 

*To mark our 45th birthday, the Scene caught up with co-founder **Evan Thomas** to find out if today's Thomas Carroll lives up to the 1972 vision.*

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

It all started in the late summer of 1972," says Evan. "Terry Carroll and I were approached by the directors of Western Brokers Limited on Churchill Way with an offer to purchase their commercial account, valued then at £7,000." It was an offer they couldn't refuse, he continues: "We jumped at the idea of starting out on our own. My father lent us the deposit and Thomas Carroll was born."

With considerable help from their wives, Delma and Anne, Evan and Terry began looking for Thomas Carroll's first home and signed a lease for three rooms on the second floor at Queens Chambers, Queens Arcade.

"Once we got our first place we were on a roll," says Evan. "In our first year we'd increased the income to £12,600. We were even able to take a bonus of £1,570 each – that was a small fortune in those days!"

CHARTING THE COMPANY'S GROWTH AND SUCCESS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Fortunately for Thomas Carroll, many insurers were closing their direct accounts with clients, who had received a discount for acting as their agent. As Evan explains: "We had close ties with many insurance inspectors who offered us this business. We gladly accepted this windfall, and insurers were relieved that their clients would now be looked after by qualified, local brokers."

The years to follow saw Thomas Carroll grow dramatically with the opening of Piccadilly Square, Caerphilly after the purchase of Morgan Roberts Limited. But sadly in 1977, Terry passed away following an earlier diagnosis of cancer, and Thomas Carroll was shaken to the core. Evan remembers: "Delma and the children had lost the person closest to them, and Anne and I had lost a true friend."

But thanks to the support from Delma, Anne and the loyal staff,

IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME AT ALL IF THE BUSINESS DOUBLED IN SIZE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS!

the business battled on. “Terry was greatly missed by everyone in the insurance industry,” Evan says. “I missed his expertise, particularly in the life and pensions field, he was a great salesman.”

Shortly afterwards, Thomas Carroll decided to leave the office in Queens Arcade and concentrate the business in Caerphilly. But then the need for an office in North Cardiff knocked on the door when Eagle Star gifted them a major account. To retain and expand on the local business, they opened an office in Llanishen.

It was now 1982 and technology was beginning to take off, which thankfully had started to filter into the insurance broking field. Thomas Carroll embraced this new era and signed a contract with Misys Software which improved efficiency overnight – enabling them to expand more quickly.

And it didn’t stop there. Over the next 10 years Thomas Carroll acquired more than 15 small to medium accounts of local brokers wanting to retire, or where circumstances had changed. Evan says: “This showed that our peers trusted us to look after the interests of their clients.”

◀◀ THE HIGHLIGHTS OVER THE YEARS

There have been many great moments in the Thomas Carroll journey. Evan recalls some of the events that stand out. “In 1983, after a number of ‘supreme’ chicken lunches – as we called them – in the Piccadilly Pub, we persuaded Chairman John Moore to join us, then as a director. It was the transfer deal of the century!”

Another milestone was purchasing Pendragon House, the Caerphilly headquarters, in 1997. Evan explains: “This was a significant financial commitment and represented our ambitions

for the future. We went on to extend the building, first to accommodate the commercial insurance team from Cardiff, and then later on to diversify into a Group with subsidiary companies.”

Thomas Carroll have always been passionate about the local community and have supported Ty Hafan Children’s Hospice since they opened their doors in 1999. “We fundraised before the bricks were laid,” says Evan. “It’s been a real highlight supporting and watching the wonderful work they do over the years.”

Also, unlike other brokers, Thomas Carroll has remained independent throughout the years. “We created an independent growth strategy and it paid off.”

So was it all worth it? “It’s been a fantastic journey. When we look back, John and I could never have imagined that in 2017 we would be celebrating 45 years of service to the business community in South Wales and beyond,” says Evan. “And it’s all thanks to the dedication and expertise of so many members of the now famous Thomas Carroll team!”

◀◀ THE NEXT 10 YEARS AND BEYOND

With the business growing from strength to strength, today Thomas Carroll Group has four limited companies and supports clients with a family of integrated services covering insurance, financial planning and health and safety. They also have multiple regional offices and almost 150 employees.

As Evan says, “It wouldn’t surprise me at all if the business doubled in size in the next 10 years!” 📈

THEN&NOW

In Numbers

Turnover
Profit before tax
Offices
Companies
Employees

1972

£83,930
£506.91
1
1
4

2017

£9.6million
£1.5 million
5
5
147



thomascarroll
GROUP PLC

SCENE

MANAGING **RISK**
PROTECTING **WEALTH**
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