



Amanda Wickstead

Qualified as legal executive

Years of commitment have paid off for a Telford woman who has qualified as a legal executive for a local firm.

Amanda Wickstead originally joined Martin-Kaye Solicitors, in Telford, as a legal secretary in the commercial corporate team.

And after studying for her qualifications alongside her day-job, she has now been named as a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives.

Workplace

She said: "Before I could officially call myself a legal executive, I needed to complete five years' training, and two years had to be done in the workplace after my final exams."

"I worked in the commercial corporate team carrying out company secretarial work, commercial contract work and assisting with the sale and purchase of companies."

Amanda is now working as a legal executive in the commercial corporate team, dealing with commercial contract work and company secretarial work.

Stuart Haynes said: "Amanda has worked incredibly hard over an extended period of time, and her dedication and commitment has now paid off."

Marking a decade

A Shropshire man has celebrated ten years' service with a local homecare company with a ceremony recognising the length of his stay.

Gary Swain, who works in the Shrewsbury area, is a carer with Anchorage Care Group in Conover.

He has received a special award for his decade of service with the company, which delivers homecare services to elderly and vulnerable clients to help them stay in their own homes and retain their independence for longer. Founder and managing partner Margaret Rhodes said: "Without the support of committed carers like Gary our business would not be able to deliver the high quality standards of care our clients deserve."

Proud

"His excellent attitude, professionalism and caring nature has helped him to care for some of our most vulnerable clients, and we're very proud of everything he has achieved."

"We are committed to ensuring all our clients receive the very best care at all times, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and our supportive staff are the key to our success."

Gary said: "I have enjoyed the past ten years very much and the care industry is definitely an extremely rewarding career."

"Many people assume it's a job just for women, but I'd encourage men to consider it too as it has been a really challenging but interesting change of direction for me."

Call to use private finance

Private finance needs to play a role in delivering infrastructure projects in the UK, a business body has warned.

The CBI says that while the Government is right to look at how Private Finance Initiatives are used, and must learn lessons from previous failings, the country still needs to invest in meeting the country's need for roads, hospitals, and other public use projects.

In a new report, Building Strong Foundations: Financing UK Infrastructure, the CBI puts forward a package of

measures to boost infrastructure investment through effective public-private partnerships.

CBI deputy director-general Dr Neil Bentley said: "A successful economy depends on high-quality economic and social infrastructure."

Quality

"Given the current state of the public finances, private finance must be an option if the public is to continue to access quality new schools, hospitals and other infrastructure at an affordable price."

"We want the Government to publish a clear, long-term pipeline of projects so that investors can have the confidence to put their money in the UK. Infrastructure spending also offers one of the biggest bangs for buck in terms of additional economic activity, so this is a chance to generate jobs, growth and build for the future."

"Thanks to the use of private finance and expertise, hundreds of hospitals, schools and homes have been built, with the vast majority delivered on time and on budget. But let's be clear, private finance should only be used when it offers best value for money."

Lending stabilises in sector

Lending conditions for Midlands manufacturers are stabilising, but the flow of lending to business has eased significantly according to a survey by manufacturers' organisation EEF.

The third quarter survey of access to finance and cost of credit comes ahead of a report from the Independent Commission on Banking, and was used by EEF to call for greater competition among banks to improve business lending.

EEF Midlands director Richard Halstead said: "The improvement in availability last quarter has now been accompanied by some easing in the numbers of firms facing a rise in the cost of finance."

"While conditions are slowly heading in the right direction the overall picture remains far from being as supportive as we'd like."

Increase

"There is clearly more finance available but the fact more companies are still reporting an increase in cost rather than a decrease suggests that firms are paying a price for it."

"With global clouds of uncertainty providing enough reasons for firms to hold off investment this is the time we can least afford to add any further constraints through tight conditions on accessing finance."

According to the survey, fewer companies reported increases in the cost of finance from the second quarter, continuing a steady decline since the severe conditions during the recession. However, there are still more companies reporting an increase in cost than those reporting a decrease.

Concerns over availability of finance remain, in particular, the fees on existing lending, which have shown little improvement while the balance of companies that have seen the rates on existing borrowing go up has increased despite interest rates remaining at a record low level.

Updates at seminars

A series of seminars to give businesses the latest updates on employment law are to be held around Shropshire.

Throughout September, law firm Lanyon Bowdler will be holding employment law seminars to provide a general round-up of the latest developments in employment law, together with advice on the new Bribery Act.

Partner

The seminars will be presented by partner and head of the Employment Law department, John Merry.

They take place at the Lions Quay Hotel in Oswestry on September 13, at Park House Hotel in Shifnal on September 22, and at Lanyon Bowdler's Shrewsbury offices on September 27, plus at the Three Counties Hotel in Hereford on September 15.

All seminars begin at 9am, with presentations starting at 9.30am, and finish at around midday.

They cost £17.50 per person plus VAT, including food and refreshments.

● To book, contact Rachel Donaghey on 01952 224047 or email rachel.donaghey@lblaw.co.uk

On the front line for environmental issues

Fighting the cause on a global scale

Oswestry businessman DAVID BURTON saved elephants from poachers in the reign of Idi Amin and launched waste paper banks in Britain. He meets THOM KENNEDY

"There's a natural resistance to change, but it either happens planned or it happens unplanned. We can't afford to have it unplanned any more."

It's a claim that could run into almost any area of business, but David Burton, as is often the case, is talking recycling, in particular to people who bemoan having alternate bin collections for their recycling and household waste.

The chairman of environmental consultancy Strateco, which waves a flag for the green agenda with its radical approaches to eco-friendly business, knows a few things about change.

During a life of environmentalism, he has helped ship elephants to Britain to save them from poachers in the regime of a deadly dictator, and launched the very modern concept of recycling paper on the streets of Britain. But he doesn't stand still.

Tucked away above a supermarket on a housing estate in Oswestry, another quiet revolution is going on.

ermarket flowers and newspaper A-boards. So narrow is the passage to Strateco's home, you can't avoid triggering the supermarket's automatic doors to get to its front entrance.

Battle

But from its modest base, the firm has been fighting the battle for environmentally-friendly business practices on many fronts.

These have included the offshoot company CRT Recycling, which recycles old cathode ray television screens to prevent them going to landfill, and the core business of consulting around 450 companies on their environmental policies, helping them save money and improve efficiency.

Now, new schemes are on the horizon, as the company launches Electrocycle, which will recycle a far wider band of waste electricals and electronics (WEEE), which will see the company's own "Ele" Banks set up in public to allow people to recycle household products - their broken televisions, kettles, laptops and toasters.

Those which can be pressed back into use will be refurbished, and sold at a low price to low-income homes - projects like the Oswestry Furniture Scheme will be given access to the goods with potential for reuse. That which needs to be recycled will be done so at the firm's North Wales plant, helping keep recycling as local as possible.

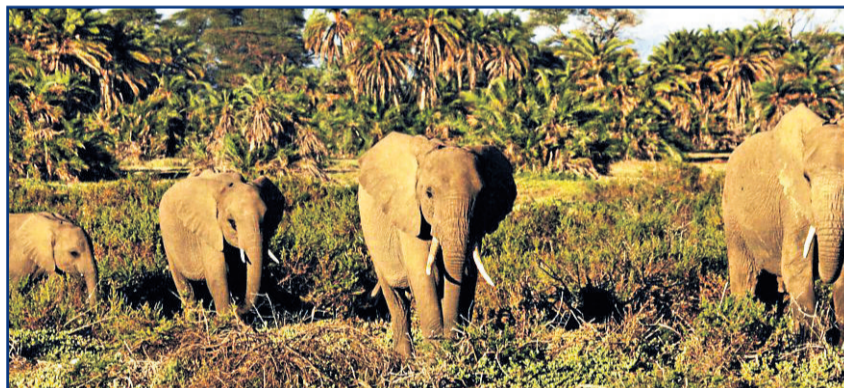
It's a system that he believes will become commonplace.

"The step change towards recycling home waste took 20 years, but look at things like reusable shopping bags now," he said.

"Every household is aware now, and they all have a recycling facility on their doorstep, except one for waste electrical equipment. I predict most local authorities will have collections of small electrical waste in two to three years."



The launch of Electrocycle saw David Burton meet up with old colleague David Ross again



In the 1970s David was among a group who rescued elephants from countries in Africa

As newspaper recycling took off across the continent, it was Mr Burton who brought paper banks to the streets of Britain.

"In the UK in the early 1980s, people collecting waste newspapers were Scout groups wanting to collect money for a minibus. There was no environmental dimension."

"UK newsprint mills were finding continental mills were producing at a lower price as the public were starting to collect their old papers for recycling for environmental reasons, whereas the waste paper infrastructure in the UK was still paying for that material."

"I persuaded a number of supermarket groups to accept paper banks alongside bottle banks."

"In the 1980s the only people that used them largely were middle-class women, so a paper bank on a civic amenity site didn't work as that's where men took their rubbish."

"They didn't work at lower end supermarkets, it was Sainsbury's rather than Kwik-Save. The middle-class people were more likely to participate in a community initiative, and quite often they didn't have coal fires so didn't burn their paper."

Mr Burton was in paper recycling for 20 years before setting up Strateco in a barn near Oswestry in 2003. It moved into the vacant premises in the town later.

He had run his own cafe and worked in sales jobs, but found his field in environmentalism.

"I was made redundant at the age of 52, and that prompted me to set up Strateco," he said.

"I thought at the time, 'I have no chance of getting a job'. It was just a case of sink or swim. As it is, it has operated without any borrowings of any kind."

"The environment is going to have an impact on your business whether you like it or not, and companies are acting more sustainably but financially benefiting from it - Marks and Spencer's Plan A has achieved £15 million of savings as it has increased its environmental stance."

How, then, does he feel about people's resistance to participating in the green agenda?

"There's a price to pay to live in a sustainable society," Mr Burton said.

"Yes it's a bit awkward and smelly, but what's the alternative?"

For every tonne of waste recycled by Electrocycle, a proportion will be donated to the Space for Giants scheme, which aims to protect the last remaining herd of elephants in Kenya by supporting local populations and erecting electric fences.

Rescued

In the 1970s, he had been among a group of people who rescued elephants from poachers in Africa, including Idi Amin's Uganda.

"I worked in zoos in my youth," he said, "and safari parks were growing. The bars were coming down and the concept of being in a cage yourself, with animals roaming relatively free was quite radical. It was a very enlightened thing to do, and a very exciting thing for a young man to do as well."

The launch of Electrocycle saw Mr Burton meet up with an old colleague, David Ross, who now runs Knowsley Safari Park on Merseyside. It was only after discussing the donations for the elephants that their common connection arose.

The pair had met once in the past, when he briefly met Mr Ross in hospital in Uganda, while both were working on the



David faced danger when Idi Amin was at the height of his power in Uganda

scheme to bring the elephants back.

The process would involve effectively hooking an elephant with a rope on a length of bamboo, and transporting it back to the UK by ship along with other safari park-bound animals.

Mr Burton is aware of the controversy which dogs safari parks, and the public perception of the parks, but believes that the project at the time was carried out with the best intentions for the animals in mind.

He said: "A lot of these elephants were being killed and there was a lot of poaching. There might be some disagreement on keeping elephants in European safari parks, but this was the 1970s, and the future was very bleak for elephants."

"It wasn't nearly as traumatic as the killing itself."

"They were very dangerous times. Idi Amin was at the height of his power. I was on the last plane out when he gave British ex-pats notice to leave the country."

He has also been part of a new scheme at Popoffsets.com, which allows people to offset the impact of their carbon footprint by helping fund family planning clinics in areas of need around the world, helping limit additional population growth.

The scheme has received the backing of environmentalists including David Attenborough and Jonathan Porritt.

"It's based on funding for family planning," Mr Burton added.

"It's the most cost-effective way of reducing our carbon, more than putting wind turbines on hills, more than solar panels. The population is going to be nine billion in the next 30 years. How are they going to be fed?"

"You either set out your values and beliefs or remain part of the problem."