

# illuminate

The magazine from  
The Wilson Organisation

An enlightened approach to independent insurance and financial advice

## NOT ANOTHER CHEESY INSURANCE STORY

How Wilsons continues to  
serve the food industry

Plus

The tale of Bunny Appliances  
Forging a reputation in the construction industry  
Mansfield Sand & Wilsons - in a league of their own

**p4**

Why Wilsons continues to sponsor the Nottingham Restaurant Awards

**p6**

Wilsons joins the Premier League by working with Mansfield Sand

**p8**

Profiling the Next Generation Family Business Forum

**p9**

How to cope with the credit crunch - Wilsons offers its plan for Survival through to Success

**p13**

Looking for business overseas? The Russia Midlands Business Club could be your perfect entry point

**p19**

Find out which member of staff won a prestigious Nottingham Insurance Institute award

**illuminate****EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Hilary Campton  
hcampton@wilorg.com

**EDITOR; FOR WILSONS**

Leah Bradley  
lbradley@wilorg.com

**EDITOR; FOR BOWLESASSOCIATES**

Simon Cleaves  
simon@bowlesassociates.com

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Terry Bowles; Andy Afford;  
David Middleton

The Wilson Organisation  
Wilson House  
1/3 Waverley Street  
Nottingham  
NG7 4HG  
Tel: 0115 942 0111  
Fax: 0115 942 0459  
www.wilorg.com

**illuminate is produced for Wilsons by BowlesAssociates.**

However, the views expressed may not be those of either company, their partners or employees.

Harold Wilson (Insurances) Ltd and Harold Wilson Financial Services Ltd are authorised and regulated by The Financial Services Authority. The information provided in this magazine is for information purposes only and should not be construed as advice.

**Wilson**  
Organisation



# Foreword

**W**elcome to our new magazine, which is designed to not only keep you up to speed with developments within The Wilson Organisation but also point you towards events and advice that could assist you at this challenging time.

Communication is more important than ever in the current climate. Good advice is essential and it's our firm belief that we all have to pull together to help each other through this recession.

The launch of *illuminate* is an exciting development for us. It provides an opportunity to give you more of a feel for Wilsons, and the people working within our business. And we also welcome the chance to get across the message that although there's a natural demarcation line between the insurance and financial services we offer, we are very much one firm.

As with all companies operating within the financial sector we have been forced to take a close look at the way in which we operate, but the fact that we run independently from larger concerns allows us to control our own destiny.

As you will see in this magazine, we are constantly developing new products and updating existing ones, and we urge you to check what's available - including the targeted seminars we are planning to help you survive the economic downturn - and see if they are applicable to you.

In this issue, we introduce you to Barber's, the world-renowned cheese-makers based in Somerset, and a client of Wilsons for the past two years. Barber's recognised that as specialist food business insurers, we are ideally placed to support a family business that dates back to 1833.

Other clients featured in this issue include Caunton Engineering, the Nottinghamshire company currently building a new stand for Leicester Tigers, the UK's leading football and rugby pitch manufacturer Mansfield Sand and white-goods supplier Bunny Appliances.

Their stories make fascinating reading and we are pleased to highlight their achievements, just as we are to introduce you to Wilsons People... award-winners, new members of staff and those who brought us success in the Shape Up Notts Workplace Fitness Challenge.

There's an update on the Next Generation Family Business Forum and Russia Midlands Business Club, with details of forums that enable business people to meet and discuss mutual challenges, and we highlight the fact that we're giving our full support to the restaurant industry in the city and county at this difficult time by continuing our sponsorship of the Nottingham Restaurant Awards.

Charlotte and Annabel Prow, Joint Managing Directors

Wilson's is continuing its headline sponsorship of the Nottingham Restaurant Awards, which have become a flagship event on the industry calendar since their introduction in 2002.

## For mutual benefit

With many clients in the food and restaurant sector, it was a natural move for Wilson's to become involved with the Nottingham Restaurant Awards - and both sides have benefited as a result.

Wilson's began sponsoring the awards last year as a demonstration of its commitment to local businesses and restaurants, and felt it was even more important to continue to do so following the economic downturn.

Marketing consultant Hilary Campton said: "People have always enjoyed eating out in the city and there are many top-quality restaurants who offer great value to customers.

"At a time when some customers are choosing to stay at home, it's important that we play our part in reminding the public that there is so much outstanding food and dining available."

The decision to take on the title sponsorship in 2008 was a straightforward one according to Hilary, because of the strong connections Wilson's already has with the industry.

She added: "We have many clients in the food trade and taking on the title sponsorship was a way of underlining our commitment and support for them.

"It has served a dual purpose by raising our profile as well, and we have gained a number of new clients in the last year as a result of the sponsorship."

From left: ITV Central's Lucy Kite who co-presented the 2008 Restaurant of the Year award; Awards host Mark Durden-Smith; Charlotte Prow of Wilson's and Paul Fearon and Sally Martin of Hart's Restaurant



Patron chef John Molnar and Wilson's marketing consultant Hilary Campton at the award-winning Larwood & Voce

## Award success provides extra cover

The Nottingham Restaurant Awards not only represent an opportunity for the industry to celebrate the success of their peers, but also provide a real boost to the coffers. That's the message from John Molnar, managing director of the Moleface Pub Company, owners of the Larwood & Voce in West Bridgford, which claimed three prizes last year - the prestigious Best Young Chef for Nichola Thompson, as well as Best Local Produce Menu and Best Pub Food. He said: "We saw our cover numbers go up 50 per cent after winning the awards, so quite apart from the prestige, it had a great financial effect for us."

**T**alk to any restaurant owner in the region and the topic of Nottingham Restaurant Awards is bound to crop up in conversation.

Since the Awards were introduced seven years ago, the competition has grown stronger between restaurants and pubs in the region, as they all seek to claim a piece of the prestige and the rewards that go with it.

Mark Osborne, co-owner and executive chef of Restaurant 1877 in the city centre, is a firm supporter and said: "Anyone who understands the industry will appreciate the importance of the Awards. They are massive."

Although Mark has been a regular 'face' at the Awards ceremony for his cooking at Café Bleu in Newark and Hart's Restaurant in Nottingham City Centre, Restaurant 1877 is his first venture into ownership, and he aims to provide affordable fine dining to customers.

His dishes consistently received a thumbs-up from the general public in the past, and with a record 40,000 votes for last year's event, the profile has never been higher.

That has a positive knock-on effect for all the

restaurants short-listed as Kerry Mathie, co-director of organisers Big Table PR, explained.

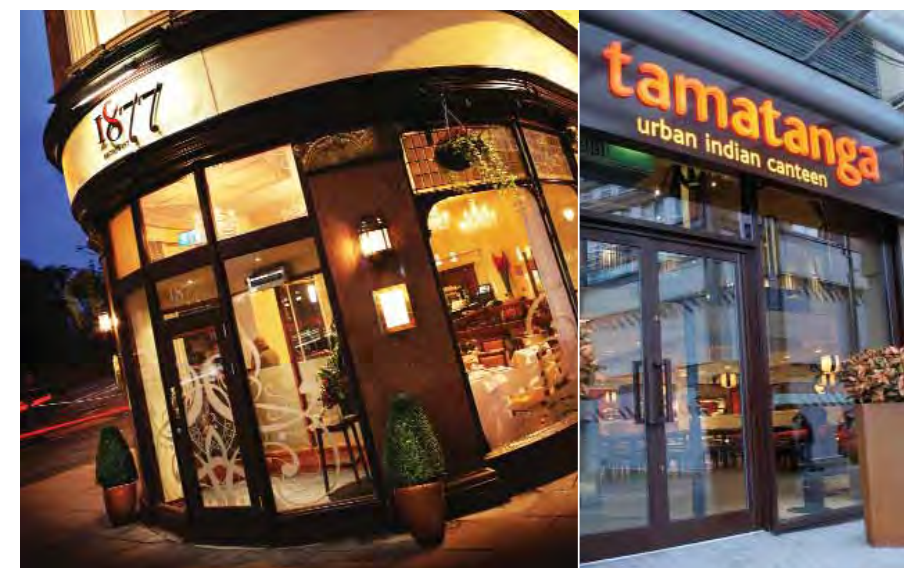
She said: "The Awards have also been important in generally driving up standards. There's real prestige attached to winning a category, and a definite sense of competition between the restaurants taking part."

Votes are registered online to generate a shortlist for judges to visit, before a panel of industry experts are invited to assess the top three nominees in each category.

The winners are announced at a glamorous ceremony in the summer, which brings together the whole restaurant industry for a night of celebration and networking.

And Aman Kular, managing director of Tamatanga, based at the Cornerhouse, added: "There are a lot of independently owned restaurants and pubs in Nottingham and the Awards are a great platform to promote the food they offer."

■ Voting for the 2009 Nottingham Restaurant Awards takes place throughout April and during the month, readers of *illuminate* can get an exclusive discount at certain restaurants. For full details visit [www.wilorg.com/News](http://www.wilorg.com/News)



***"There's a real prestige attached to winning an award and a sense of competition between the restaurants taking part"***

# IP insurance helps Mansfield Sand sow fresh seeds

**W**hen a leading sports pitch manufacturer needed insurance for its latest cutting-edge product, Wilsons was the first port of call.

Mansfield Sand and sister company Fibresand UK produce pitches for many of the UK's biggest football and rugby clubs, including Manchester United, Chelsea, Glasgow Rangers and Newcastle, and recently came up with the latest version of its industry-leading pitch technology.

While the family-owned company has been producing sand-based products and surfaces for more than 150 years from its base in Mansfield, its new Fibrelastic Turf was important enough to not only warrant a patent, but also comprehensive intellectual property insurance.

That was where Wilsons came in and as Mansfield Sand director Vic Armond explained, "We were very happy with the way they went about the work.

"We regard Fibrelastic as a major step forward in pitch technology and as such it was extremely important to have the insurance in place to protect it from any potential rivals.

"Our patent agents, Potter Clarkson, recommended Wilsons, and we

got a good response from them straight away. When we compared what they were offering to other quotes, they covered all our needs."

Mansfield Sand had previously come up with the Fibreturf system of pitches, which was introduced in 1991 and is now used by more than 40 top sports clubs and grounds across the country, including Wembley and the Millennium Stadium.

Fibrelastic is the next generation of that system and offers a more player-friendly natural turf playing surface, with sand-based turf using two types of fibres to cushion impact, while still binding together and offering excellent drainage.

Explained Dr Armond: "Pitches at the top level have been sand-based for about 20 years and are now about 80 per cent sand and 20 per cent organic.

"We developed the Fibreturf system in 1991, which added in extra fibres to make the pitches more hard-wearing and resistant to divots. Fibrelastic uses two types of fibres, which maintains the resistance to divots while feeling softer underfoot and providing more 'give' when a player is running - thus reducing the chance of injury."

The business originally supplied industry and foundries before branching out 20 years ago to become a specialist supplier of a comprehensive range of materials for the construction and maintenance of top class sports and landscape surfaces.

It has two sites at Ratcher Hill Quarry and Sandhurst Avenue Brickworks, which offer the whole production process, from quarrying through to washing, grading, blending and the adding of polypropylene fibres.

As well as re-laying football and rugby pitches at the highest level, Mansfield Sand also supplies sand to more than 50 non-League teams, plus local councils and schools.

Locally, it produces the training and first team pitches for Nottingham Forest and Derby County.

For advice or information on insurance to protect your intellectual property rights, contact Roy Costa at [rcosta@wilorg.com](mailto:rcosta@wilorg.com)

**"It was extremely important to have the insurance in place to protect Fibrelastic from any potential rivals"**



**£200k**

average cost of re-laying a Premier League football pitch using Mansfield Sand's Fibrelastic technology

**300,000**

tonnes of sand the company distributed nationwide in 2008



As a truly independent adviser, Wilsons called on the expertise of Scottish Widows, one of the country's most recognised financial services brands, to give its analysis of the current market

## Outlook...

The world economy appears to be undergoing an unusually sharp and synchronised downturn - and the UK is no exception. Activity is falling sharply and the labour market has weakened as the global credit crunch continues to grip the market. Recent data has been weak: Gross Domestic Product fell by 0.5 per cent on the quarter in Q3 and early indications on Q4 have been soft. Overall, after growth of 0.8 per cent in 2008, the UK economy will shrink by 1.2 per cent in 2009 and then recover by 1.2 per cent in 2010.

Consumer Price Index inflation has now started to fall, and with the dramatic swing in energy prices and the cut in VAT, may drop from the 5.2 per cent peak this September to a low of -0.5 per cent a year later, with an average of 0.9 per cent for 2009 as a whole. Lagged effects of weaker sterling and the reversal of the VAT cut may see inflation averaging 2.4 per cent in 2010 before falling to around 1.5 per cent in early 2011.

Retail Prices Index inflation is likely to show even greater volatility because of movements in mortgage interest payments,

dropping as low as -2.8 per cent next September before moving up to around 4 per cent in late 2010.

The Bank of England has slashed rates by 350 basis points since October, taking the base rate to 1 per cent in February - its lowest level in history. It appears that policy makers may now be giving some attention to the implications of sterling's recent sharp fall - from mid-September to the end of the year the trade-weighted value of the pound declined by around 15 per cent. Moreover, there may be some desire to put more weight on improving the flow of credit rather than simply reducing its cost.

## UK...

The economic backdrop in the UK remains very difficult. Unemployment looks set to rise, with few areas in the economy growing fast enough to take up the slack resulting from job losses across a broad range of industries. The huge increase in government borrowing as the authorities attempt to spend their way out of the current turmoil should reduce the severity of the downturn, but may well be at the expense of recovery when it comes.

However, Scottish Widows has already built in the economic downturn into its forecasts for UK companies, and as a result, long-term value is beginning to emerge. The company has generally positioned its funds with greater exposure to the staples, since its earnings are less at risk from a global economic downturn and may even grow. In tandem, exposure to the more economically sensitive stocks has been limited and it continues to avoid companies burdened with significant amounts of debt.

However, with forecasts that already reflect a major economic downturn, the market is beginning to see long-term value in UK companies. Given the speed of the share price declines among the economically sensitive stocks, recovery, when it arrives, may prove to be just as rapid. The timing of this recovery will be fundamental to performance of the UK market in 2009.

**NOTE:** Investment markets and conditions can change rapidly and as such the views expressed should not be taken as statements of fact nor should reliance be placed on these views when making investment decisions.

**SCOTTISH WIDOWS INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Wilson's joint managing directors Annabel and Charlotte Prow have teamed up with renowned private bank Coutts to host a unique family business event

# Coutts bank on family strengths

Running a family business offers a unique set of challenges and both Annabel and Charlotte Prow are quick to admit there have been times where they would have benefited from the knowledge of others who had faced similar problems.

It inspired them to create their own Family Business Forum, as a place for others to share their experiences and offer advice on tackling issues.

Annabel and Charlotte are joint managing directors of Wilson's and as Annabel explained, being family is not a guarantee of unanimous agreement on every topic.

She said: "Anyone who works in a family environment and claims there has never been any conflict is telling 'fibs'."

"Of course it can have a very positive effect, but there will always be times when people have a difference of opinion, just as in any business. But in a family environment you have to bear in mind the different dynamics and relationships that exist."

"Often you find that the first generation of the family, who set up the business, will have a very autocratic leader, and that can cause tensions with the second generation. The handover may not come naturally, or the children may want to take the company in a new direction."

Increasing family ties (from left): Wilson's joint managing director Annabel Prow, Sandy Lathia from Asiana Hypermarket (also speaking, main picture), Coutts family business manager Rob Jacob and Wilson's joint managing director Charlotte Prow



"With the Forum everyone gets the chance to talk about those problems and explain how they overcame them."

Meetings are held on a quarterly basis in conjunction with Coutts Bank and regularly attract owners from more than 30 businesses to listen to a guest speaker before an open forum discussion. Recent speakers have included Sandy Lathia, who shared her experiences of running Asiana Hypermarket.

Members come from across the Midlands, including Nottingham, Birmingham, Leicester and Lincolnshire, and Charlotte claims the club is unique outside of London.

She added: "Annabel and I were originally asked to speak at a Coutts seminar about our experience working in a family business and on succession planning."

"We then spoke at one of their business forums and found a lot of the people at the event wanted to follow up on it. With no facility for regular meetings unless you were

based in London, we thought there was an opportunity to do something constructive in the region."

The Next Generation Family Business Forum was set up two years ago and has proved such a success that Coutts is now looking to follow the template, and launch similar programmes across the country.

And quite apart from having a chance to talk through any problems in an open environment, the Forum also represents an ideal way to network and make new contacts.

Annabel said: "Working in a family business can be a relatively lonely job and these meetings have proved a good way to forge friendships and new business relationships."

If you run a family business and are interested in attending or speaking at a future Next Generation Family Business Forum event, contact Charlotte Prow at [cprow@wilorg.com](mailto:cprow@wilorg.com)

## WILSONS PRODUCTS

### Keep it personal

Social networking sites have rapidly become an established and fun way of keeping in touch with people but the Information Commissioner, Britain's privacy watchdog, has warned that many people are continuing to put themselves at risk of identity theft by posting personal content online.

Fraudsters look for information such as your date of birth, job title, home address and basic information that might be used as a password, such as the name of your children or pets or your mother's maiden name.

The Information Commissioner's Office gives advice on using the internet at [www.ico.gov.uk/youngpeople](http://www.ico.gov.uk/youngpeople)

Here are some extra tips on how to protect yourself against identity theft:

- Keep important documents in a safe place
- Shred personal documents or receipts before you throw them away
- Check your statements carefully each month and apply for credit monitoring services
- Always sign bank cards immediately and never write down your PIN numbers
- Never disclose any of your secure information in response to unsolicited phone calls or emails

Identity theft advice and protection is available with most home insurance policies and the Wilson's Private Client team can help you find the policy with the best level of cover.

Contact: Ros Urbanowicz at [rurbanowicz@wilorg.com](mailto:rurbanowicz@wilorg.com)

## WILSONS PRODUCTS

### Is credit insurance still available?

Just before Christmas, Zavvi, the CD and DVD retail chain went into administration because its major supplier, a subsidiary of Woolworths, had also gone bust and could not supply goods in the crucial pre-Christmas period.

This highlights the vulnerability of some businesses to events occurring outside of their control. Wilson's has had a number of enquiries from people looking for credit insurance to protect themselves from either a customer or supplier going out of business.

While it is possible to insure against defaulting customers, only limited insurance protection is available for suppliers. Cover can be provided if supplies are interrupted as a result of loss or damage, and businesses should review their supply chain and have contingency plans in place.

As an independent broker, Wilson's has access to a wide array of market options and can support its clients in a drive to find effective cover. But all insurers will want to see companies taking strong and clear steps to manage their credit risk. Clients are recommended to perform credit checks on all potential clients and avoid high credit limits as well as having a business continuity plan should the worst occur. Full and clear financial reporting will also convince insurers that yours is a risk worth insuring. Contact: Alan Johnson at [ajohnson@wilorg.com](mailto:ajohnson@wilorg.com)



## From survival through to success

Remaining positive is crucial at a time when we are faced with so much gloom and doom. Wilson's is helping to lead the fight to combat the credit crunch with a series of free lunchtime 'Survival through to Success' seminars, offering advice, guidance and practical solutions on coping with the economic climate.

### March 25: Funding and security

Led by the Wilson's team and a corporate finance specialist, the seminar will offer advice on securing finance via existing borrowing methods and other capital raising options, as well as provide guidance on how to protect your business.

### April 22: Realigning business assets

The seminar will address how businesses can find tax-efficient strategies to help release capital for the survival and growth of the business. Wilson's will provide innovative ideas on the use of pension and investment planning tools to realise assets and improve your cash position.

### May 20: Keeping your key people

An economic downturn makes it crucial for companies to hold on to key members of staff. A leading HR director will offer first-hand experience on keeping your key people, with guidance from Wilson's on how tax-efficient employee benefit programmes can help you retain and motivate your key staff.

### June 24: Investing your assets

It will discuss the UK and international investment opportunities available to business owners, explaining investment cycles and including market and asset commentary from a number of investment specialists, linked to innovative solutions provided by Wilson's.

To reserve your place at any of these seminars, visit [www.wilorg.com/events](http://www.wilorg.com/events), email [jsquires@wilorg.com](mailto:jsquires@wilorg.com) or call Julie Squires on 0115 942 0111. All seminars are held at The Carriage Hall in Plumtree from 12pm to 2.15pm - free of charge - and include lunch.

# Helping Barber's assets mature

Cheese is cheese, right? Well, not exactly. According to Barber's Farmhouse Cheesemakers - one of The Wilson Organisation's many varied clients - making the very best on the market is all in the detail. Andy Afford donned his Wilsons' wellies to find out more...

I'm not a cheese man myself. But Giles Barber is - a lifer, in fact. To the extent where he and a mere six generations of his family have been making the stuff in the same area, in basically the same way, from as far back as 1833. He is one of four Barbers of the current generation that work within Barber's Farmhouse Cheesemakers, the UK's oldest cheese producer. And one of six family members in total that run Maryland Farm in the idyllic West Country setting of Ditcheat, near Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

They make their special cheese in the traditional way, geography dictating that it is cheddar for which they are world-renowned. The business is a thriving one; supplying the likes of Sainsbury's and Tesco with its flagship West Country Farmhouse Cheddar; a foodstuff (like Parma ham and Melton Mowbray pork pies) afforded its own Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status. "Making cheese is easy," said Barber, speaking from the family farm base, before commenting somewhat provocatively: "You only need four things - milk, salt, rennet and starter culture. But making high-quality cheese, well that's a different thing altogether, isn't it?"

The company's award-winning cheesemaking owes everything to its standing as the country's oldest practitioner of the art. It is also the only operation to produce their own starter culture, this being the friendly bacteria that infuses the cheese with its rich and distinctive characteristics.

Where others have turned to freeze-dried or mass-made concentrate versions, on Maryland Farm, modern production values are still underpinned by this most primal of agitators. And on this, there appears little room for compromise. "Making good cheese isn't simply about following a recipe," stated Barber once again. "Even I could produce a lump of yellow stuff. But chances are that it wouldn't taste any good. When making cheese, there are so many variables. You don't just pour it all in and sit back.

"That's where Nick (Barber, master cheesemaker) brings his experience to bear. Maturing the cheese correctly - in the case of our Vintage Mature strain - can take up to 24 months, alone. It is a science, but most definitely a science with an art to it. And it's a mix I think that we apply better than anyone."

In this most rural of locations, Barber's farm 10 herds of dairy cows - eight owned by them, two by other families - totalling 2,250 cattle all grazing within 3,000 acres of glorious countryside. It's a landscape that the family has played a huge part in shaping. "There is most definitely a sense of civic responsibility," added Barber, thoughtfully. "We, as a business, are at the very core of this area.

"We work with or buy from 85 other families and our cheese-making underpins the very fabric of life down here. Fifty years ago there would have been six farms like ours making cheese, but not any more. And situated 15 miles from Cheddar itself, we're not planning to move any time soon."

Such is the versatility inherent within the different stages of the cheesemaking process there is room for diversification in the business offering. The company's operational model sees that only around 50 per cent of its custom is generated via the large super-market retailers.

Elsewhere, the firm sells wholesale, to the ingredients business - a big user for sandwich fillings and cheese flavourings - and also supplies a number of large independent stores; Fortnum & Mason being one. If you throw in exporting to 12 countries as well as making its own butter you get the feel of a progressive and far-reaching enterprise.

The business has grown by 25 per cent over the last five years, mainly due to Barber's confidence in branching out and investing in the processing of cheese bi-products such as whey, protein concentrates and food additives for the baby food and yoghurt industry. And supporting this progressive and varied business infrastructure sits The Wilson Organisation.



Director Chris Barber with some of his dairy cows at Maryland Farm

Wilson's has been working with Barber's for two years; the firm's insurance team initially winning the business due to its acknowledged expertise within the complex and varied machinations of the food industry. General insurance director Roy Costa said: "Barber's were looking for a business-like approach to their insurance and we were very happy to help.

"Barber's are a highly valued client and we are pleased to be able to place all their general insurances for them. We are also on hand to bring our food sector expertise to assist with the resolution of any claims, should they arise."

The success of the relationship is further endorsed by Chris Newcombe, Barber's finance director. He explained the checks and balances from a client's perspective: "With the critical requirement for food businesses to ensure that their products reach the customer in perfect condition; a proactive approach to managing food safety is paramount.

"Modern food business insurance brokers must also be proactive in supporting their clients to implement risk management through preventative food safety controls, and not simply as providers of insurance products.

"Wilson's has taken this approach with us right from the beginning of our business relationship and this can be seen in the robust risk control system improvements that Barber's have made, and continue to do so."

***"Modern food business insurance brokers must be proactive in supporting their clients to implement risk management, and not simply provide insurance products"***

Supported by Wilson's, the future looks bright for the master cheesemakers. Although another 176 years of existence cannot be guaranteed, it appears the quality of the product, and the insurance advice it receives, can.

And the food processing industry in general, how does that look in these days of economic uncertainty? Giles Barber thinks that other factors are more important in Ditchley than the money markets. He said: "The general decline in the dairy industry is always going to be the biggest threat to our business.

"And as such, the business isn't built around any sense of exponential growth. We need to ensure that we maintain the quality of what we produce. And if we do that we will be happy, and the region will maintain its charm and balance.

"More widely, we are under pressure, as all manufacturing businesses are. Competition coming from cheaper commodity production overseas is always there. But all things considered I would have to say that our biggest day-to-day concern lies considerably closer to home."

Barber smiled before adding his final thoughts, a comment made about life in modern-day Britain – endorsing the perception that the nation is very much a nanny state. "Our biggest headache has to be the passing of over-zealous legislation - regulations laid down concerning the production of this most natural of products," he explained.

"We do need to be left to do what we do. After all, we reckon that history suggests that we probably know what we're doing."



For more information on Wilson's services for the food sector, contact Andrew Davies at [adavies@wilorg.com](mailto:adavies@wilorg.com)



**WILSONS PRODUCTS**  
Peace of mind for professionals

Despite many professional practices pushing ahead towards a paperless nirvana, most remain heavily dependent on documents and paper files.

This is where Wilson's valuable office insurance policy really comes into its own, with its extensive cover for documents. It offers world-wide cover, without a penalty for under-insurance and a generous £10,000 of cover for each lost document or record, to give practice managers and partners peace of mind that the costs of any rewriting will be covered.

Developed with leading insurers, this exclusive policy offers exceptional cover (with less onerous warranties and conditions), such as "full theft" cover, meaning there's no need to prove a forced or violent entry or exit from the premises. This proved very useful for one client when a cleaner 'left the door open' allowing thieves to disappear with 22 laptops from their offices.

The service also includes a free risk management audit, providing advice and recommendations on security, fire precautions and health and safety.

Contact: Simon Hoare at [shoare@wilorg.com](mailto:shoare@wilorg.com)



Clockwise from top right: The first Russia Midlands Business Club event, held at Tonic in Nottingham; Anna Sinelnikova, Wilson's, with Tim Jelley, UKTI, and Stephen Dalziel, Russo-British Chamber of Commerce; Suki Ghuman, Octavian Security, with Sam Sangha, Asiana Hypermarket, Pat Makin, Wilson's, and Thalej Vasishtha, Paragon Law

# From Russia with love

Many companies talk about expanding their horizons and looking further afield for new business, but one member of staff at Wilson's has taken the idea very seriously.

Anna Sinelnikova introduced the Russia Midlands Business Club in September with the aim of helping some of Wilson's corporate clients establish better trade links overseas.

It has proved an instant hit and having linked up with UK Trade & Investment and the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, Anna will soon be heading back to the country of her birth to 'fly the flag' for Wilson's as part of a UKTI trade visit.

Anna arrived in the UK five years ago, having been born and raised in Samara, based on the River Volga and the sixth largest city in the country. While she works in the financial services team at Wilson's, she also has experience with an insurance company in Russia, leaving her in a strong position to drive the Club further forward.

She said: "I found that many of The Wilson Organisation's clients were looking for translators or business solutions in Russia and I was not in a position to answer their questions.

"With help from UKTI, I started investigating what help was available and found that networking opportunities were all based in London. That meant there was a lot of potential help and work in the country that was going untapped.

"Setting up the Club appeared to be an easy way to get things

rolling and bring the Russian community together. The Russo-British Chamber of Commerce had been looking to expand outside of London but needed a local contact who could run things - and that became me."

With help from Tim Jelley, senior international trade adviser for UKTI, the opening event was held in Nottingham in October 2008, with more than 100 people attending from Nottingham, Leicester, Lincolnshire, Birmingham and Manchester.

Anna is now looking to generate new business from those contacts as well as with companies in some of the core sectors of the Russian economy - oil and gas, construction, food and drink and financial services - pointing out that: "There's a lot of synergy with existing Wilson's clients, and plenty of potential."

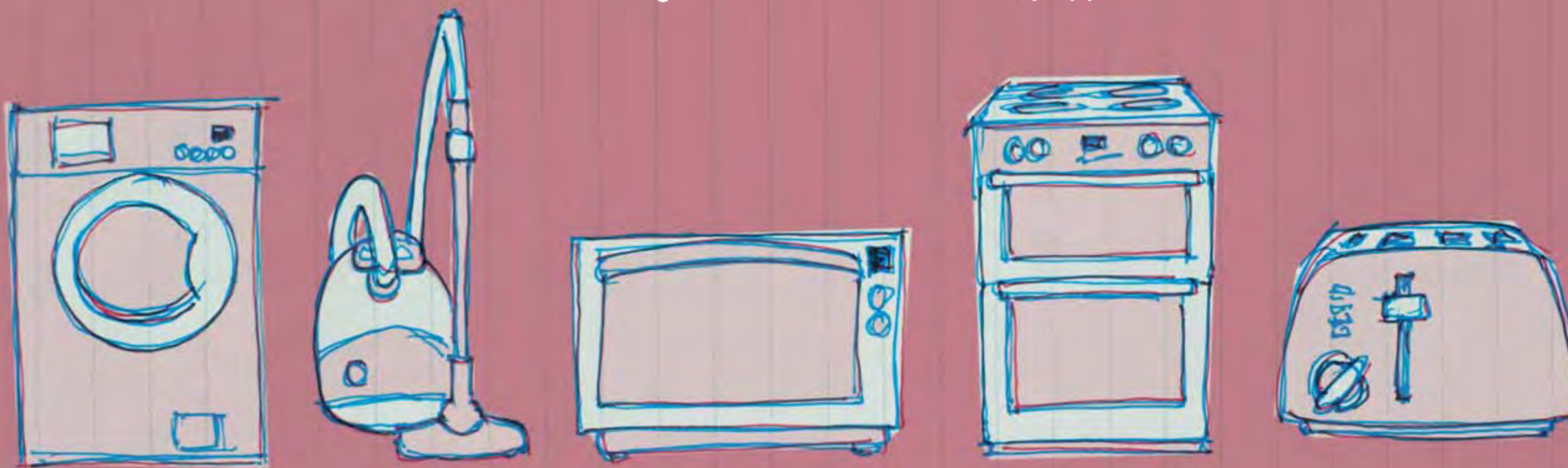
Her efforts have received praise from Mr Jelley, who said: "The UKTI's objective is to make people aware of the great potential that exists in Russia and remove any preconceptions about trading with Russian businesses.

"Anna has been a real driving force for the Club, which has proved to be an excellent way to network and make contact with companies over there. It's been such a success that the next Club meeting, featuring the BBC's Jonathan Charles as the guest speaker, will follow a pre-trip briefing for the next UKTI trade visit in March."

Contact: Anna Sinelnikova at [annas@wilorg.com](mailto:annas@wilorg.com)

# Finding a positive spin (cycle)

They've grown from a two-man shop to a 30-strong team distributing white goods across the country - and Wilsons has been with them all the way. Simon Cleaves gets domesticated with Bunny Appliances...



**P**aul Bysouth-Kemp claims a recession doesn't have to mean that businesses must batten down the hatches... it can actually be a time of opportunity.

The managing director of 'white goods' supplier Bunny Appliance Warehouse has seen his company

***“We have a long-standing relationship with Wilsons and continue to call on them for advice and help to keep us growing and moving forward”***

quadruple in size in the last three to four years through the growth in sales on its website.

And despite all the uncertainty, he firmly believes there's no reason why Bunny should not continue to thrive.

Established in 1986 as a small independent supplier of built-in kitchen appliances to the trade and public markets, the company's success in e-commerce is based on having a large showroom and warehouse stocked with more than 5,000 products and constantly

monitoring the market to provide competitive prices.

Mr Bysouth-Kemp believes those factors give Bunny an edge over its rivals and said: "There's no denying that times are hard but you have to stay positive and look at the situation as an opportunity.

"We've seen some businesses struggle financially because they can't get hold of supplies, but so far that hasn't been a problem for us.

"As long as we have products in stock, we can keep supplying customers, and because we sell goods from such a wide range of manufacturers, that shouldn't be an issue.

"In addition, we are always adjusting our prices to provide our customers with the best value for money - that's imperative in e-commerce. With many of our manufacturers based on the continent, the price of the Euro has hit hard. We've seen a big cut in our margins as a result, but we are battling through."

After starting out with just two members of staff in a small shop in Bunny, the company moved to a warehouse showroom to allow customers to browse a wider range of products and to lower overheads.

By offering a 'no-frills' service concentrating on a broad selection of goods, knowledgeable staff and low prices, the company grew steadily until it launched its website.

That proved a spectacular success and Bunny now employs 30 people, with a big increase in the sales team, and its own dedicated fleet of vehicles for delivery.

While around 70 per cent of business comes from the general public, Bunny also has a large portfolio of trade customers, including kitchen companies, builders, property developers and architects.

Mr Bysouth-Kemp added: "We offer discounts for bulk orders as we are able to negotiate better with the manufacturer on substantial volumes. It's helped us to win many contracts with builders, property developers, local authorities and housing associations for developments both locally and nationally."

Wilsons supplies Bunny with all its general insurance, helping to protect it from any problems with suppliers, as well as handling the company's investments and pension funds.

Said Mr Bysouth-Kemp: "We have a long-standing relationship with Wilsons and continue to call on them for advice and help to keep us growing and moving forward. They have always been very diligent in their work and are extremely reliable."

Contact: Pat Makin at [pmakin@wilorg.com](mailto:pmakin@wilorg.com)

## WILSONS PRODUCTS Protection for directors & officers

There are an increasing number of circumstances where directors and officers can be sued as well as the company. This trend increases when the financial future of a business is in doubt. If successful, a director can not only lose the business but personal assets as well.

Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance is a cost-effective method of protecting both the company and the individual against the costs of defending claims brought against one or more directors or officers, including damages, settlements, judgements, defence costs, legal and professional fees.

Non-exec directors share the same liabilities as "ordinary" directors but are arguably more at risk as they are often assumed to have greater knowledge than other directors, yet have less involvement in the day-to-day running of the business. Many D&O policies provide "ring-fenced" cover for non-exec directors to ensure they are also protected.

Contact: John Steele at [jsteele@wilorg.com](mailto:jsteele@wilorg.com)

## WILSONS PRODUCTS Flex your benefits...

It is common for employers to spend up to 20 per cent of their total wage bill on employee benefits but often employees do not fully appreciate their entire benefits package.

Wilsons recognises the need to manage costs while retaining and rewarding key people and has developed WilsonFlex, a powerful and flexible web-based employee communication and administration solution that will help to maximise the return on the investment made by the business in its people.

WilsonFlex can help you take advantage of significant National Insurance and tax savings to maximise your benefit budget, administer your HR processes more efficiently, obtain ongoing employee buy-in so you can understand what they really value, improve recruitment and retention by ensuring potential and existing employees understand their individual benefits packages and give them the opportunity to select the benefits that they value the most.

Other benefits include holiday booking and absence management, streamlined joining of pension schemes, HR self-service and administration.

Contact: Annabel Prow at [aprow@wilorg.com](mailto:aprow@wilorg.com)

# It's the final countdown...

According to a recent survey by the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF), 25 per cent of private sector businesses anticipate closing their final salary pension schemes to current members over the coming years, on top of the many schemes that have already done so, indicating that they are just too expensive.

Final salary schemes provide guaranteed benefits to members, with the employer bearing the brunt of the cost if investments fail to perform. Falling interest rates and increasing life expectancy add to the problem created by the global economic downturn and accompanying slump in equity prices.

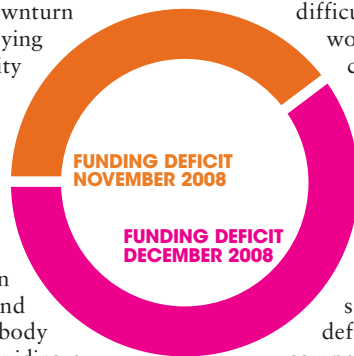
The scale of the issue can be seen in the figures provided by the Pension Protection Fund (PPF), the body tasked with providing a safety net for final salary schemes via a collective insurance "scheme". The PPF indicates that the funding deficit of UK final salary pension schemes leapt from £136billion in November to almost £200billion in December. This deficit affects 2.7million private sector employees.

The NAPF reports there is now an increasing likelihood that

current members of schemes will see future pension benefits being provided in a less favourable form, with some even returning to a reliance on the inadequate State Provision. NAPF's survey also found that 25 per cent of respondent firms anticipate closing their schemes' doors to future accrual of benefits for all members.

In short, it is becoming extremely difficult for employers to fund the long term, open-ended commitments that are inherently part of the final salary scheme pledge. Employers should take action now to prevent an already difficult position worsening. Many companies will want to disassociate themselves from their final salary schemes, which can appear as a significant deficit on the company balance sheet.

Closure to all members is one way of carrying out this disassociation, but does not solve the entire problem. Wilsons is working with many clients to provide commercial options to negate the seriousness of this position. For the latest developments in this area, and to see how this may affect your business, contact Paul Rodgers at prodgers@wilorg.com



**The funding deficit of UK final salary pension schemes leapt from £136bn in November to almost £200bn in December**

## WILSONS PRODUCTS

### Automatic cover for insolvency practitioners

Wilsons has teamed up with JLT Partnership Practice to offer insolvency practitioners a market-leading insurance facility for all types of appointments in both corporate and personal insolvencies.

The facility provides automatic cover from the moment an insolvency practitioner is appointed, ensuring that any assets, income and liabilities are immediately protected.

It's quick and easy to arrange the cover, which is wide-ranging and subject to high limits. The scheme is underwritten by leading UK-based insurers, all of whom have excellent security ratings from the leading agencies.

Wilsons can also offer access to a newly-developed "after the event" legal expenses product, which will enable insolvency practitioners to pursue any pre-existing claims against third parties that would ordinarily have had to be dropped due to lack of funds.

Contact: Alan Johnson at [ajohnson@wilorg.com](mailto:ajohnson@wilorg.com)

## WILSONS PRODUCTS

### Key deadline looming for large pension funds

An important deadline is approaching for savers with large pension pots, who may need to make a choice to maximise tax advantages by April 5, 2009.

In April 2006 the government introduced legislation to replace eight different tax regimes on pensions with one new regime going forward.

As part of the new rules, the Government introduced a 'Lifetime Allowance', described as the maximum amount of tax-advantaged pension savings for an individual. If your pension is over that limit, a tax charge applies of up to 55 per cent of the surplus funds when benefits are drawn. Currently the Lifetime Allowance is £1.65million, which will rise to £1.8million by April 2010, with no further increase before 2016.

To protect people with large pension funds accrued before April 2006, the government offered the option of transitional protection through 'Primary Protection' and 'Enhanced Protection'.

Primary Protection allows people who had pension funds of more than £1.5million at April 5, 2006 to be allocated their own lifetime allowance enhancement factor, which can be used when they draw pension benefits, as well as allowing further pension savings.

Enhanced Protection allows people, irrespective of their pension fund value as at April 5, 2006, to obtain full protection for their pension funds subject to there being no contributions or accrual of pension benefits after that date.

People who want to apply for protection of their pension funds are advised by HMRC to submit an application as soon as possible.

This is a complicated area and if you believe you may have pension funds above or close to the Lifetime Allowance, Wilsons recommends you check with an Independent Financial Adviser as to how this change will affect your retirement planning.

Contact: Ian Baguley at [ibaguley@wilorg.com](mailto:ibaguley@wilorg.com)



## A relationship forged in steel

Wilsons has a reputation within the construction industry that boots its rivals into touch - as Cauntion Engineering is happy to testify.

The family-owned steelwork contractor is currently working on the spectacular new 10,000-seater North Stand for Leicester Tigers, England's biggest rugby club, which stands 35m high and 104m across and includes a sophisticated triangular shaped truss weighing 250 tonnes.

It's the first part of a proposed £60m redevelopment of Welford Road that will raise the capacity of the ground from 17,500 to 30,000 and represents another milestone project for Cauntion, which is based at Newthorpe in Nottingham.

It also linked up with contractors Galliford Try - who are heading up the North Stand project - to provide the framework for the new Museum of Liverpool, due for completion in 2010 and sure to become an iconic landmark on the Mersey skyline.

They represent two of the highest-profile ventures recently undertaken by Cauntion, which is one of the leading fully automated structural steelwork contractors in the country with particular strengths in design and IT.

Marketing director Geoffrey Taylor said: "We have always been a progressive pioneer of fully automated manufacture, information technology and innovation, and are now probably the second biggest company in the UK for design and build."

"Our training and development schemes are also highly regarded, culminating in Cauntion being named as Nottinghamshire Company of the Year for 2008."

Wilsons provides all of Cauntion's employee benefits, including staff pensions, and Mr Taylor added: "Word of mouth suggested that Wilsons would provide excellent service to us, and we switched to them in 2006."

"Their reputation has proved well-founded and we have a very strong relationship with them. They spend a considerable amount of time at our offices to stay in touch with staff and are extremely thorough in their work."

Contact: Pat Makin at [pmakin@wilorg.com](mailto:pmakin@wilorg.com)

1970  
the year Cauntion Engineering was established;  
first year turnover totalled £25,000

£37.8m  
turnover for the year up to January 31, 2008

20,000  
tonnes of steel to leave Cauntion Engineering site last year



Leicester Tigers' new North Stand - another impressive project

Ensuring professional development and a healthy work-life balance helps Wilsons' people to be the best in their field. Here, we introduce you to a few members of the team.

**TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

Wilsions prides itself on the quality and professionalism of its staff and is committed to investing in training and support across all levels of the business. Congratulations go to a number of staff for their recent exam successes, as they continue on the road to completing their professional qualifications:

*General Insurance*

Craig Martin, Daniel Torr and Tom Green studying for their Certificate in CII; Stuart McNeil studying for his Diploma in CII; Steve Smith studying for his Advanced level in CII.

*Financial Services*

Sarah Smith, Catherine Waterfield and Justyna Nieszczerzewska studying for their Certificate in Financial Planning; Debbie Wallace studying for her Diploma in Financial Planning; Anna Sinelnikova, Pat Makin, Richard Dilley, Sally Stephenson, Natasha Duncan, Angela Booth and Allister Black studying for their Chartered Financial Planning Certificate.

**New faces at Wilson House**



Bryan Elliott      Mark Wilson      Simon Hellier      Leah Bradley      Paul Rodgers

**BRYAN ELLIOTT** has joined Wilsons' Private Client team as an account executive, where he specialises in high-value household insurance.

Currently vice-president of the Nottingham Insurance Institute, Bryan has 40 years' experience in the industry, and has managed large regional offices for several major insurance companies.

He said: "I'm delighted to be part of Wilsons, and I'm especially looking forward to the stimulus of advising private clients amid the challenges of the credit crunch."

A new account executive in Wilsons' general insurance team, **MARK WILSON** leads the company's work in the restaurant sector as well as providing technical insurance advice for a wider range of clients.

He said: "I'm very pleased to be part of the team at Wilsons. It is an ambitious

and forward-looking firm and I am looking forward to contributing to its ongoing growth."

A non-executive director with a wealth of consultancy experience, **SIMON HELLIER** will be supporting the Wilsons board to guide the strategic direction of the financial services business.

As owner and managing director of his own consultancy practice, Simon will help with staff recruitment and relationships with product providers, as well as assisting with forging long-term relationships with new clients.

He said: "Working with Wilsons allows me to draw on my skill-set and knowledge of the industry. I look forward to helping the business plan for the legislative issues due for immediate action in these difficult economic times."

Wilson's most recent appointment has

joined as marketing manager and is responsible for all marketing communications and promotion of the company brand.

**LEAH BRADLEY** is an experienced 'marketeer' with a sound knowledge of the local business market and will assist in developing a marketing plan that will help strengthen the profile of the business even further.

She said: "I'm delighted to have joined such a well-established company, and am looking forward to being part of its continued success."

An experienced financial adviser, **PAUL RODGERS** is an employee benefit consultant for Wilsons.

With 13 years of industry experience, he specialises in personal and corporate financial planning and relationship management, and is also a qualified occupational pension transfer specialist.



**Taken in their stride**

'It's a marathon not a sprint' was taken as gospel by two Wilsons' employees after they helped the company win the Shape Up Notts Workplace Challenge in November.

Wilsions cruised to the overall title, and the £2,500 prize, after 59 of its workforce monitored their daily exercise over a six-month period to beat 74 other Nottinghamshire businesses.

And hoping for a similar 'long haul' victory are trainee para-planner Natasha Duncan and major client broker Patrick Fitzgerald, who are both running marathons later this year.

Natasha (pictured) was selected to represent Shape Up Notts alongside a six-strong Evening Post team in September's Robin Hood Marathon, while Patrick will be testing himself over the 26-mile duration in London this April.

Said 26-year-old Natasha: "I've never attempted anything near that kind of distance before, so I'm a bit apprehensive as to how I will cope. But I'm excited about the challenge all the same."

"I walk everyday from West Bridgford to the City Centre, which is about two and a half miles, I do circuit training once a week and go for the odd run, so I should have some basic fitness already. It's just a question of building up the distance."

Patrick, who has been with Wilsons for six years, is currently undergoing a similar gruelling schedule, running 40 to 50 miles a week to build up his stamina.

He said: "I'm stepping up my training now and it's hard work, but it will all be worth it if I can sneak under the three hour mark on the actual day."

Another fitness fanatic in the Wilsons ranks is Jo Tipper, who will be taking part in the Great Notts Bike Ride for charity this year.

**YOUNG ACHIEVERS**  
**A worthy winner**

Wilsions staff showed they were the cream of the crop in 2008 by securing three nominations in the Nottingham Insurance Institute 'Young Achiever of the Year' Award.

Craig Martin (right) and Daniel Torr (left) were put forward, but it was Catherine Waterfield who took home the accolade... and £500. The 20-year-old was selected for the prestigious award in recognition of her hard work and outstanding achievement at Wilsons since joining in September 2007.

Said Catherine: "I was shocked to be nominated but chuffed to bits when I discovered I had won. It's nice to know that my work is being noticed."

Catherine plans to use the prize money to part-fund a marine trip to Italy to complete her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.



# From survival through to success



A SERIES OF FOUR FREE LUNCHTIME SEMINARS PROVIDING ADVICE & SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS OWNERS, DIRECTORS AND KEY ADVISERS

“...banking system needs profound change.”

The Times

Running a business can be lonely, frustrating and worrying - and never more so than in the current economic crisis. The unique nature of these economic conditions means that many business owners are without the relevant knowledge and experience to draw on for their next actions.

“Monetary union has left half of Europe trapped in recession.”

Daily Telegraph

The Wilson Organisation has been working with leading financial sector professionals, including corporate financiers, investment specialists, pension technicians, accountants and lawyers, and is now able to bring you Survival to Success; a targeted response to the issues faced by businesses in today's economic climate.

“From the ruins of the credit crunch, a new financial order will emerge.”

Financial Times

Wilson's will provide you with support, guidance and innovative solutions over the series of four free events. Each Survival to Success seminar will also include an 'open forum' session, where you can ask the specialists about any unresolved issues you may have and share the experiences of other business people in our community.