

# 2019/20 imREVIEW

**A NEW ERA**  
The Gate opens  
new chapter for IM

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**IM PROPERTIES**  
Haseley Manor faithfully  
restored to reveal stunning  
living in Warwick

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**SUBARU**  
Orders surge for hybrid  
electric models

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# INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW E-BOXER RANGE.



## DISCOVER HYBRID, THE SUBARU WAY.

The all-new e-BOXER self-charging hybrid range is a continuation of Subaru's commitment to being Better Where it Matters. You can expect the same superior safety, go anywhere capability, and rugged reliability that our SUVs are renowned for; with the added benefits of battery based power. And all without the need to plug in to recharge. We've merged Subaru's core DNA with hybrid technology, so you have the best of both worlds.

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**(BETTER where it MATTERS)**

**5 YEAR**  
OR 100,000 MILES  
WARRANTY†

**8 YEAR**  
E-BOXER BATTERY<sup>†</sup>  
WARRANTY\*



SUBARU e-BOXER RANGE fuel economy (WLTP) and CO<sub>2</sub> results (NEDC Correlated): Combined 34.7 – 35.7mpg, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 149-154g/km. Fuel consumption figures are determined according to the WLTP test cycle. Mpg figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes & may not reflect real driving results. CO<sub>2</sub> figure shown is based on the outgoing NEDC test cycle & will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. Only compare fuel consumption & CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical standard. Fuel consumption achieved in real life conditions & CO<sub>2</sub> produced depends on a number of factors including accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles & vehicle load.

† The service intervals for the Subaru e-BOXER range are every 12 months / 12,000 miles, whichever comes sooner. The Subaru e-BOXER range is covered by a 5 Year / 100,000 miles (whichever is sooner) Limited Warranty. This comprises of a standard 3 Year / 60,000 miles (whichever is sooner) Manufacturer's Warranty (bumper to bumper) and an Extended Warranty that applies to the powertrain only, provided by the importer, to complete the 5 Year / 100,000 miles (whichever is sooner) Limited Warranty. \*For added reassurance the traction battery (Lithium-ion) is covered by an 8 year / 100,000 mile Warranty (whichever is sooner). All vehicle bodywork is covered by a 12 Year Anti-Corrosion Warranty and paintwork is covered by a 3 Year / 60,000 miles (whichever is sooner) Warranty. Added reassurance is provided by a comprehensive 3 Year Recovery and Assistance Programme valid in the UK and Europe only. For general terms and conditions visit [SUBARU.co.uk](http://SUBARU.co.uk). Vehicles shown are an XV 2.0i e-BOXER SE Premium Lineartronic, OTR price of £30,995.00 and a Forester 2.0i e-BOXER XE Premium Lineartronic, OTR price of £36,995.00. OTR price incl. VAT, delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee plus optional special paint finish at £550. Prices correct at time of going to print.

SUBARU  
UK

*Subaru's first self-charging hybrids launched in the UK at the end of 2019. The introduction of hybrid technology – and specifically the all-new Forester – marked one of the biggest news stories we've had in recent years and represents a huge opportunity for Subaru UK and its dealer network. Our full marketing campaign for the all-new Forester e-BOXER starts early in the New Year on TV, radio and digital channels. It's time for the UK to discover hybrid – the Subaru way!*

## IM REVIEW 2019/20 INTRODUCTION

I've heard it said that when the owner becomes a philanthropist or they build a new HQ, then you should sell the shares. This year, both situations would be true of IM Group!

Despite the maxim, if IM's shares were traded publicly (which they are not) and I was a stockbroker, I would not issue that advice. Over the last few years we have talked in this magazine about our new HQ and the fact that our old one has been displaced by the HS2 project meaning the choice to build The Gate was forced upon us. IM is a family business – in more ways than just its ownership – and family values have always been at the heart of what we do and how we do it. Exactly what this new building would look and feel like and how it would operate were the subject of a lot of careful thought. It became an opportunity to think about where the company had arrived at and what is important for us to succeed in the future. An opportunity to make those family values count and put them at the centre of what the company will be in the next phase of its history.

This year we have given a lot of space in the IM Review to talking about The Gate and the numerous stories behind its inception and what it really means to us. I make no apologies for that. The Gate is a statement of our confidence in the future and of our intent regarding how we value our staff, what they do and our ability to attract new people into the life of IM.

It became clear to us as the move date drew near that the time was right to restate the values of the group. These were not new values but ones that would be familiar to those 40 or so people who started the business in 1976. The significance of these 'restated' values, in part, was to remind us of why our family and many, if not all of our staff, want to be in business. Success and performance is vitally important but there has always been a desire for our business to be about something greater than ourselves. When considering our values and articulating what IM is about, we realised this notion of 'giving something back' was hard-wired into IM's psyche. It turns out it's not just the owner who is a philanthropist!

You may feel that this has nothing to do with business but I would argue very differently. By focusing on something bigger than ourselves and introducing an additional motivation to doing well, we begin to live out our values both inside and outside of the business better. This new motivation gives us a feeling of togetherness (one of our values) and instead of working for better profit we can simply work to be better. Great companies tend to be profitable but the reverse is not always true. This year, 2019, we have taken another step to making sure we earn our profits by being better. Our new HQ is a small part of that but our values are right at the centre of it.

Andrew Edmiston  
Managing Director – IM Group



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*To the  
future* AND  
BEYOND

NEW HQ

WOW!

YOU JUST CAN'T HELP TO BE  
IMPRESSED WITH IM GROUP'S  
NEW GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS.





But that initial reaction to the spectacular £30 million flagship building does not stop at the entrance. Walk in and the Wow factor just keeps on coming and ultra-modern beauty keeps hitting you in waves as you walk around the building. The attention to detail is outstanding. The sense of space, grandeur and daring design flows throughout the building on every floor culminating on the top floor with its restaurant and chill and play areas. Yet the fantastic, often combined with quirky characteristics of the building, does not convey the clinical, cold feeling that many modernistic architectural designs leave you with. Quite the opposite. It's an inviting atmosphere and that's the hidden secret of the new HQ named The Gate. Impressive, outstanding, and awe inspiring as the building may be, the bricks and mortar – or should that be glass and steel – is only the physical shell. What IM has created is so much more than an edifice office. The whole philosophy behind, and integrated within the building, is a radical approach to lifestyle working. There is not a single management office in the entire building – no traditional cellular offices with individual names on doors. Instead the design is open space that brings alive the ethos of transparency. There are break-out 'pods' where people can work intensively on projects or meet to discuss topics with colleagues. But the 'pods' can also be used for chill areas and for socialising at any time during the day.

Staff are free to head to the upper floor to relax, chat, have a coffee or even play table tennis, pool, table football or go to the well-equipped gym at any time during what would conventionally be termed 'the working day.' At work people can either sit or stand as the height of the desks are can be raised or lowered to whatever level they find comfortable. As long as people do the work on time and to the expected high standards, it's largely up to them how they divide their day at the office. So it boils down to a matter of trust – and that is at the heart of IM's values. IM's values largely set the company apart from many of its peers. While many companies have high-minded 'Mission Statements' and the like, the IM Group has a set of values that form the bedrock of the business. The company lives up to these values and it expects everyone to do the same. During a gala event to mark the official opening of The Gate, 150 key business contacts and consultants were invited to see the results of the company's rapid growth over the years. And they certainly seemed highly impressed with both the building and the IM Group business. The global Chairman of Subaru, Mr Yasuyuki Yoshinaga flew more than 5,800 miles from Japan to the UK specifically for the event. Andrew Edmiston, IM Group's Managing Director, said: "This was a great honour for us. Mr Yoshinaga was particularly impressed that we have taken the decision not to have individual offices, even for the most senior staff, and said this was a great reflection on the ethos of our business."



In his speech, Andy Street said: "This is an incredibly impressive building in a beautiful parkland setting which will, I'm sure, make it a great, enjoyable place to work. "The IM Group is a thriving West Midlands business and I am delighted that you have decided to continue to grow here. This is a clear vote of confidence in how ambitious and business-friendly our region is. "IM Properties, in particular, has been built with adventure and passion and created a new generation of business parks, houses and apartments and revitalised shopping centres and communities throughout the West Midlands." He added: "It's not just the new buildings and construction jobs that the IM Group should be applauded for, but the long-term jobs and prosperity that they have brought, and continue to bring, to our region. "Lord Edmiston, Andrew and all the staff at the IM Group can be proud of the role they have played in helping to bring thousands of jobs to the West Midlands region. "I wish the company all the very best with this outstanding new headquarters. Long may the IM Group prosper and continue its excellent work from which so many families and firms in the West Midlands benefit."





Mr. Haruyasu Tanishige, President of Isuzu Motors Co., (Thailand) Limited, was among a party of senior Isuzu executives who also flew half way across the world to attend the function.

British Home Secretary, Priti Patel, MP, the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and Solihull MP, Julian Knight, were among the distinguished guests who toured the building during the event (pictured bottom left page 8).

Andrew Edmiston, said: “The new building reflects all the constituent parts of our business. We designed and now have a truly fantastic place to work.

“It encapsulates what we are about with people coming together as a business, interacting together in teamwork, friendship and camaraderie. For me that will always be one of the defining things about what makes a great company.

“We wanted The Gate to be a building with great atmosphere where people could enjoy their working day and feel that the company is investing in them.

“The message is: ‘We have given you the tools and we are championing you. So go out and do something brilliant’.”

“WE WANTED THE GATE TO BE A BUILDING WITH GREAT ATMOSPHERE WHERE PEOPLE COULD ENJOY THEIR WORKING DAY AND FEEL THAT THE COMPANY IS INVESTING IN THEM.

“THE MESSAGE IS: ‘WE HAVE GIVEN YOU THE TOOLS AND WE ARE CHAMPIONING YOU. SO GO OUT AND DO SOMETHING BRILLIANT’.”





# DREAM TO REALITY

**IM GROUP'S NEW GLOBAL HQ**  
IMAGINE BEING ASKED TO CREATE THE MOST  
SPECTACULAR STATE-OF-THE-ART OFFICE  
CAMPUS IN BRITAIN. IT'S A DREAM JOB FOR  
ANYONE IN THE PROPERTY BUSINESS.

NEW HQ



**TIM WOOLDRIDGE**  
IM PROPERTIES MANAGING DIRECTOR



**MAJELLA LYNCH**  
PROJECT DIRECTOR



**JASON JASPER**  
PROJECT DIRECTOR

Imagine being tasked to create a market leading, state-of-the-art office campus in Britain. It's a dream job for anyone in property development

Now factor in that you have two years to go from a clean sheet of paper to delivering a fully-functioning set of offices, overcoming numerous challenges on the way. Some might say that sounds more like a nightmare!

But IM Properties has never shied away from challenges. So the team that were to deliver the new company headquarters and associated offices turned challenge into opportunity – and true to form they delivered.

IM Properties project directors, Jason Jasper and Majella Lynch, headed the huge task, knowing that they would be under the spotlight for a full two years. Literally everyone at the IM Group would have to live with the consequences if they got it wrong. So no pressure!

Jason said: "The brief was to create a blend of the quality of a bank and the creativity of an ad agency, but the next step was to apply science to that. This building was going to be our new HQ for the next 30- 40 years.

"This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase our credentials as one of the region's leading property developers. We knew that

quality, sustainability, wellbeing and obviously, profitability were high on the agenda."

And as Majella explained, they didn't even have a design brief to begin with so before she and Jason could even start planning the new HQ, they had to fully understand what each division of the business needed for their new home.

So the race against time to deliver what would normally take at least three years to complete was underway, the countdown had begun.

As IM Properties Managing Director, Tim Wooldridge, emphasised: "We were on site building a building which hadn't been designed from start to finish - because we just didn't have time for that.

"We hadn't got time to plot absolutely everything out in front of us and say right that's done and everything is signed off. Because of the time constraints we had no alternative."

Just the build time alone on a project of this size would normally take 18-months to complete even if everything ran like clockwork.

Majella said: "We had to really drill into the functionality of the individual businesses in the IM Group. We also had to think about the headcount forecast and to consider the IM Academy and the apprenticeship scheme as well."



WHILE AS MANY AS 300 PEOPLE WORKED ON THE SITE, JASON AND MAJELLA HAD TO CONSTANTLY WATCH THE CONCERTINAED TIME PLAN TO ENSURE THAT THEY COULD DELIVER THE PROJECT ON TIME AND ON BUDGET.

The new HQ surpasses all existing best practise standards for offices. Jason explained just a couple of factors. “The British Council for Offices has a 12 litres of fresh air per-person per-second standard. But we are pumping 14 litres per-person per-second and we have increased the natural light to the building by up to 30 %, reducing the need for artificial lighting.”

Solar panels on both the HQ and Christian Vision building provide 10-15% of electricity requirement and the use of energy is constantly managed and adjusted. Sustainability was at the heart of the planning for the new campus – adding another complexity. But the new building was designed to be future-proofed for new technology.

Jason said: “It was a journey of blood, sweat and tears and right from the start we were up against it. We had just two and a half years to find a site, formulate our requirements, obtain planning permission and then design, build and fit out our new HQ and of course relocate the entire business.”

Majella explained some of the constraints that they faced long before the first brick was laid on the new HQ. She said: “The pressure was on from the start.

“Some of the constraints that could have put the programme at risk had to be managed. These ranged from a local-area power upgrade and site-wide ground conditions that resulted in all the buildings being piled to bio-diversity, offsetting and ecological requirements.”

Inclement weather played its part as did power diversions and underground oil pipes. The feature internal sloping concrete walls had to be poured in-situ in July 2018 when temperatures soared to 29C degrees (84F) – not ideal conditions for such demanding work!

While as many as 300 people worked on the site, Jason and Majella had to constantly watch the concertinaed time plan to ensure that they could deliver the project on time and on budget. They did this by reviewing progress on a daily basis.

With part of the campus being within the Green Belt very stringent restrictions were imposed. The Training Academy building at the rear of the campus site had to be partly subterranean and completed with a sedum roof.

A very comprehensive flood plan had to be made from scratch – again, another huge challenge and part of the overall plan had to be referred to the Minister of State for the Environment because of the sensitivity of the site. But the IM team was ahead of the game and had planned all the landscaping from the very start. When staff moved to The Gate the site looked fully mature as if it had been that way for ever.

When the move took place, time was so tight that instead of a phased move the whole IM Group business – along with Christian Vision staff – transferred to the new campus over one weekend.

The slate ‘Welcome’ sign and generators were the only materials from Coleshill which found

their way to The Gate and reinforced the beginning of a new era for IM.

Remarkably the whole move was completed on time and only minor snagging issues remained while business continued without interruption. Even more incredible, given the sheer scale of the project, the finished buildings were almost a carbon copy of the first computer generated images.

No compromises were made in delivering the huge project and now it looks, quite rightly, as if the campus will receive a number of design awards for outstanding architecture.

Although minor changes had to be made during the build from the concept plan, every single one of the main features was retained – even though many added to the complexity. These included the huge “floating” cantilevered staircase, shuttered internal concrete walls, monolithic terrazzo floors – these are beautifully finished, hard wearing concrete composite floors that have to be carefully hand finished. Other feature highlights are one of the largest AV screens of its kind in Europe and striking external Core-Ten steel artwork, which naturally weathers to a warm, burnt orange colour.

But Jason and Majella are adamant that, given all the challenges, they would not have changed any aspect of the campus if they had to start again. And would they have compromised on the plan? “No – we didn’t compromise on quality or design because of time constraints – why should we?” came the instant response.

NO COMPROMISES WERE MADE IN DELIVERING THE HUGE PROJECT AND NOW IT LOOKS, QUITE RIGHTLY, AS IF THE CAMPUS WILL RECEIVE A NUMBER OF DESIGN AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ARCHITECTURE.







# HOME GROUND FOR BAM



DAVID HARTLEY

WHEN CONSTRUCTION FIRM BAM STARTED WORK ON IM GROUP'S NEW HEADQUARTERS IN MANY WAYS IT WAS LIKE A HOME COMING.



BAM had previously owned Fore Business Park, the location for IM's new HQ and in 2014 it sold the entire 17-acre country park location to IM Properties in a deal worth in excess of £21 million.

The award-winning firm won the contract to build the new IM Group HQ and knew that the parkland setting, which is an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), was one of the key reasons IM had selected the site. It reflected the countryside setting of the former HQ in Coleshill. But Fore Park had the advantage of being much closer to the Midlands motorway network and local amenities.

David Hartley, BAM Construction UK's project manager for the IM offices, said: "We took an 'ecology first' approach to construction but we also knew this was to be a very high specification development. During the tender discussions IM gave us a sense of their ambition, which was for a very impressive structure both externally and internally.

"We were appointed to deliver the shell and core project initially and started work in January 2018. We knew the whole process associated with the new HQ was going to be very tight for all parties involved in order to meet the deadline IM faced in vacating its Coleshill office because of HS2.

"But this is where our professional approach and reliable supply chain come to the fore. We worked

at full throttle on site while the fit out was still being tendered for.

"It was important there was no disconnect between the two processes and I headed up both teams to ensure this was the case and that any decisions in either construction or in the fit out design process worked seamlessly."

David said that BAM was constantly aware of the high standards demanded by IM alongside the need to build and fit out the building at speed.

He explained: "This meant that careful consideration of all supply chain members was necessary and we had to fully integrate all the different trades on site throughout the build.

"Working at such a speed was a requirement for everyone on the project and inevitably there were changes on the way. We had around 150 significant changes to incorporate in the build element alone while also incorporating a fit out scheme into a live project.

"It was extremely demanding but also massively rewarding and has delivered a project I am very proud to be associated with."

BAM were on site at The Gate for just 78 weeks – an amazingly short time for such a complex project.

IM's new HQ is bespoke in almost every aspect; from the terrazzo flooring, to the in-situ cast walls,

the furniture and even the lighting solutions.

David said: "This meant that selection of our supply chain was paramount. They needed the ability to deliver bespoke installations to high quality whilst also understanding IM's vision and expectations.

"Getting the correct supply chain to the table was the first step, delivering the quality from every aspect and meshing the various trades was where BAM's design team and site management stepped up.

"The design process needed copious amounts of samples to be produced to ensure the junctions between materials coordinated and worked with one another. It was vital the site team understand the materials they had to install."

David highlighted just one example. He said "The raking board finish to the in-situ concrete core walls – this was a true definition of something bespoke. We had to ensure the specific colour of concrete was being achieved; the viscosity of the concrete mix had to be suitable to take the impression of the timber patternation; the level of treatment and sandblasting of the timber to give the appropriate grain and texture to the concrete and the releasing agent used to ensure the wood releases without staining the concrete finish."

The attention to detail was staggering.

"IT WAS EXTREMELY DEMANDING BUT ALSO MASSIVELY REWARDING AND HAS DELIVERED A PROJECT I AM VERY PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH."



The angle of the interior walls and their finish in The Gate gave another challenge. David said: "They had to achieve the desired 'compression' of the space and then the 'release' into the open atria at either end of the core.

"Multiple samples of the finish were needed to give IM a choice of options through the design and delivery process, and that was just one element of the project – this was needed for every item, which is not normal for a project with such tight delivery timescales. But it was a necessary process to ensure that IM's vision was delivered without compromises."

BAM worked with the Environmental Agency to put measures in place to protect an existing badger sett, a large area of sedge grass and trees with preservation orders at The Fore site.

David said: "We planned specific working methods to ensure waterways were protected and planted semi-mature trees throughout the site. This year is the 150th anniversary of our parent company, the Royal BAM Group, and we have planted 150,000 trees throughout the world, including 5,500 in the Midlands, to celebrate this."

The UK arm of BAM can be traced back to 1874 and the company has built schools, universities, offices, hospitals and huge infrastructure projects

across the country.

It became part of the Dutch-based Royal BAM Group in 2008. It has a history going back even further to 1869, starting as a carpentry workshop and is now one of the largest construction companies in Europe.

Phil Eaves, Employment and Skills coordinator for BAM Construction Midlands, has worked with IM Properties to arrange a number of on-site visits for schools, colleges and universities in the Birmingham and Coventry area.

He said: "It was really great to do this at the new IM Group building and it followed on from similar community work we had done when BAM worked at the Grace Academy in Coventry.

"We were able to use the site during World Environment Day to record the many species found in the grounds at Fore Park with pupils from Haslucks Green Junior School and we've been to see sixth form students in Solihull, working alongside Yvonne Wykes at Christian Vision."

BAM's own Midlands' construction business has retained its office within Fore Park and buildings BAM built prior to the sale to IM attracted a series of high-quality tenancies, including Goodrich, Arcelor Mittal and E-tech.



DAVID KRAMER  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR



# SO MUCH MORE THAN AN OFFICE

*Interior workplace design specialists Squaredot looked at IM's old HQ before taking on one of the most exciting projects it had ever been involved with.*

The award-winning company was handed a 'compelling and challenging brief' for The Gate which had to embrace a whole new attitude towards work.

Squaredot's Creative Director, David Kramer, said: "Initially we were commissioned in December, 2016 to undertake an in-depth utilisation study and detailed analysis of the IM Group and its existing office in Coleshill.

"Our study produced evidence and findings which helped to inform the future spatial requirements of the new HQ, enabling the group to consider and evaluate possible new sites for development."

David explained: "The new environment needed to be planned along with the specific functional requirements and facilities to support and promote working more effectively and efficiently in the future. Through challenging existing protocols, we were able to develop specific settings

and facilities that would encourage collaboration, through a more flexible approach in working together.

"One of our tasks was to future proof the new HQ for the next 30 years within an office which would become an iconic landmark for the region, rivalling any offices previously seen outside of the capital."

Squaredot's team spent time studying how staff worked. David said: "We needed to gain a clear understanding of how the different businesses operated and what future requirements would be required to support the various business teams, functions, facilities and of course all the staff going forward.

"At a meeting with Andrew Edmiston he really focused our thoughts when he said: 'This company is all about its people. We need the best environment and facilities that suit the business and support the staff. It needs to be both flexible and stimulating'

and that became our mantra for the project."

Squaredot, based in Stratford-Upon-Avon, developed an innovative design based on creating an experience for staff and visitor alike. David said: "We wanted to emulate the drama of the building and continue the journey from outside to inside.

"Just as the IM Group campus is revealed on the approach driveway, our intention was for different aspects of the interior to be revealed as you journeyed through the buildings. Our aim was to challenge the traditional notion of office planning and create an open environment with changing landscapes and points of interest that encourage fluidity, visibility, movement and connections on all levels.

"With wellbeing at the heart of this project our layouts offered a completely flexible and collaborative approach to working that would inspire and stimulate the working culture."





He added: “What we call ‘neighbourhoods’ within the building provide a diverse range of work settings reflecting the different work styles and activities of the staff. This in turn encourages movement and communication, creating a sense of community and a place where people enjoy spending their day.”

Clusters of sit-and-stand desks were planned throughout the HQ with numerous types and styles of collaborative working zones to support the varying team requirements.

A variety of meeting and break out spaces were designed to enable and encourage staff to choose how and where to work, meet and socialise – a radical move away from a traditional office.

David added: “Work styles were challenged at all business levels with the entire executive team moving away from cellular offices into an area that would be open and approachable while remaining a professional environment to host global clients.”

He recalls that gaining approval for the executive area was one of many pinch points. “This was fairly exhausting, and we had to produce and present well over 30 options!”

The entire top floor of The Gate is given over to staff wellbeing with amenities including a restaurant, gym, areas to play pool and table football or watch major sporting events on a big screen while relaxing on the bespoke seating feature affectionately named by IM staff as ‘The Embankment’.

Four distinct roof terraces allow a variety of outdoor functions and activities including a three-hole putting green, herb garden and quiet tranquil space. With a number of areas to dine and meet in, both in

the restaurant and on the main terrace, the floor seamlessly merges the outside with inside and is designed to encourage use throughout the whole day to work, rest or play.

David explained a further part of the design brief. He said: “IM wanted a ‘quiet communication of values through creative use of innovative materials’. So, we put together a scheme that characterised the different businesses and complemented the distinctive base build materials. Core-Ten concrete and glass were the principal materials for the building, forming its distinctive character and a backdrop for our unique interior and exciting furniture scheme incorporating myriad finishes and fabrics.

“We think our scheme cleverly compliments the outside and plays with light and shade, angles, views, textures and colours. Meeting rooms are accentuated with vivid coloured glass while timber shuttered concrete walls create dark transition spaces through the buildings, providing views through to the light and airy colourful spaces and on to the external backdrop of trees beyond. It was a really exciting aspect of the design.”

David said IM managers embraced the new technology and ideas put forward by Squaredot. “The whole campus incorporates the latest in smart technologies and AV systems, including Wi-Fi enabled external terraces, wireless connectivity throughout all the internal and external areas, switchable smart glass and the

dramatic 7 x 6 metre semi-translucent LED pixel video wall which dominates the double height space of the reception and showroom area of The Gate.

“It’s clearly evident that IM Group have invested significantly in the new campus and the team at Squaredot are proud to have been part of a project that has not only created sustainable and efficient buildings, but has also given them a working environment that will enrich the lives of everyone working there, as well as helping to attract and retain talent in the future.”

Time was extremely tight on the project. David said: “Yes, the timescales were challenging for the entire team, especially as the brief had to be developed in great detail from the onset, prior to conceptualising the building scale and overall master plan.

“Squaredot is immensely proud of what we achieved. It wasn’t plain sailing at all and we worked hard on pushing the design in every way possible and, due to the ingenuity throughout, there were many challenges.

“But the time spent convincing the team that our solutions and ideas were appropriate hopefully speak for themselves in the finished results!”

He went on: “For Squaredot this was one of the most challenging and complex projects we have ever worked on. It’s a distinctly different one-off project that stands alone and we feel fortunate to have worked on and added value to it.”

*“I think the greatest achievement, looking back at the project now that it’s fully operational, is how it’s affected those working there; the change in the staff and their behaviour is remarkable. The smiles and sense of pride throughout is really uplifting, there is a real feeling of unity and community and a great sense of home for all in IM.”*



# Art

## NOT JUST FOR ART'S SAKE

ART CAN BE FLIPPANT, INTENSE, PASSIONATE OR SIMPLY CURIOUS BUT IT'S USUALLY MIND PROVOKING AND CAN CONVEY MEANINGS AND QUESTIONS OFTEN EVEN BETTER THAN WORDS, SAYS DOUG WALLACE.

So if the phrase 'Art for art's sake' reminds you of the hit single from 1976 by British rock group 10cc, or gets you thinking along the lines of the French philosophical slogan "l'art pour l'art" from which it's said to be derived, you are already beginning to become involved.

Art, but in particular paintings, drawings and the like, can stop you in your tracks and make you think. And that's the very point of the art installations at the IM Group's new headquarters at The Gate – it's not just art for art's sake.

Sit for a moment beneath the towering 3D work by Adrian Sykes called 'It all begins with Trust' that dominates the reception area. It's clever on so many fronts.



**“THESE VALUES ARE NOT REALLY NEW, INSTEAD THEY ARE A RECOGNITION OF THE CORNERSTONES UPON WHICH THE GROUP HAS BEEN BUILT.”**

As the IM Group Chairman Lord Edmiston observes, the theme is about trust. Trust in colleagues to play their part and everyone succeeds. He said: “Trust underpins everything we do and the four values of the IM Group.”

Artist Adrian Sykes explained: “With most of my works I try to express a feeling of joy and happiness. I like to add humour and quirkiness along with bright colours which I hope give the paintings a lightness and optimism. I aim to capture a sense of ‘hopefulness and peace’ but sometimes enjoy adding slightly unnerving or even comic elements.

“Whilst a house alone on a lake might be someone’s dream home or sanctuary, its setting is one of isolation and impracticality requiring extreme effort to reach or escape from. I use distorted scale to present visual challenges such as high walls, tiny windows, elongated ladders, towering cliffs, tall trees and long winding paths to add drama to the moment.

“These elements combined are equally happy and playful as they are laced with challenge, arduous travelling, restriction and loneliness. Some may be a more likely setting for a dark fairy tale than one that ends happily ever after, but what I try to achieve is giving the viewer pleasure in making their own interpretation of the image before them.”

Walk up the stairs and ‘It all begins with Trust’ goes with you. Go on to the second floor and there is a second and totally difference piece of artwork which dominates the entire back wall of the ‘rest and play’ area.

Vic Lee uses his huge mural to create talking points. His work is full of personal anecdotes with which some people will be very familiar and will bring a smile to many faces. Other, newer members of staff may have no idea what many of the snapshots of the different aspects of the company history allude to – but that should be thought provoking enough to maybe make them ask colleagues and delve into the history. One of the themes that will emerge builds on the ‘togetherness’ of the company.

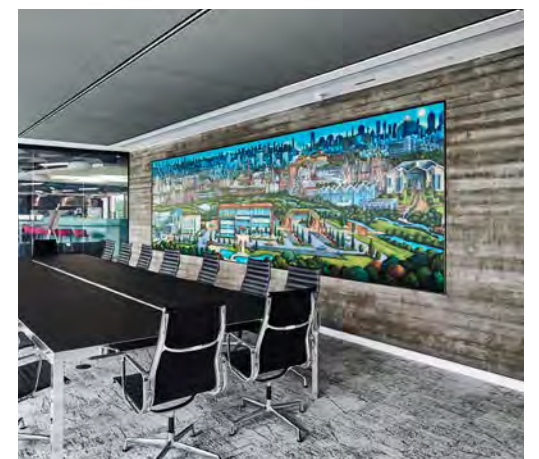
In fact each of the company’s four core values is highlighted in columns within the total mural.

Vic says: “I love to see how the space works with people, furniture and movement within the area and how people interact with the mural. There is a connectivity that develops between the art and the viewer.”

Again it’s a case of the more you stop and look, the more interest and thoughts the mural stirs.

Andrew Edmiston sums up his views on how artwork in The Gate reflects on the company and its values. He said: “IM has always been blessed with wonderful people working together as an integrated team, producing extraordinary results.

“These values are not really new, instead they are a recognition of the cornerstones upon which the Group has been built. Let us embrace them, have pride in our past achievements and look forward in anticipation of an even more successful future, full of Integrity, Commitment, Respect and Togetherness.”





# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A *story*

ADRIAN SYKES FREELY ADMITS THAT HIS ARTWORK IN THE NEW IM GROUP HEADQUARTERS REPRESENT THE MOST CHALLENGING COMMISSIONS HE HAS EVER TAKEN ON. THEY ARE ALSO THE LARGEST!

But he also says that the end results are probably his best ever. Yet even the reason he became involved in the first place was not straightforward but it went on to meld together aspects of art and advanced engineering - maybe not the most obvious of bedfellows!

Adrian explained: "Gary Hutton, IM's Executive Director, had bought two pieces of mine some years ago and I got a call from him out of the blue offering me the chance to take on the commission as well as an invitation to visit what would be the new headquarters.

"It was still a building site then but when I saw the location and heard what the company wanted to do, I immediately said yes as it was such an exciting project."

When the Bristol-based artist stood back and looked at the sheer size of the reception hall and the seven-metre wall in what was to become The Manor meeting room, it became clear that these would be the largest artworks he had ever created. But his design brief from Andrew and Gary would be even more challenging!

Adrian said: "Yes, the size of both pieces was dictated by the location within the building. I had originally suggested a painting for the foyer but it was Andrew who suggested that it should be 3D.

"I had to get my mind round that one! But it was a challenge too good to turn down. And then the brief for the foyer artwork was very specific in regard to representing the company values. I offered IM three different compositions to choose from and I was glad that they went with the figures as it was my favourite image.

"Once we had decided on the composition I made another five refined drawings/paintings until it was signed off. I then did the original master painting from which the sculpture was replicated."

Adrian added: "I was very pleased with the final composition as I felt it reflected all of the company values. It was challenging working to such a strict brief but Andrew and Gary in particular were very encouraging in allowing me to develop my own ideas once the original composition had been accepted.

"For the Manor Room painting I did five or six initial compositions before deciding on the finished



one. This was a very detailed piece which needed a lot of planning and careful balancing as there were more than 500 buildings to include!

Adrian began working on his original designs in October 2018, while work was going on building the shell of The Gate and IM staff were still working at the old company headquarters in Coleshill.

He worked at his studio to first create a painting for the piece in the reception hall, and then Adrian involved a specialist UK company called Codsteaks, which makes modelling for film and TV companies, to transform it into the 3D sculptural work.

Adrian said: "Codsteaks faithfully replicated my original painting to the five metre size it now is and the director's suite painting was painted on six panels in my studio and then installed once finished.

"This whole process took five months from start to finish for the sculpture and the Manor Room painting took a full six months. When I took the commission on I made a bit of a guesstimate as to how long things would take,

luckily I got it about right! But it was tight - I was working on the painting for a week once it had been installed in July."

Now both works are finished and seen by hundreds of people at The Gate every day, Adrian can reflect on the commissions. He said: "I knew of IM through Gary but was not then familiar with their company values.

"I did a lot of research prior to submitting my ideas as I wanted to go into meetings with Andrew and Gary with a strong sense of what the company was all about. It really helped me with tailoring my ideas towards the final compositions. Andrew and Gary were very trusting and generous in their approach and allowed me lots of freedom. I think for any artist that always gets the best results." It did, indeed, all begin with trust!

So was Adrian pleased with the outcome? "I am really pleased with both pieces of artwork. They were the most challenging pieces I have ever created in terms of size and detail and brief. The sculpture was very exciting to do and seeing

a painting of mine come to life both in terms of size and texture was thrilling.

"Lots of lessons are learned from anything that takes you out of your comfort zone."

"I love the new building. I wanted to ensure that the colour palette for the foyer sculpture would be harmonious with the interior design which I feel was achieved and I think it sits really well with the entrance. I love how the grey of the shuttered concrete acts as a frame for the Manor Room painting and I feel it sits perfectly in that environment too.

"It was a huge challenge to do these two pieces but the team that I worked with at IM, true to their values, allowed me the time and space and freedom to express myself. It was a pleasure to work for them and I hope that the artwork will be enjoyed for many years to come."





# Artist

## ALMOST IN RESIDENCE!

The award-winning graphic designer turned artist was frantically working on his piece four weeks or so ahead of the opening of the new IM headquarters building.

Vic fondly recalls: “Yes – it was fun! It was a working site with painters, ‘chippies’ and ‘sparks’ floating about. But they were a great bunch to work around. Apart from when the external site toilet got blocked!”

At his studio, an old Victorian suitcase factory, in Camberwell, south east London, Vic had been armed with rough dimensions for the installation before he visited Solihull.

*Vic Lee is used to working quietly on his own. But he rarely got the chance when he was drawing his huge mural piece which dominates one side of the top floor at The Gate.*

But when he arrived on site, Vic had a bit of a shock. He explained: “The biggest challenge was having initially been sent the plans and sketching the ideas, to actually visiting the site and seeing the enormity of the wall!

“It’s only when you stand in front of the wall and look up and side to side that I realised just how big it was, and for just me to do all in pen... That was pretty daunting. I had also only allowed nine to 10 days to do the entire piece, so I was on a tight timescale.

“I was doing it live and entirely in situ while the building work carried on around me, it made life even more interesting.”



Vic is an artist in high demand and his past commissions have included clients as diverse as Marks & Spencer, The Royal Shakespeare Company, Crabtree & Evelyn, Tate Modern and boxes and labels for limited editions of The Famous Grouse whisky.

He started work as a decorator, postman, billiard table restorer and then travelled the world as a stateroom steward aboard a luxury cruise ship before taking a degree in graphic design. He started his career as an artist eight years ago and has never looked back.

Vic, who has won numerous awards, met with Andrew Edmiston and Jason Jasper, key people behind the design of The Gate, before working on his giant mural.

Vic said: “I always research a client as best I can; this gives me the opportunity to add personality to the artwork.

“When I met Jason and Andrew on site they gave me a pile of magazines to do with the company as well as two books of history. I went through most of these and pocketed some snippets of information that I thought were relevant to the company, also talking to the guys about the history and their Christian values. I wanted to include these as they played a big part in not only Andrew’s life, but Bob’s too.

“I was given a pretty open brief. The only thing was to include given quotes that were relevant for the staff as well as the business model. But that was it. I love meeting a new client and finding out about them. It’s often best not to have any preconceived ideas of a client. I may do some minor research prior to meeting, but I find to get a true idea of a client it’s best for them to talk about themselves, I gauge the passion and excitement from that

meeting that I can then interpret into the artwork.”

Vic certainly didn’t have a problem in finding out about the passion, excitement and enthusiasm for the IM business and its new home!

So was Vic pleased with the outcome of his work?

“Yes - super pleased, there are so many aspects to it. So much to see. And you have to know the company to know the stories. It also makes for good gossip...”

And his impression of the new HQ? “Wow, loved it! So pleased to be asked to be involved in such a stunning building, and also for a company dedicated to helping others. Means a lot.

“I really appreciate working with clients that trust me. IM Group, Andrew and Jason were brilliant to let me run somewhat free on this artwork. I could add in so many details to the piece without restrictions. There was no red tape or committee to run everything past. This gives that element of fun to the piece, the illustrations you have to find, to ask what certain bits mean. I think my favourite bit is Motor Ed.... Best ask Bob about that.”

Interestingly, while a lot of people think that Vic’s mural is printed on to the wall, it was all done by hand He explained: “The inks and paints I use are all water based, no toxins or odours. My carbon footprint is so very minor, and that’s important on every project I work on.

“Though the work looks printed to some, the making of it and the material waste is probably the size of a tin of beans. Or a cup holder in a Subaru.”

You can see a time-lapse YouTube video of Vic at work by entering ‘Vic Lee’ in the search engine.





LEE REALLY IS A  
*Master Chef!*



He didn't get to the final but it was the start of a high-flying career in food which saw Lee working in exclusive villas in France and Spain for a luxury travel company. He's worked for some of the world's top gourmet foodies and is delighted to be the chef manager at IM's new headquarters.

Lee said: "I started my career in a front of house role as a bar tender, but food has always been a passion for me. Even from the early days, I used to cook and bake with my Gran. That interest stayed with me and I have always been intrigued with the kitchen environment.

"I competed in MasterChef in 2012 and that really started me on my path. Out of 20,000 applicants, I reached 13th place and was approached after the show and went on to work with famous chefs Bruno Loubet, Richard Corrigan and Claude Bosi."

Lee worked his way up the ranks from demi-chef du partie to head chef within three years and cooked for Prince Charles while working in London. Now he works for Wilson Vale, one of the country's leading catering companies, which won the contract for IM's catering against 14 competitors.

Food was on the menu at the planning stage for the new headquarters. With such a stunning building and enviable working conditions, Managing Director, Andrew Edmiston, was determined that every aspect of the business should match the highest standards - including the quality of food served in the company restaurant.



High-quality food fits in as part of the overall staff wellbeing philosophy at IM and the new caterers have won lots of compliments from their new customers at The Gate.

Every week Lee and his team of six prepare around 100kg of meat, 25kg of fish and 250kg of fruit and vegetables which go into the meals, deli-bar and sandwiches made fresh each day. Even the cakes on offer are made in the kitchens in The Bridge, the name of the restaurant.

Lee and Wilson Vale are proud that almost all of the ingredients they use are sourced locally. Andrew Wilson, a joint founder of Wilson Vale, said: "We have more than 450 different suppliers across the business, many of whom are small family-run artisan producers and growers.

"Seasonality is everything and at IM Group, we support many local suppliers. We source fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables from Worcester Produce and our meats come from farm-assured butchers, Owen Taylor in Derby."

"Our fish supplier is Kingfisher Midlands in Birmingham and comes from Marine Stewardship Council fishing sustainable grounds. We also sourced Hampton Manor gin from Hampton-in-Arden for a recent launch event."

Lee says overseeing up to 150 meals a day in the restaurant is part of the fun. He explained: "I draw

NEW HQ

CHEF LEE  
BARNETT IS  
USED TO  
WORKING  
UNDER  
PRESSURE  
AND HAS  
PERFORMED  
UNDER THE  
GLARE OF THE  
CAMERAS ON  
THE HIT TV  
PROGRAMME  
MASTERCHEF.





on my experience to make the menu as varied and interesting as possible. London is a melting pot of cultures and cuisines so I draw on that to try to cater for different palates and tastes. And I'm always reading books and looking at the media and TV for inspiration.

"When you cook for the same people every day, it takes imagination and innovation to keep customers excited by the food, satisfied and coming back for more.

"Changing the menu on a daily basis certainly isn't the norm within the contract catering sector but we like to keep our offering fresh and exciting. For example, we have lots of different theme days and concepts such as Africa Day and Korean Day when we feature authentic recipes from different culinary cultures."

Listening to feedback is critical, says Lee. "For example, when we had three soups and three toasted cheese sandwiches as a theme for the day, people loved it so much that Sarah Coughlan, [who oversees the restaurant for IM], received several requests to make it a regular feature over colder months."

All the catering equipment is state-of-the-art. Lee highlights the three combi ovens. He said: "They are programmable and we can roast meats, steam food and even prove bread in them, often simultaneously. They allow for greater quantities and act almost like an additional chef in the kitchen."

"To say that we are impressed with The Gate would be an understatement. It's as good as it

gets, and we feel very fortunate to work in such a welcoming and fantastic building. Lots of planning and attention to detail went into it and it's a great place to work.

"The views across the landscape give us a sense of being in the heart of the countryside. People make a place and the welcome we have experienced from everyone made all the difference. We have been made to feel part of the IM Group family."

Lee and Wilson Vale take corporate social responsibility seriously. They minimised the use of plastics from day one at The Gate and use glass jars for yoghurts and the like.

They also use 'ugly fruit and veg' as Andrew Wilson explained: "We purchase 'ugly' fruit and vegetables for use in soups, casseroles, pies, tartlets and other cooked dishes.

"Even if a tomato isn't perfectly shaped, we believe that if it's fresh and bursting with goodness and flavour, it shouldn't be consigned to the composter – or worse still, the bin. Last year, we purchased 7.5 tonnes of 'Category Two' vegetables across the business."

Several people at IM have said that meals in The Bridge are equal to those they have had in Michelin starred restaurants. Lee said: "I think our fine dining offer is definitely pushing in that direction and is a 1 to 2AA Rosettes standard."



# ISUZU D-MAX

# XTR

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TOWING  
CAPACITY

—OVER—  
**1.1**  
TONNE  
PAYLOAD

**164**  
PS

—OVER—  
**40**  
MPG  
COMBINED

**EURO 6**  
**NO**  
ADBLUE

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Features and specification may vary in appearance and/or availability. \*3.5 tonne towing applies to all 4x4 models. \*\*125,000 mile/5 year (whichever comes first) warranty applies to all new Isuzu D-Max models. Terms and conditions apply. Visit [isuzu.co.uk](https://www.isuzu.co.uk)

## ISUZU UK

*D-Max XTR underlines Isuzu's key move during the year to embrace customers for lifestyle-type pick-ups as well as those for its award-winning, rugged, workhorse and business models. The launch of three distinct ranges – Business, All-Purpose and Adventure, with three models in each – broadens the appeal of one of the nation's most popular pick-up trucks. The advertisement also acknowledges that Isuzu – the Pick-up Professionals – are partners of the Welsh Rugby Union with sponsorship of the Welsh national Rugby team, semi-finalists in the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan.*



# VIEWS ON LIFE AT THE GATE



## IM GROUP'S NEW HEADQUARTERS THE GATE

The Gate – and the adjacent Christian Vision building, The Rock – have been designed with the wellbeing, comfort and working environment for staff very much in mind. Keith Read invited some of those who've spent most of their working days in the buildings over the past six months to share their impressions of life following the move from IM House at Coleshill.



## PAM HARRIS CONSTRUCTION CO-ORDINATOR FOR SPITFIRE HOMES

Although IM House at Coleshill was a great building, it's completely different here. The Gate is simply off the scale. The openness, the space and the facilities make it an amazing place to work. It's a joy to come to work every day in a building like this.



## LUKE HEWITT IM MAINTENANCE OPERATIVE

The first thing you notice as you come up the drive is what an impressive building it is with the lake, fountain and the big video screen in Reception visible as you come round the corner. First impressions are of a very prestigious and welcoming building. And inside, everything is state-of-the-art with a lot of thought behind the design. For us, who look after the building, it's been a steep learning curve with all the new systems!



## MICHELLE HOOPER IM GROUP RECEPTIONIST

I love the whole ambience that the reception area in general presents. It offers a more-professional outlook to visitors arriving and the facilities we have are ideal, which is so much better for us with Reception so much busier now.



## SHARON HAMMETT OFFICE MANAGER FOR IM PROPERTIES

Even if you're feeling a bit sluggish in the morning before you get here, when you walk into the office it makes you feel happy. It's just such a great office with great surroundings and a brilliant working environment. I guess you can say that we're really spoilt!



## SEAN SMITH ISUZU USED LCV MANAGER

I really like the encouragement you get at The Gate to be mobile... With the new desks you can raise and lower, you can stand to work rather than sitting behind a desk all day. And it's quite nice to be able to get up and walk about. We have loads of small meeting areas where you can catch up with colleagues and visitors. In addition, the games room and gym are handy if you want to let off a bit of steam! Coleshill manor was lovely. But The Gate is all new, clean and in a nice area with great surroundings.



## NAVTEJ BHAKAR IM GROUP LEAD IT DEVELOPER

I love the pond at the front of the building! When you work in an office all day it's nice to be able to get outside and walk in the lovely surroundings of a country park. It's nice and relaxing. And the spacious office itself is a lovely environment. I like the adjustable desks while the facilities upstairs for lunch, games and relaxation are excellent.



## ELLIE EDMISTON CHRISTIAN VISION CORPORATE SERVICES SPECIALIST

The move to The Gate – and to The Rock for us – has been amazing especially looking at the differences between The Pavilion at Coleshill to the facilities and environment here. What we have now is a lot more catered towards what we do with spaces that allow us to work individually, in pairs or in larger groups. This is really good because we needed to be more collaborative. And there's a flexibility aspect here that's really helped the way we work. The move has been really positive.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

Sarah Coughlan

*Like so many people in IM Group companies, there's no such thing as a typical day for Sarah Coughlan, executive and HQ office manager. "Every day is different," she says. "And it's a busy and challenging role. But I'd be bored if it wasn't because I love being busy and I love being challenged."*

Like any other job it has its frustrations, but there is no doubt that, generally, it is a fun job! Being involved with organising things like the Christmas events makes sure of that! It's great to be part of those occasions."

Sarah, who is Birmingham born and bred, went straight from school to South Birmingham College, where she took secretarial and business studies. She completed her courses in 2001 and was invited to join the College administration staff having already made her mark during an earlier work-experience placement there. After several promotions to different roles within the College administration, Sarah left in 2013 to become executive assistant and clerk to the Governors at the Grace Academy Foundation. In 2017 she moved across to IM, initially as executive assistant. More recently she took on her current, wider, role of executive and HQ office manager.

"My job is to support the executive team – mainly Andrew Edmiston, Gary Hutton and Torbjörn

Lillrud. It involves managing the executives' schedules and travel arrangements, taking minutes, preparing Board papers and organising company events. An additional element is as PA to Andrew. The executive team are all very different people. So it is important that I tailor my support for them to suit each individual personality. It's certainly very interesting working with them because they each bring something different to the table. It's also very good to learn from them and they're all very good at mentoring me. If ever I have an issue I can go and talk to any of them and they will give me their advice."

On the office management side of her job, Sarah manages IM's catering contractor, the executive-office support team and the Reception team as well as driving business improvement projects. "Those have been really interesting and challenging," she adds. One of the most challenging was the storage project, which started before we moved from IM House at Coleshill. We'd been there for 10 years

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

*"We have the big advantage of being a private company and can move quickly when opportunities arise."*

and people had a lot of accumulated stuff such as papers and events props etc that they didn't necessarily need... The objective was to reduce as much as we could – ideally around 80 percent. It wasn't just a case of throwing things away, more the utilisation of new electronic filing systems. One element of the project was to write a retention policy for the company.

"Part of the storage project challenge was to make what was a potentially-difficult operation a collaborative exercise rather than just badgering people and pushing them. I admit it wasn't easy to make it exciting... However, we can look back and say that it was a successful project."

Since that project Sarah, along with Lyndsey Thomas, took the lead on the staff grand opening of The Gate in July and the launch of IM's new intranet in September. The internal computer link is designed to improve communications across the company, especially between different areas of the organisation. She also led on the development of IM Group's new website just before the move to The Gate.

Sarah describes this part of her role as 'helping to push things through in an operational way'

and 'making things happen.' I've got to know a lot of people through my new role and, hopefully, have gained their trust, developed good working relationships and, importantly, won their respect.

"It's so enjoyable working at IM. There are some great people here and, unlike some organisations that lose the friendliness and team-togetherness when they become large, here – even though it is a large organisation – we still have that friendliness and togetherness. Sarah says those virtues are particularly apparent when major events are being organised. She knows that everyone who is able to lend a hand will willingly do so. "Part of my new role is to help to out-work the Group values across the organisation. The move to the new HQ was a really appropriate time for the executive team to re-establish the company values. I think everyone who works at The Gate would agree that our new HQ is an amazing place to work. It has a real wow factor and you feel really delighted to welcome visitors to the building. The first time they visit they are inevitably blown away!"

One of the many exciting days in Sarah's life at IM was her first flight to IM Nordic in Sweden in the company aircraft. "That was one to tick off

my bucket list as I'd always wanted to fly in an executive jet!" she says. "And I can't not mention the food in our restaurant at The Gate. As a foodie, it's simply wonderful and working with the new catering team is great. They are amazing people – they're first-class. Being involved in managing that team gives you a great sense of pride. The same goes for our Reception and executive support team too. It's been very rewarding helping the teams to grow with new recruits."

When Sarah leaves work and drives to her home in the Acocks Green suburb of Birmingham, her focus switches to family. "I'm a big family girl," she says. "I have three brothers and two sisters and we are a very close-knit family. There are a lot of girls in our family and I spend a lot of time with my cousins, my sisters, my Mum and my Nan. I love being auntie to my nephews and nieces. However, I must admit that it's also nice to be able to hand them back!" Relaxation for Sarah usually involves cooking, going to the gym or, best of all, heading to the shops, beauty parlour or spa. "I'm a shopaholic, a big clothes buyer and I really love a beauty treatment or spa day."



# NEW OFFICES *for* IM'S BEIJING OPERATIONS

JUST A FEW MONTHS BEFORE IM GROUP MOVED TO ITS NEW HQ AT THE GATE IN SOLIHULL, THE 50-STRONG TEAM IN ITS BEIJING OFFICE MOVED TO A BRAND-NEW SIX-STOREY BUILDING IN THE PRESTIGIOUS TONGZHOU AREA OF THE CITY.

It was an important move that has given the Chinese operations room to expand as it wins new business in one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Martin Dalton, Director of Business Development for IM, is full of praise for the staff in China who undertook the move themselves in just four days.

"We'd decided to move offices in the middle of 2018," he explains. "It represents a big investment for the company and our second acquisition of property in China. What we bought was basically a shell in a private gated estate in an up-and-coming location. The Beijing City Government is also moving to that area, which is close to the new Beijing International Airport, which recently opened and is said to be the largest airport in the world. Having acquired the building we then hired an Australian company to fit it out. They did an extremely good job creating modern, open-plan offices. Initially we've occupied four of the six floors but have plans to expand into the other two in the near future."



"We ceased working in the old office for three days at the end of March, moved into Tongzhou and resumed business there on 1st April. So we were up and running within four days having done the move ourselves. The team did a great job."

Martin says the new offices offer a much better working environment and more meeting rooms, which are more effective in that they have full IT facilities similar to those at The Gate. The office break-out areas have all got IT screens and the building's IT facilities are far better than at the old location. "Because we're now in a newly-developed area we were allowed to put in quite a big Internet line. That has made life a lot easier for us, particularly in communications with Head Office in the UK."

Despite the Chinese economy experiencing a number of hiccups, IM's business has been doing well, says Martin. "The Vehicle Certification Agency business is recovering extremely well after the problems associated with issues surrounding Brexit. These forced us to adopt and issue Dutch and Swedish approvals rather than British. The other significant VCA China achievement was gaining in August the internationally-recognised ISO 17020 qualification for the certification of vehicles and systems. We'd been on a four-year programme to get the qualification that means we're internationally recognised. It's a hugely-important thing for us in our industry. And while some organisations employ consultants to gain it, we've done it ourselves with the team fitting in all the hard work to gain ISO 17020 between their other tasks."

For IM's AutoGlym business in China, the current deep recession in the Chinese auto industry has brought mixed fortunes. "It still remains the biggest car industry in the world with twenty-million-plus cars per year," explains Martin. "But, as we speak, the market is down by over two million cars... So the industry and the trade are really struggling at the moment. This has had quite a knock-on effect into the car-care industry where there currently isn't the money floating around. However, in fairness, we are around 20% up on AutoGlym sales compared to last year. But we had hoped for more!"

As far as the future is concerned, Martin remains very optimistic. "We are talking to a number of Chinese auto makers who have ambitions to come into Europe, particularly with new-energy vehicles."

"Among those is Great Wall, whose strategy for a major assault on Europe is starting to crystallise," he says. "It looks as though they will be launching in certain parts of Europe in 2021 with their new-energy plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles."

Discussions with them regarding our markets are ongoing. With the experience that Great Wall had with IM in the past there remains a great deal of trust between the companies. It was, of course, disappointing for both of us the way it turned out before. But it is fair to say that the partnership is as strong as ever and Great Wall, with their new brands, are just waiting for the right opportunity and the right time. Certainly the two full-electric 4x4 SUVs that Great Wall exhibited at the 2019 Frankfurt Motor Show – and having their Chairman and majority owner present on the stand – was a strong statement of their intent as far as Europe is concerned."



# D-MAX

## THE PICK-UP THAT KEEPS WINNING AWARDS

Since Isuzu's rugged D-Max pick-up was launched in May 2012 to replace the Rodeo, it has won no fewer than 25 awards in the UK – 14 in the past two years. Seven years after first going on sale in Britain, D-Max has collected a staggering seven 2019 awards as well as being short-listed for an eighth. So what's the secret behind a pick-up in the twilight of its life-cycle beating much newer rivals? "Put it down to the fact that Isuzu is now recognised as building the best pick-up in terms of doing what it's designed to do," says Isuzu UK Managing Director, William Brown.

"There are currently six different makes of pick-up for sale in the UK. A pick-up is, by its nature, a vehicle that carries a lot of weight and tows very heavy loads. D-Max is recognised to be the best in the sector, so any awards that recognise this usually come our way. The ones we don't win are those from the lifestyle magazines who are comparing D-Max to an SUV. However, it is incredible that almost eight years down the line there's still nothing out there that can beat D-Max for durability, reliability and fitness for purpose."

Isuzu UK started attacking the fleet market seriously four years ago and 2019 will be the best year for fleet sales. Total sales are forecast to hit over 5,000 registrations in spite of several new and updated rivals pitted against what is currently the oldest pick-up in the UK market. But that won't be the case much longer. An all-new D-Max is promised for late 2020 and it is, say those who have seen it, another clear winner! "It has a new chassis, a new body and a new interior," says William, who's seen the vehicle in Japan. "The only carry-over is the drive-train. But even the

engine and gearbox are updated to reduce emissions and improve performance in fuel economy and overall driveability. It will meet all the latest European emissions regulations.

"Probably the biggest difference is the interior," adds William. "It's much more modern and stylish as befits a premium-brand pick-up. The finish and 'feel' is exceptional. The cab is definitely a place that you will enjoy being sat in. It's an environment just right for those who spend their working day behind the wheel. And it's extremely good looking – very stylish!"



UP UNTIL WE WENT TO PRESS, D-MAX HAD WON SEVEN MAJOR AWARDS IN 2019 AS WELL AS BEING SHORT-LISTED FOR AN EIGHTH. THOSE TROPHIES ADDED TO THE 18 WON SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN MAY 2012 INCLUDE: **WHAT VAN? PICK-UP OF THE YEAR; 4X4 MAGAZINE, BEST MODEL; PICK-UP & 4X4 PRO, PICK-UP OF THE YEAR; PROFESSIONAL PICK-UP & 4X4 MAGAZINE, BEST WORKING PICK-UP; TRADE VAN DRIVER, BEST WORKHORSE PICK-UP; EXPORT & FREIGHT TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS, PICK UP OF THE YEAR; COMMERCIAL FLEET AWARDS, PICK UP OF THE YEAR.**

### STOP PRESS:

*The Isuzu D-Max has been selected for the long list of candidates for the What Car? Car of the Year 2020 awards in the pick ups section. The winner will be announced in January.*



# ONE-STOP-SHOP GROWS FLEET SALES

One of the ways in which Isuzu has been winning fleet business against strong competition from rival manufacturers is through its One-Stop Shop facility at IM Group's import centre at Sheerness in Kent. The new service was launched with a two-day event for 70 existing, new and potential fleet customers. "The purpose of the One-Stop Shop is to provide customers requiring specialist equipment with a single point of procurement and fitment," explains Neil Scott, Isuzu UK's National Fleet Sales Manager.

With many hundreds of different items that can be fitted to the D-Max to make it perfect for the role it will undertake, the One-Stop-Shop solution offers a number of benefits, says Neil: "It helps with cost-saving, it helps with convenience and it can reduce down-time during the vehicle's life because everything we fit has been tested and signed off by IM Group

technical director, Phil Evans. Customers also have the benefit of our company warranty.

"In addition, the safety of the equipment is guaranteed. Electrical equipment will have been wired-up correctly by our own technicians rather than going to a third-party who might not know everything about our vehicle. This ensures additional equipment doesn't compromise the vehicle electrics and systems." This was highlighted at Fleet Fest when invited guests were shown exactly what's done in the new Sheerness facilities. "We didn't hide anything," says Neil. "They saw the complete journey pick-ups take from coming off the ship and going through the One-Stop Shop to being loaded on to transporters for delivery. Throughout that journey they were able to see all our processes, the stock that we carry and the quality control measures, not to mention the investment that we have put in as a business."



DEAN FAULKNER

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT AT SHEERNESS

**A £1.5-MILLION INVESTMENT IN TWO NEW FACILITIES AT IM GROUP'S SHEERNESS IMPORT AND LOGISTICS CENTRE ARE SET TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY BY BRINGING BODY AND PAINTWORK IN HOUSE, BY INCREASING THE CENTRE'S SECOND-STAGE MANUFACTURING AND ONE-STOP-SHOP ACTIVITIES AND BY SPEEDING-UP VEHICLE DELIVERY TO DEALERS.**

The developments – a second-stage manufacturing building, opened in June, and a paint and bodyshop due to become operational the first week of the New Year – will transform the Sheerness operation from high-storage/low-intervention to the opposite, low-storage/high-intervention, explains Darren James, UK Group Resources Director. "We have Isuzu pick-ups such as XTR, Blade and Blade Plus that have more than 20 hours' worth of intervention per vehicle. It's called second-stage manufacture and we've got

authorisation for it at Sheerness and are licensed to undertake it."

Every vehicle imported through Sheerness receives a certain amount of work, ranging from 2½ hours for an alarm installation and security window etching on Subarus, to between 25 and 28 hours to transform a standard Isuzu pick-up into one of the significantly-enhanced editions.

The new body and paint shop brings a big advantage, says Dean Faulkner, General Manager of Logistics operations at Sheerness: "It gives us full control rather than using a third-party provider and will reduce the average turn-around time for a vehicle from 25 days to at least 10 days. And we hope to further-improve on that," he adds.

The 6,000 sq ft building – which cost £500,000 plus £250,000 for two state-of-the-art spray booths and associated equipment – will have several uses including de-fleeting used vehicles, rectification of transportation damage, rectification of demonstration and promotion fleet vehicles as well as preparation of show vehicles. It will also be

used for vehicle enhancements such as Raptor, a spray-on liner for pick-up truck cargo tubs.

The second-stage manufacturing building – also 6,000 sq ft – cost £500,000 plus £200,000 worth of vehicle lifts and production facilities. Dealers and fleet customers were among the first to see it at the first Fleet Fest days in the summer when IM's one-stop-shop was launched.

"These investments will enable us to completely focus on our products, on the quality of our deliverable service to our network and improve on lead times for getting vehicles to our dealers," says Dean. "They will bring a small increase to our 18-strong IM staff with appointments of managers for the new facilities. However, the new development will bring more jobs to this area as we utilise more than 60 agency personnel with more being needed as the paint and bodyshop becomes fully operational."

Currently the Sheerness site is open seven days a week operating four different shift patterns including a Monday-to-Friday nightshift.



# Sun RISES ON RUGBY IN Japan

RUGBY BLOSSOMED  
IN JAPAN FOR THE  
ISUZU SPONSORED  
WELSH NATIONAL  
SIDE, WRITES  
CHARLES MILLER

Wales stormed through a series of tough matches and were agonisingly close to getting to the Rugby World Cup final after a gruelling battle in the semi-finals when they went down 16-19 to a powerful South African team, who became the tournament winners.

But it was the Welsh team that won the hearts of the Japanese people who adopted the Welsh Dragons alongside their national Brave Blossom side as their favourites.

The Welsh are renowned for their passionate and emotional attachment to all aspects of the oval-ball game. But even before the first ball had been kicked in the tournament, there were tears in the eyes of players and fans alike. It was prompted when more than 15,000 Japanese turned out to watch Wales train at their base in Kitakyushu and to the delight and surprise of the team, sang the Welsh national anthem in near-perfect Welsh.

For a dozen lucky UK Isuzu dealers the World Cup turned into the trip of a lifetime. They were in Tokyo and roared on Wales as they beat Australia in their second game of the tournament. It was the highlight of a week-long trip to Japan where the dealers enjoyed not just the rugby but the culture of Japan – home of course to Isuzu.

For one Isuzu dealer, Kevin Davies who runs Cawdor Cars in Carmarthenshire, there was something extra special about the game. His son, Gareth, not only plays at No 9 for Wales but scored a great try against the Wallabies and was voted Man of the Match for some awe-inspiring play.

Paul Tunnicliffe, now a consultant at IM and who masterminded an Isuzu sponsorship deal with the Welsh Rugby Union, co-hosted the dealer visit to Japan.

Unfortunately the Welsh team could not wear the Isuzu-sponsored kit for the World Cup because the tournament rules would not allow it. But away from the tournament the teams could wear the kit at training sessions. Back home the Welsh side wear the Isuzu brand on the team's distinctive red home kit and also on their green alternative kit.

Paul said: "It was a fantastic trip and experience for all the dealers. The rugby was of course really passionate and enjoyable to watch but the way the Japanese supported the whole tournament, and in particular Wales, made it extra special."

Although the dealers were only in Japan for a week, they certainly packed a huge amount into their visit. As Paul recounts: "We had them cook their own Japanese lunch on a hot plate on the table, took them on a bike ride around the grounds of the Emperor's Palace



HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES VISITED THE TEAM IN JAPAN

and had a particularly crazy night at a Robot Bar."

Beer is almost an essential ingredient of the spirit of rugby and the dealers certainly had good reason to celebrate as the Welsh team powered up the World Cup pool stage.

Paul said: "Yes, the dealers loved the beer, mainly because I think it was free of additives and chemicals. They certainly drank it as though they loved it!"

Along with the liquid refreshment there were a host of highlights that have filled the memories of everyone who went on the trip. Paul said: "We were treated really well and one of the everlasting high spots was meeting some rugby VIP's for dinner and drinks – ex-captain Ryan Jones joined us for a couple of sessions, as did new coach Wayne Pivac who takes over from Warren Gatland at the end of the World Cup.

"One of the hosts was Rhys Williams, ex-Wales winger, who was with the group throughout. He kept us entertained with his fascinating tales of what it's like to be an international playing at this level."

Away from the games the group had the rare opportunity to attend a closed Welsh training session.

Paul said: "The dealers had the chance to see the squad put through their paces at very close quarters. But the main highlight had to be the Australia game, and the Welsh victory.

"Everyone suddenly became Wales supporters, and I was glad I had insisted that the dress code was Isuzu jerseys. We had 10 VIP's from Isuzu Japan with us, and we celebrated long into the night at a local Irish bar after the Australia match.

"We watched the Japan v Ireland game from a rooftop terrace, along with about 300 other fans. The highlights were watching an Aussie fan play Waltzing Matilda on his bagpipes at half time, and listening to the massive cheers coming up from the city at the final whistle. Even for the impartial, it was a magical moment."

William Brown, Managing Director of Isuzu UK, was on the trip and shared the enthusiasm of Paul and the dealers. He said: "It was a wonderful trip and we were all so impressed with the Japanese fans and their national side.

"The Brave Blossoms played with flair and at frenetic speed. Even the highly-experienced Welsh team couldn't help but be impressed."

William and Paul praised their Isuzu colleagues in Japan for making the UK party so very welcome.

Gene Taylor, Director of the multi-award winning Isuzu dealer David Taylor Garages in Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons, was on the trip. He said: "It was an excellent trip, very well organised and we had a tremendous welcome from lovely Japanese people.

"I used to play rugby at school and now support our local clubs and of course Wales. Seeing the lads train and being able to meet and talk to them was something really special."

David Taylor Garages has been an Isuzu dealership for 31 years. The business was started by Gene's parents and was among the first Isuzu dealerships in the UK.

Gene has been on many dealer trips. "But the trip to Japan was really something," he said. "Away from the rugby we had some great opportunities to see and learn more about Japan and some of the sights and places certainly put a smile on my face.

"I was really impressed with how clean the country was and it was nice to meet some of the Japanese Isuzu dealers."

ISUZU

*"The Brave Blossoms played with flair and at frenetic speed. Even the highly-experienced Welsh team couldn't help but be impressed."*





## IT'S A SPECIAL BLADE RUNNER

LIMITED EDITIONS OF THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING ISUZU D-MAX TEND TO SELL OUT VERY QUICKLY – AND THAT'S LIKELY TO BE THE CASE WITH THE EXCITING NEW BLADE+, SAYS TONY GARUTH.

Only 150 examples of the Blade+ will be built, so it's a case of first come, first served for this head-turning version of the D-Max which comes with a host of extra equipment.

All the standard features of the big-selling standard double-cab D-Max have been retained but backed by a huge number of interior and exterior upgrades that really sets the special edition apart.

This top-of-the-range D-Max Blade+ is available in three colours: Cosmic Black Mica, Obsidian Grey Mica, and Spinel Red Mica. It's certainly a real head turner.

Customers can choose between a manual or automatic transmission and the new addition to the D-Max range retains all the rugged and hardworking capabilities of the entire Isuzu range of professional pick-ups.

Either an Alpha Type E canopy or Mountain Top roller cover with Black sports bar can be specified by buyers. The colour-coded Alpha Type E leisure canopy has pop out side windows that gives even more user flexibility along with central locking black roof bars. For those who prefer the Mountain Top roller cover, this comes with a black sports bar which combines practical storage with a sporty, lifestyle look.

A striking front skirt, which comprises a grey lower section and gloss black upper section with red stripe detail, highlights the exterior styling and is complemented by a new 19" gun metal alloy wheel design. This is an

upgrade in wheel size and style but the new wheel has all of the practicality expected from a D-Max. It comes with a full-size spare alloy wheel and locking wheel nuts as standard.

The Blade+ is equipped with a comprehensive safety package including front camera, reversing camera and front and rear parking sensors. New Lazer Lights are mounted to the front bumper to improve visibility even further. Plus, it's even easier to operate as the Pro-Lift tailgate assist system gives the tailgate movement a smoother feel and makes it light enough to close with just one finger.

To enhance the special run of only 150 vehicles, Blade+ features a numbered interior badge positioned just in front of the gearstick. Bespoke Blade+ decals, puddle lamps, illuminated door sills, leather upholstery and Blade+ branded carpet mats contribute to a feeling of luxury and with a wireless charger removing the hassle of forgetting your phone cable making it easy to stay connected.

The full 3.5 tonne towing capacity, outstanding 125,000 mile / five-year warranty (whichever comes first) and five-year roadside assistance in the UK and across Europe comes with the Blade+.

Blade+ is priced at £29,999 as an on-the-road commercial vehicle in manual format and £30,999 for an automatic. With all the additional equipment and features, the Blade+ cost just £1,190 over a standard Blade Double Cab.

## INTE EN EL-HYBRID SOM ANDRA



### PREMIÄR FÖR NYA SUBARU FORESTER e-BOXER

Vi har alltid byggt bilar för de som vågar tänka annorlunda. Därför har vi skapat en helt unik el-hybrid. Utan att kompromissa med vare sig framkomlighet eller dragvikt tar vi steget in i framtiden. Det betyder att vår tillförlitliga boxermotor nu assisteras av en kompakt elmotor, som ger mer kraft och mindre förbrukning. Och som alltid är fyrhjulsdraft och förarassistanssystemet EyeSight standard.

Nya Forester e-Boxer lanseras i slutet av november.

Bränsleförbr. bl. körn. 6,7/8,1 l/100 km. CO<sub>2</sub>-utsläpp: 154/185 g/km (enl. NEDC/WLTP). Bilen på bilden kan vara extrautrustad. \*Eller vid 1500, 3000 och 4500 mil.

3 ÅRS FRI SERVICE\*



SUBARU  
NORDIC

*'Not Just Another Hybrid' says the headline – an important message to customers in a part of the world where sales of electric cars and hybrids have really taken off. Unlike all its rivals, the Forester e-Boxer has everything that Subaru's renowned Boxer engine offers plus the assistance of an electric motor to provide more power and better fuel economy. And don't forget that Forester e-Boxer comes with the legendary Subaru four-wheel drive system and the innovative EyeSight driver-assistance system as standard. All of which makes the newest model from Subaru unique.*



# IM NORDIC'S 'MR SUBARU' RETIRES

By Bill Trudloor Jnr



Dan Persson, one of the first people to be recruited when IM Nordic was established in 1991 – and the man universally known as 'Mr Subaru' – retired in September.

In a tribute to Dan's loyalty and career with IM, Torbjörn Lillrud, who joined IM Nordic as Managing director in 2003, said: "What we did in IM Nordic was quite extraordinary. We took it from less than 1,000 cars a year to close to 10,000 a year. But none of our achievements would have been possible without Dan..."

"He never doubted that something was possible. He never saw problems as a negative and, most importantly, he was liked by the employees in our company and by the dealers, many of whom would call Dan if they had a problem – even if it was outside his responsibility. He was brilliant as our product manager and even became known as 'Mr Subaru'."

Immediately before he joined IM Nordic as Assistant Service Manager, Dan – a qualified engineer – had worked for a Subaru dealer in Sweden. Before that he worked with BMW, Honda, Toyota and Suzuki dealers. During his time at IM Nordic he looked after warranty claims, became service manager, moved to sales and marketing when Torbjörn joined the company and finished his career as product and logistics manager.

"My first trip to Japan was in 1991," recalls Dan. "By the time I retired I'd been there some 70 times! I became well-known at Subaru in Japan and made some very good friends there. They always gave me a tremendous welcome and were always seeking my feed-back, which I willingly gave because I was, at the time, looking closely at other brands too. Subaru were always looking to be one of the best!"

As Sales Manager, Dan witnessed the meteoric growth of IM Nordic. "This was the time of the boom, when sales moved from less than 1,000 cars a year to almost 10,000. With Torbjörn's arrival, the company – and sales – just grew!" So much so that in 2007 Dan opted for another change of career direction. "Because the company was growing so much, with sales in six countries, I needed to be a bit more relaxed and take life more quietly. I didn't want to burn-out my lights! So I became Product and Logistics Manager for Subaru and Isuzu."

In this role he was involved in arranging dealer promotions, conferences and events all around the world. "It was really exciting and I was very happy to be in that position until my retirement," he says.

Dan, now 61, says he is already enjoying retirement. "I plan to spend it as a free guy doing what I want to do with my three kids, helping them, being at home with my wife and doing the cooking for her. Cooking is one of my passions. I also have four very good friends who have also just retired and we plan to do a lot together. I have an old boat and plan to do some fishing. I bought a Subaru Outback from the company and I've just fitted a tow-bar to that."

However, while 'Mr Subaru' might have formally retired, Dan has a message for anyone in IM listening: "My door is always open," he says. "If there is something special in the future where I can offer some help, I am available!"

## ANOTHER SAFETY ACCOLADE FOR SUBARU

Safety is one of the key features of Subaru models which is often overlooked or taken for granted by customers as the brand has always been a leader in this field.

However, automotive experts have recognised the vital role that Subaru plays for drivers, passengers and other road users alike and they have heaped praise on the company.

Having won the prestigious Safety category in the 2018 annual *What Car?* awards, the highly-regarded Driver Power Survey on car ownership highlighted Subaru and the brand was voted Best Manufacturer for Safety Features in 2019.

The Driver Power survey covers all aspects of buying and owning a car in the UK. To claim the top safety title, Subaru had to beat stiff competition from 29 other manufacturers.

All three Subaru SUVs were rated highly for safety features. The Outback came 11th out of 100 cars for safety, XV fifth and the Forester was second in this important possibly life-saving area.

The awards, held in conjunction with *Auto Express*,

Britain's largest-circulation weekly motoring magazine, which was highly complimentary about Subaru's safety features.

Steve Fowler, *Auto Express* editor-in-chief, said: "Subaru has long been known as a maker of tough, well-built, all-wheel drive models. More recently, Subaru has placed its EyeSight system at the heart of its model range.

"The feature is a well-judged package of safety systems powered by a pair of cameras to scan the road ahead. This year, owners have consistently praised Subaru's safety credentials in our Driver Power survey, placing the manufacturer ahead of some far-larger manufacturers."

All three Subaru SUVs, plus Impreza and Levorg, hold the maximum 5-Star Euro NCAP safety rating and are fitted with a host of safety features, including EyeSight driver assistance, as standard.



Safety has always been central to the development of Subaru cars and the firm has an on-going commitment to safety. Subaru has been crash-testing vehicles since the early 1960s, long before industry-wide testing was introduced.

Subaru cars are fitted with a host of innovative safety technologies as standard and the company remains committed to the welfare of all road users. Subaru has a vision to eliminate traffic accident deaths involving its vehicles by 2030.







# Electrifying reaction TO NEW SUBARU MODELS

SUBARU CUSTOMERS VOTED WITH THEIR CHEQUE BOOKS AFTER TEST-DRIVING NEW ELECTRIC HYBRIDS – EVEN THOUGH THEY HADN'T DRIVEN UK SPECIFICATION MODELS!

Yet the customers were so impressed that 1,104 orders were placed for e-Boxer Foresters and e-Boxer XVs months ahead of the start of production of European models. On the test drives Subaru UK only had access to Japanese specification models.

Chris Graham, Managing Director of Subaru UK, explained: “We took a huge gamble. We were confident that the new hybrid electric models were superb but of course this was, in effect, a new market we were entering and everything depended on how our customers would react.

“We had to make all our decisions months ahead of the start of European production so we purchased four Japanese e-Boxer Forester and two e-Boxer XVs and planned a series of VIP customer driving events throughout the UK.

“We knew the XV had been much improved and updated and the Forester was truly fantastic. But these were new hybrid electrics which customers had never had any experience with before.”

This huge marketing plan had a bonus for prospective customers. If orders were placed and cars built and delivered ahead of new EU emission penalties due to come into force from January 1 2020, they would save hundreds of pounds.

Due to factory build timetables, Chris and his team at Subaru UK knew that they had to get confirmed orders back to Japan in August to meet strict production line deadlines. So the road show of regional UK events had to take place in June and July.

Chris said: “We had never done anything on a scale like this before to get an order bank of pre-orders for entirely new models so it really was quite a challenge.”

Subaru dealers in the UK had to be willing to share the challenge too – and they did! After a number of dealer driver days they were so impressed that they agreed to pre-order demonstrators and up to eight stock models.

Dealers were then able to invite VIP guests to the nine regional customer ride-and-drive events at hand-picked venues. That was so successful that more than 450 customers took part and each had the opportunity to get behind the wheel of one of the new hybrids for at least 45-minutes. Some of the venues included off-road driving just to add to the experience.

The venues were spectacular and included Bowcliffe Hall, near Wetherby, West Yorkshire; The Manor, near

Taunton, Somerset; Longstowe Hall, Cambridge; Dallas Burston Polo Club, Warwickshire; The Shore, Loch Lomond, Scotland and in Northern Ireland Subaru dealership Desmond Eastwood Motors hosted an event.

After the UK events the cars went to the Irish Republic for events in Eire before returning to the UK so that every Subaru dealer had one of the new cars for two days to promote further customer interest.

Chris said: “It was an amazingly complex series of events over eight weeks that the Subaru UK team organised and manned and was very demanding. But the whole team did a fantastic job and our customers were delighted.

“As well as the confirmed customer orders we had 2,156 enquiries on our website asking to be kept informed about the new cars.”

The Subaru UK team’s efforts did not go un-noticed. At a Subaru Europe distribution conference they were highlighted for achieving the incredible pre-orders.

In November the first cars started to arrive at UK dealerships with plan for a further 800 to be delivered in December – an early Christmas present for dealers and customers alike!

*“It was an amazingly complex series of events over eight weeks that the Subaru UK team organised and manned and was very demanding. Bute the whole team did a fantastic job and our customers were delighted. As well as the confirmed customer orders we had 2,156 enquiries on our website asking to be kept informed about the new cars.”*



SEAN O'NEILL AND CHRIS GRAHAM



## STOP PRESS:

*Both of the new Subaru hybrids are on the long list of candidates for the What Car? Car of the Year 2020 awards. The XV e-Boxer has been selected for the Family SUV section and the Forester e-Boxer is on the Large SUV section. Both models have also won places on the long list for hybrid cars. Winners will be announced in January.*



# PETROL-HEAD ERA IS CHANGING FAST

By Keith Read

**IM GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR ANDREW EDMISTON HAS A CLEAR VISION OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY AS IT FACES SWINGEING LEGISLATION ON EMISSIONS IN THE MOST CHALLENGING CHAPTER IN ITS HISTORY – EVEN IF FUEL FOR VEHICLES IN THE FUTURE IS LESS CLEAR.**

By 2050 – the target for zero vehicle emissions – there will still be plenty of petrol cars about, he believes. Extracting motive power from petrol is reasonably efficient. Once electricity is in the battery, converting that to the wheels is even more efficient; but the tricky part is what happens before the point at which the battery is charged – this complicates the picture somewhat.”

But he acknowledges the industry faces formidable legislation. “In Europe it requires that, every five years, average fleet emissions reduce. In 2020 it is for most manufactureres something like 95gms/km. At the moment nobody is achieving that except for Tesla. Fines for failing to meet legislation targets are quite

stringent – in the region of €90 per gram over the target per car... So even if you achieved a fleet average of 105gms/km – which would be amazing and extremely low – on 1 million vehicles you are still going to pay a fine in excess of €900 million for doing a great job! By the time we get to 2025 the target drops to close to 67gms/km and by 2030 it's even lower than that.

“Here's the issue: manufacturers have to build some form of electric vehicle (EV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) to get their fleet average emissions down. A PHEV is typically comfortably below the 2020 target with around 60 or 70gms/km. But with everyone thinking the world is going to go electric, there are three key technical obstacles. Firstly, vehicle



ANDREW EDMISTON

“I THINK THE INDUSTRY IS GOING TO LOOK FAMILIAR IN THE FUTURE JUST AS IT DID IN THE PAST WITH DIFFERENT FUEL TYPES,” HE SAYS. “WE HAVE HAD CNG, LPG, PETROL, DIESEL AND HYBRIDS AND I CERTAINLY DON’T THINK PETROL IS YET GOING TO DIE.”

manufacturers can’t make any money out of EVs. Secondly, there’s the problem of plug-in points – there aren’t enough, and that’s a restriction. Thirdly, there remains the issue of range and the technology behind EVs.”

Andrew’s stark statement on EVs being unprofitable for manufacturers is based on evidence from meetings he and his father – IM Group founder, Lord Edmiston – had some time ago with presidents of major car companies. In conversations including much about the future and EVs, senior executives independently told the Edmistons that vehicle manufacturers could not make money selling EVs. “They explained that no car manufacturer produced batteries for EVs. Most battery makers were in China with a few in Japan,” says Andrew. “They argued that without ownership of EV power-train it would be those companies selling batteries that made the profit.

“So what will happen? I expect car manufacturers to introduce EVs into their fleets – but only to a certain percentage. They won’t want to make too many because they can’t make

money on them. However, they’ll want to sell sufficient EVs so that they don’t have to pay the fines. Let’s say that the manufacturers calculate that they need EVs to account for 30 percent of their total production to avoid paying fines. But what if 30 percent of their customers don’t want to buy an EV? They’ll have to reduce the price of EVs and, to avoid losing profits, they’ll have to increase the price of petrol cars. The likelihood is that it will become more expensive to buy any car from 1st January 2020. And bear in mind that if car companies are paying the fines, that will ultimately find its way to the customer. No car manufacturer will want to make less profit than it did...”

The Chinese should, says Andrew, be the big beneficiaries of any switch to electric. “They have virtually all the battery-production facilities and the pollution in their cities that is harming their children gives the Chinese a more-pressing reason to go electric. However, it could be argued that EVs change where the CO<sub>2</sub> is produced more than reducing total CO<sub>2</sub> per se. They take it out of the cities and place it where the factories and





power stations are located. If these are fossil-fuel based, you could easily find a situation where CO<sub>2</sub> produced is hardly reduced at all”

But if not batteries – what? “I suppose the ultimate is to ‘burn’ water, which comprises two parts hydrogen to one part oxygen,” says Andrew. “There’d be no range anxiety because anybody can provide water. There’d be no toxic emissions from the tail-pipe and you’d still get good motorised performance. It sounds like a super solution to me. Unfortunately, although man is clever, no-one has managed that yet and I understand that it is next to impossible to achieve.” But there is a ‘halfway-house’ solution. “We could consider hydrogen but producing hydrogen takes a lot of electricity... There are hydrogen-powered cars being made right now, but the cost is high. However, hydrogen may have some role to play in the future. I have also heard about solid-state batteries which promise to solve many of the current issues. I am

## “EVS ARE NOT AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO THE MOTOR INDUSTRY.”

certainly no scientist or engineer but I do believe there is great incentive to come up with a much better solution than we have today and I believe that will happen soon.”

“EVs are not an existential threat to the motor industry. The fact that some people like to present it that way says to me they are more interested in killing the traditional motor industry than saving the planet... What is more of an existential threat to the industry is the arrival of driverless cars. It’s further away, but has much wider ramifications and implications. It has implications for the way we distribute cars, implications for the way we buy cars and implications even for car ownership. Instead of 10 cars for 10 people, why not one car for 10 people with that one car being shared? I feel this is unlikely for a variety of reasons but it must be a possibility.

“So while petrol will still have a place, the



TORBJÖRN LILLRUD

landscape is very challenging, especially from 2020 onwards with regard to emissions. For IM Group and its dealers, the big question is what are Subaru and Isuzu doing about it. Torbjörn Lillrud is the best person to answer that.”

Torbjörn took on the role of Automotive Development Director for IM Group more than a year ago when he moved to the UK from Sweden where he successfully grew IM Nordic into one of the jewels in the IM crown. Today he is Managing Director of International Motors Ltd., and is having an impact on the Group’s various automotive companies. “We will introduce two hybrid cars from Subaru toward the end of 2019 – XV e-Boxer and Forester e-Boxer,” he says. And he is more than happy with reaction to Subaru’s e-Boxer technology. “We started to pre-sell those products in May with a series of events and test-drives for dealers and customers using pre-production vehicles. The response was amazing both in Nordic territories and the UK. As we speak it’s the middle of October and, so far, we’ve sold more than 800 in the UK and 900 in Nordic countries.” Customers took delivery during

MEANWHILE, EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS FROM ISUZU ARE STARTING TO MAKE NEWS. “IN 2020 WE ARE GOING TO INTRODUCE AN ALL-NEW D-MAX. IT FULFILS ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EU AND IS THE BEST-LOOKING PICK-UP WE’VE EVER SEEN,” HE SAYS. “IT’S STATE-OF-THE-ART.”

November and December.

Because the e-Boxers replace existing petrol engines, Torbjörn doesn’t consider them as incremental sales. “But I do believe that these new models will help us to continue taking more market share and to grow our business to the targets we have set,” he says. “In the UK in 2018 we grew from 2,600 to 3,100 Subaru sales. In 2019 we will have moved from 3,100 to something like 3,400 and our ambition for 2020 is to continue to grow – up to, in the long run, 10,000 units a year. We also expect growth in Ireland while in our six Nordic countries we hope to defend our strong market position.

On the EV front, Subaru is known to be considering all options and has strengthened its resources. “Subaru has intensified its relationship with Toyota, with both companies buying an increased shareholding in each other,” explains Torbjörn. “They have already announced that they are going to jointly-develop an electric car – a full EV.”

Like Andrew, Torbjörn believes that the cost of owning a car is going to be higher from 2020 and

into the future. To reduce the impact of that, he says the industry is looking at ways of becoming more cost-efficient in the way it distributes cars. “And here at IM we are always prepared to investigate and consider new distribution methods. We currently have a couple of projects running – one in Ireland and one in Sweden – where we are looking at how we can be more efficient and cost-effective in the way that we distribute our cars in the future.”

While IM is only allowed to say that it expects Isuzu and the commercial sector in general, to seriously look at electric power-train pick-ups in the future, speculation among industry-watchers is that with its reputation for being a bold pioneer, Isuzu will definitely not be left behind or caught out by rivals. It’s well-known that installation of motive power-pack batteries in pick-ups is relatively easy thanks to their conventional chassis and significant under-tub space. However, the penalty of increased vehicle weight could be a serious threat to the vital cargo capacity – an area where Isuzu has led the field – although all manufacturers face the same problem.





# CSR DIRECTOR APPOINTED

FOLLOWING AN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE RESPONSE BY IM STAFF TO PRESENTATIONS FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS WITHIN THE COMPANY ON THEIR CHARITABLE WORK WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, IM GROUP APPOINTED ITS FIRST DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

JUDI WOOD, WHO HAD BEEN DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AT GRACE ACADEMIES – THE CHARITY ESTABLISHED BY IM FOUNDER LORD EDMISTON – TOOK ON HER NEW ROLE IN MAY.

Judi, a solicitor specialising in family and education law, has links with IM since 2006 when she was invited by Lord Edmiston to become a Governor at the first Grace Academy at Chelmsley Wood, Solihull. She subsequently became a Governor at Grace Academy Coventry when it opened in 2008 and, a year later, a Governor at Grace Academy Darlaston.

As well as her initial role with Grace Academies, Judi remained a consultant at a legal firm. But with huge changes rapidly occurring in her area of law, she decided to work part-time at Sydney Mitchell Solicitors and part-time at Grace. In May this year, when Grace Academies were handed over to the Tove Learning Trust, she was appointed full-time Director of CSR at IM Group.

CSR has, in the past decade, become important for many of the larger private companies as well as the UK government. “Over the years they have realised that the impact of encouraging their employees to give something to the community has a wider impact on the marketplace which, in turn, has an impact on the profitability falling back into the company,” explains Judi. “Within IM Group – a diverse organisation – a lot [of community work] has been done. However, it’s always been in isolated pockets and not co-ordinated or pulled together. As a result, people in one aspect of the group aren’t aware of the amazing work that those in another aspect of the group are doing.

“Earlier this year, both Christian Vision and Grace Foundation were invited to talk to regular staff gatherings about what they were doing. The response from staff was ‘Wow! We didn’t know how much effort and resources were poured into this... We didn’t know about the impact and the good work being done.’”

Judi defines CSR as... the collective energy of the Group to benefit society and the environment through the contribution of three things: labour, skills and financial support.

“Andrew Edmiston asked me to look at how the corporate element, the business element and the element of the responsibility we have as a business

and as individuals impacts the four areas of CSR covered – employees, the community, the environment and the marketplace. He asked me to co-ordinate it, invigorate it, drive it and bring targeted focus, strategy and purpose to all that we do and all we are going to do. Lots of good work has already been done, but it hasn’t always followed the purpose of the company, which is about wanting every child to be brought up in an environment where they are given the opportunity to reach their maximum potential in life.

“It’s challenging because it’s such a huge area to pull together and be developed. But I like a challenge. It’s very humbling talking to the staff about our values that are founded in the Christian Faith and directly relevant to the business. IM’s senior Board members really do talk the talk, walk the walk and follow through on what they say they will do. There’s a completely different feel working in this business to working in other corporate sectors.”

In her private life, Judi and her husband are committed to ‘giving something back’ having six years ago bought a 300-year-old Warwickshire coaching inn, standing in sizeable grounds. “Due to the state it was in, it should have been knocked down,” she says. “But it wasn’t, and we’ve been renovating it using traditional techniques. Being such an old building you cannot use new, modern materials.”

Their first move was to build a log cabin so that they could live on site. Then they demolished several 1970s out-buildings and are building an extension that sympathetically complements the coaching inn. Renovating the old inn takes up many evenings and a fair number of weekends. Hard-hat, ponytail and jeans that are covered in mud are a far cry from Judi’s stylish office attire. “Nobody would recognise me!” she admits. And the contrast with work continues: “At work I am a leader, while on the renovation my husband is very much the project leader and I’m the labourer!”

The fruits of their labours mean that despite not being connected to the power grid, they are able to now live in the upstairs area of the inn with the log cabin now a vital storage area. “But you still need boots on to be in the downstairs,” she adds. Her husband estimates three years’ more work. Judi says no way... She wants it finished sooner so that they can achieve the remarkable objective of the renovation. “Our goal is not to give us an amazing house – that’s a side benefit,” she says. “The main goal is to help people who have come out of difficult relationships and find themselves in a situation for which there is no immediate help available.”

A typical example is the divorced partner who has access to their children at weekends but doesn’t have a home or suitable accommodation. They will be able to spend time in the coaching

inn with their youngsters and enjoy its grounds and safety. All they would have to provide is their food. There’d be no charge for staying.

“Originally the coaching inn was a place of rest and recuperation for men and horses before they moved on,” says Judi. “It was a relatively short stop. And the design of our build is to enable us to offer services to people to have that recuperation and do normal things with their children.

“The purpose and values of IM are all about giving something back. Giving something back is crucial. And there’s no point in me being CSR Director here if I don’t live it in my own life. It’s about empowering people and one of the things we do here at IM is giving the opportunity to every young person to reach their full potential. I couldn’t do my job here if I didn’t have that underlying passion and desire to help others.”



## MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT

More than 12.8 million working days are lost in the UK due to stress, depression or anxiety; 85% of UK adults experience stress on a regular basis, yet fewer than a third of UK firms implement a stress management plan. “One of the many things we’ve implemented is Mente, a digital system for looking at mental health within the organisation,” says Judi.

“Mente is divided into bite-sized sections of five-minute, e-learning courses that staff can take advantage of. They cover a multitude of scenarios

that could trigger mental health issues that could have a significant impact. Every IM employee has a unique password with which to access the totally-confidential system.”

There’s a significant difference between mental health and mental illness, she explains. “We’ve implemented Mente because mental health is as important as physical health and we want to give our staff the tools to thrive in life and at work. The system offers practical advice and also sign-posts resources that could be of value and assistance.”





# BRIGHT FUTURE for youngsters boosted

THOUSANDS MORE LESS-PRIVILEGED YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING HELPED BY A HUGE EXPANSION OF THE WORK STARTED BY THE GRACE FOUNDATION, FOUNDED BY IM GROUP CHAIRMAN, LORD EDMISTON.



During the past 12 years three Grace Academies in Chelmsley Wood, Solihull; Coventry and Darlaston, Walsall, have seen many students achieve outstanding academic success. But exam results are only part of the picture that has fundamentally changed the lives and outlook of the youngsters.

Now an exciting new chapter in the work pioneered by Lord Edmiston has begun. Gary Spicer, Executive Director of the Foundation, said: “We developed all three of what were failing state schools into thriving centres of excellence which gave our students the encouragement and opportunity to fulfil their real potential.

“We had probably reached a level where we needed to make a fundamental step change if we were going to progress further in a new era in education which was facing myriad growing pressures.”

Part of the outside pressure included the Government’s guidance for multi-academy trusts (MATs), like the Grace Academies, to merge with other schools and colleges to form larger groups for greater impact and the sharing of resources.

So the Grace Academies merged with the larger Midlands-based Tove Learning Trust where Dr Jamie Clarke, who had led The Grace Foundation as the CEO, also worked.

Gary said: “It means we have moved from a three academy organisation supporting approximately 2,500 students to a larger body teaching and helping more than 10,000 young people in eight schools.

“This larger scale obviously means that we can help even more young people and we have ambitions to go much further with a target of growing to 10 schools and 12,000 students within a year.”

All this came at a time when the Grace Academies had all achieved their best ever exam results and had glowing reports following Ofsted inspections.

Gary emphasised that the great academic results were just one aspect of how the ethos of the Grace Foundation had changed the lives of the youngsters. He said: “We wanted to leave a positive legacy in the students, where their lives were impacted holistically and they were each equipped to make good life decisions. We believe we have achieved that goal.

“A lot of our students come from backgrounds where learning and education was never looked at as being important. It meant that many of the young people had a very pessimistic view on their lives ahead.



“By bringing our underlying Christian values into what we do, the lives of these young people have been changed completely. We involve parents, school staff as well as the youngsters and we have broadened horizons and attitudes for everyone involved – not just the students.”

If anything it is these changes that have pleased Gary and his team alongside the positive exam results. He added: “It’s not just looking at the star results but looking at where the young person entered into the Grace Academies and celebrating what they have achieved as they have progressed.

“It’s wonderful to see the improved self-confidence and positive attitudes. Our young people now look at future careers and are prepared and encouraged to put in the hard work to get them there rather than be satisfied with going into just any job.”

The non-selective, free-access Grace Academies are in some of the least affluent areas of the Midlands. They have been transformed from poor performing and run down to now being over-subscribed with waiting lists and the whole surrounding communities have benefited by their success.

Although the three academies have been handed across to a new organisation, the Tove Trust has embraced the philosophy and moral standards that are the bedrock of The Grace Foundation.

Tove and all its schools are now benefiting from around £1 million a year from Lord Edmiston’s donations. The money is used for school resources and staffing that would otherwise not be available from the state.

A class-leading Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) programme which was developed by The Grace Foundation has now been introduced at all the schools.

Each of the academies within the enlarged Tove family now has three additional staff

members thanks to the legacy of The Grace Foundation. These are a family support worker, a community youth worker and a ‘hub leader’ to oversee the non-teaching aspects of the academy.

Gary explained: “Their task is to help the teachers and staff at each school to develop a full and rounded student and to ensure the ethos of what we do is really grounded.”

A specialist team is also being developed and based within IM’s new headquarters at The Gate. Gary said: “At the old HQ we were in a separate building. But basing our team in the new HQ means that all of our IM Group colleagues can see us and how the work that they do, and the profits that they make, are helping to transform young people’s lives.”

“Our RSE programme has a Youth and Family co-ordinator based at The Gate backed by two RSE professionals who can go out to schools which need additional support.

“There are two creative team members who are professional actors. They help us develop specific drama pieces that we can take into schools to highlight issues such as knife crime and gangs and tackle the pressing issues concerning young people today. We use creative theatre to help educate young people to be better prepared for the challenges outside the Academy gates.”

Some of the former students from the Grace academies have gone on to university and higher education while others have won apprenticeships and others have worked at IM companies. Gary sees this success now being replicated across the enlarged family of Tove schools.





# A MASTER CLASS IN HOW TO BUILD A COMMUNITY

**THE STORY BEGINS IN LATE 2014 WHEN IM FIRST LOOKED AT WHAT WAS AN EXISTING BUT FAILING BUSINESS PARK AT BLYTHE VALLEY AT JUNCTION 4 OF THE M42 MOTORWAY NEAR SOLIHULL, WRITES ROD GOWLIMTIDE**

The success that IM Properties achieved with the commercial elements of Blythe Valley Park is well known. But working away quietly in the background was IM Land, the strategic land promotion arm of the business. While most onlookers associate Blythe Valley with employment, now the transformation from a business park to an entirely new integrated mixed-use settlement is taking shape.

When IM acquired Blythe Valley in 2014, for a total of £125 million, a good deal of the focus was placed on the latent value held within the commercial elements. At the time, further work was required to form an understanding of the potential in the 40 acres of pasture land which adjoined phase one.

The IM Land team, under the stewardship of lead-Director Jonathan Dyke, was tasked with generating a favourable level of return from a situation comprising a long list of known unknowns.

Five years on, Jonathan says: “All sites come with issues, challenges and hurdles but they also come with potential and our job was to unleash that potential. And that’s exactly what we have achieved.”

One of the initial challenges was the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is a charge local authorities place on developers to cover the costs of items required as a result of new development. These include schools,

transport infrastructure and healthcare. The Blythe Valley site carried a huge CIL charge, which IM felt jeopardised the viability of the whole scheme. As a result they negotiated away a CIL levy of £8.5million.

Further negotiations were needed as part of the land promotion. These were painstaking but resulted in a planning permission, which increased the density of the scheme, and hence its value and profit.

As the land promoter, IM create a masterplan for every strategic site. They then need to achieve buy-in from all major stakeholders with the local authority being key. Underpinning the masterplan is always a sense of place, community, sustainability but above all, viability.

Once these intense periods of negotiation are completed and planning permission is achieved, IM move to the next phase in the process - the development of fundamental detailed infrastructure and site set-up before selling on land to volume housebuilders.

The entire process includes work around ecology studies, landscaping, flood risk assessments, ground conditions, highway impact studies, noise and air quality and public transport strategy. Every single element requires a negotiation that has to be concluded with viability in mind.



JONATHAN DYKE



The end product is a very attractive proposition for housebuilders, where all the hard work has been done and they are presented with ‘plug in’ ready parcels of land to build on. The time and cost savings passed on to the housebuilder result in higher profits for IM.

Fast forward to the past twelve months, and that hard work is paying off. Two house builders, Bloor Homes and Crest Nicholson, have started building a total of 750 homes which will have a beneficial impact on Solihull’s housing need.

Hundreds of new jobs have been created and a whole new community is being created at Blythe Valley within a network of green spaces, walkways and cycling routes and a great coffee shop.

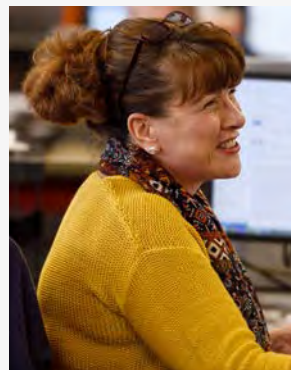
As ever, such a prime asset continues to create opportunity. The location of Blythe Valley and its semi-rural feel has been further enhanced, and has attracted one of Britain’s leading care-home developers.

Octopus Healthcare will build a stunning 80 bed care-home on a 1.4 acre site within the parkland setting. It’s likely to be Octopus’s flagship development project and will be close to a neighbourhood centre being developed.

Richard Knight, Technical Director at IM Land, part of the team responsible for coordinating and working to deliver the residential element at Blythe Valley Park, said: “This is another exciting step. The investment across the entire site reflects our confidence in its strategic vision to create the first genuinely mixed-use, sustainable new community in the Midlands – a lasting legacy.”

Like all IM developments, Blythe Valley Park remains much more than a story of bricks and mortar. It is a story that incorporates technical professionalism and skill, passion and determination.





# DRIVING NEW *business forward*

FROM A STANDING START TO TURNING A PROFIT OF APPROACHING £4 MILLION, SPECIALIST MOTOR FINANCE (SMF) HAS SEEN SOLID PROGRESS IN JUST THREE YEARS.

Driven by hard work, an injection of new funding and a radical overhaul of the way it approaches and carries out business, the completely revised SMF stands out as a beacon of success, with much more to come.

Our previous finance business, The Funding Corporation (TFC), had been rocked to its foundations by the financial crisis of 2008. Despite huge efforts the old TFC never recovered plus, since then, the whole industry sector underwent seismic changes which left the old firm always on the back foot. That company is now in a run-off phase and has not traded since May 2015.

Pat Hanlon, IM's Treasury and Banking Consultant, has worked closely alongside David Challinor and Danny Armstrong, Specialist Motor Finance's Managing Director and Finance Director respectively, to ensure that the new company avoids the many pitfalls that exist in the world of finance and that it keeps its business plan relevant to the

ever- changing landscape.

The past 12 months in particular has witnessed key changes within the business which has really started to show its potential and form the bedrock for the business going forward.

Pat explained: "We quickly completed the job surrounding the branding of the new business and secured external financing to leverage IM Group's equity. That was vital. With that in place we then moved on to strengthen the team to meet the growing demands and new opportunities for the business."

Jimmy McGuire, who had worked for one of SMF's leading competitors, was appointed as Sales Director. Jimmy brings with him many years of experience working in the motor finance sector. He has already made an impact with new business but also brought an external perspective which continues to be very helpful.

A lot of background work in the motor finance sector is about working with

finance broker contacts and to win business from them. The task is to persuade the brokers that SMF is the best company for them to direct their client's business to. By streamlining and updating the business, SMF has aimed to place it at the top of the list brokers will be looking at.

Pat said: "Apart from business from car dealerships, the industry now generates a huge amount of leads from direct internet approaches. When someone uses the internet, they very often go with the first company that responds to their enquiry. So speed is of the essence in getting a response back to that person."

But of course, offers to loan have to be qualified by a number of factors which assess that person's ability to pay back the loan. Any forensic background checks could be very time consuming – defeating the would-be client's demands for a very fast response.

SMF has developed and adopted a number of

how important data is to our business – it's our lifeblood. Data is now a key focus for us, and we are getting better at it all the time.

Pat added "The whole motor finance market is so fast moving, you have to embrace Fintech (financial technology) methods to use data better and develop more agile ways of working supported by IT. The new platform which was successfully integrated this year has already paid dividends. Artificial Intelligence will undoubtedly aid SMF's analytical powers in the future'

David added: "By 2020 we need to be even more advanced. We have now secured borrowings of £150 million to give us the base for future growth. But we know we still have much to do.

"Using our automated systems, we know how quickly we can generate an automatic decline for a loan, we need to get much better at our automatic accepts and we are working hard at methods of converting and retaining business.

The growth of SMF has generated new jobs at the company offices in Chester with recent investment in a new data department headed by a senior manager. It has also meant SMF has expanded its office into the existing building. Pat said: "We are not looking to increase overheads, but these positions are vital to our future agility and growth."

Profits are up considerably from £1.5 million last year to around £4 million, a credible increase from a business that was a start up just a couple of years ago. "We know what we have to reach in terms of returns for the group and are focussed on achieving those. I think the potential is now clear to all," said David.

As usual with finance and figures, it's easy to forget that motor finance companies deal with people and the industry often gets a bad Press for that.

David Challinor sees both sides of the picture. "Often people turn to finance companies when

"IF WE CAN HELP THEM BY WAY OF A FINANCE LOAN IT'S A PART OF HELPING THEM GET THEIR LIVES BACK TOGETHER AGAIN. HELPING TO REPAIR A PERSON'S CREDIT WORTHINESS IS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE A VERY POSITIVE THING."

key tools to speed the process of due diligence and the use of automated data checking and automated response systems are among some of the big game changers. "Our ambition is for decisions to be made on 90% of applications within just 10 seconds" said David. He added: "We will for ever be improving our scorecard and levels of automation, it's just what we do."

Data, and how to analyse and interrogate it, has become paramount. David explained: "Data is super important to us. It's the next game changer in the industry and we must develop the tools to accumulate it, interpret it and use it to predict from – it's just so critical to our business.

"We might have been slightly shy about data ownership in the past, but we now know just

"The ideal customer you want is someone who has secured a loan from us, paid it back and then approaches us again for a further loan as they had such good service from us first time round.

"Our business market is so dynamic that things are changing in front of our eyes. Competition is fierce, time scales shorten, and new technology is part of a new wave driving the sector on. We have to be part of that, and we are, but we need to be much better. One of our goals is to be better everyday than we were yesterday. There is much to do!"

Bad debt is part of any finance business too and the SMF team are developing coping strategies in that area to minimise losses. "Better predictive capacity and better execution are very much in our plans," said David.

things happen in their lives which are completely unexpected and out of their control.

"They could suddenly be made redundant, suffer bereavement or be going through a divorce. These are life changing events that happen to decent people. Sometimes they lose everything but fight to get back on their feet and having a car is often vital for them.

"If we can help them by way of a finance loan it's a part of helping them get their lives back together again. Helping to repair a person's credit worthiness is something that can be a very positive thing."

Developing and deepening relationships with customers is another human side of the story that SMF is keen not to overlook as the business looks to the future.



# IM PROPERTIES LEADS THE TREND FOR CITY-CENTRE LIVING

WORK IS NEARING COMPLETION ON A £53 MILLION PROJECT THAT MARKS THE START OF A NEW ERA FOR IM PROPERTIES AND BOOSTS THE ATTRACTION OF BIRMINGHAM AS ONE OF EUROPE'S FASTEST DEVELOPING CITIES. HATTY GOURN REPORTS.

The 10-storey Newhall Square development sees the completion of 230 build-to-rent apartments and marks the first development in the alternative sector for IM Properties.

The project has transformed a rundown canal-side site on the fringe of the city centre into an attractive destination to live, offering immediate access to the city centre.

The site was once home to the Birmingham Science Museum. Its situation alongside the Birmingham and Fazeley canal, and being overlooked by adjacent buildings, presented many construction challenges.

IM Properties had to work closely with Historic England and Birmingham City Council conservation officers to retain some of the ancillary listed structures and enhance the original features to preserve the integrity of the listed buildings while delivering a premium product.

The site itself was very constrained making it difficult to access for many of the large construction rigs. So great skill was needed to navigate the site and preserve aspects of its architectural history. IM Properties had to overcome legal issues such as party walls and rights-of-light as well as a number of ground issues

The end result after two years of planning and building is 230 modern apartments with a public square and canal frontage. It has 7,500 sq ft of ground floor retail space and 4,500 sq ft of shared private-amenity space including a private dining room and a cinema room. Nothing else in central Birmingham has the same offering and character.

Iain McArthur, Director at IM Properties, secured a forward funding agreement with

institutional investor Legal and General, which selected Newhall Square as its first build-to-rent scheme in Birmingham, setting a new benchmark rental level for the city.

Iain said: "Newhall Square is the best build-to-rent scheme in Birmingham due to its high-quality design and internal specification and its close proximity to the city centre.

"Birmingham has undergone a renaissance in recent years. A wave of regeneration is taking place across the city fuelled by significant private investment and the implementation of major infrastructure schemes.

"With such levels of development taking place, it would be reasonable to expect that activity might wane. But this has not been the case with more planning consents being sought and granted."

Iain added: "With the emergence of the build-to-rent sector since 2013, there has been around 1,000 units being constructed or delivered within Birmingham City Centre with a further 1,500 units to be delivered over the next 12 months. The total Birmingham pipeline from pre-planning sites onwards shows circa 20,000 units could be delivered over the next five to seven years doubling its current housing supply."

Iain sees this sort of real estate development in the UK, although still in its early stages, as representing an exciting growth opportunity for investors and developers like IM Properties.

He said: "Institutions are already active. But we expect appetite and activity to grow substantially. Investors appreciate the underlying demographic drivers and the design and management considerations particular to the sector.

"Build-to-rent is a growth market, fuelled by increasing numbers of young professionals moving into Birmingham. It bridges the gap for those unable to purchase a property but looking for a well-designed, contemporary apartment with excellent shared amenities as part of the building and on their doorstep.

"Across the UK build-to-rent has enormous growth potential at just under £10 billion today. The market predicts, at full maturity, it will be worth almost £550 billion."

With a population of more than 1 million, Birmingham is the largest regional centre in the UK outside of London in terms of both population and economic performance. It is home to more than 75,000 companies, including 1,000 international businesses, again the largest concentration outside of the capital.

Birmingham has a glowing list of key factors which are a driving force behind the city's dramatic economic rise which in turn is pushing demand for rental homes.

It's the most entrepreneurial Core City in the UK – a group of 10 major cities outside of London. Latest figures show Birmingham has 12,108 start-up firms against 8,295 in Manchester. Twenty universities within an hour's drive of Birmingham produce 112,800 graduates a year.

Birmingham secured a record 111 Foreign Direct Investments in 2016; double that of a decade ago and a 21% increase from 2015. The city attracts 37.5 million visitors per year for business and leisure and is home to world class conference and exhibition facilities such as the NEC and the International Convention Centre.

The city centre has a thriving dining scene with more Michelin star restaurants than any other Core City and Birmingham is rated the UK's most attractive Core City with more than 600 parks and open spaces.

Against this backdrop, Iain sees a very bright future for both Birmingham and IM Properties' role in its continuing growth.

He said: "Birmingham has significant opportunities for rental growth with prime rents forecast to reach £23 to £25 per sq ft by 2021. Strong occupier demand, inward investment and a constrained development pipeline is paving the way for rents to increase from the current level of £20 per sq ft.

"Newhall Square was originally acquired by L&G in 2017 based on an achievable rent of £20 per sq ft. But L&G released the completed units in October 2019 at an average rent of £22.50 per sq ft representing circa 5% per annum rental growth even over its construction period.

"Population growth is expected to be strong in Birmingham with an extra 50,000 people forecast to be living in the city by 2023, equivalent to a growth rate of 0.9% pa over the five-year period. One factor driving the population growth is the availability of jobs. The job growth story is expected to continue over the next five years with employment growth averaging 1.1% pa in Birmingham, well above the national average of 0.5% pa.

IM PROPERTIES





# Haseley Manor

## A LABOUR OF LOVE

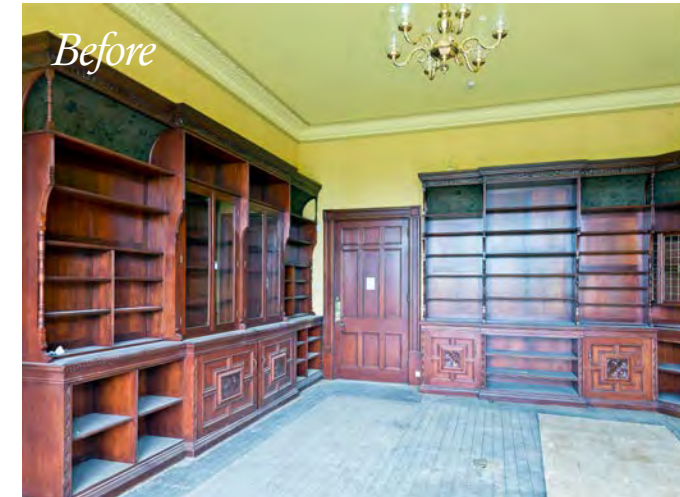
SITUATED IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND, CLOSE TO THE MEDIEVAL COUNTY TOWN OF WARWICK, IS HASELEY MANOR, A NEO-GOTHIC FORMER STately RESIDENCE DATING BACK TO 1854.

The current Manor was conceived in the Victorian era and grand residences have occupied this secluded rural position since as far back as the Norman conquest in 1066

With its gothic towers, ornate colonnade and foreboding gargoyles, the current grand manor was designed by famous Scottish architect, William Young, for an industrial baron of the time. The romantic flourishes, striking turrets and dramatic archways are all embedded within gothic and Elizabethan inspiration. Haseley was recognised as the masterpiece of Young's creations and it sits beautifully within the now newly-restored parkland setting.

More recently, Haseley Manor had been used to accommodate orphans between the first and second world wars and in the mid 1960s became a staff training college for the British Motor Corporation and later British Leyland.

Despite its listed status, British Leyland had developed ugly and inappropriate office accommodation which, until recently, flanked the Manor in a most unapologetic fashion.







In the early 1990s, IM Group Chairman Bob Edmiston saw the potential in the property. He acquired it for the IM Group, where it became the home of IM Properties from 1994 to 2012 together with a series of serviced office suites. As the need for more modern office facilities and the integration of technology grew, demand for such outdated space began to wane and the economic life for what once was a thriving office campus ended.

only be known once any developer was fully committed - and in too far to turn back. Coinciding with its closure in 2012 was the growth of IM's housebuilding arm, Spitfire Bespoke Homes. The decision was taken, and not taken lightly, to tackle the challenges faced by the property's redevelopment head on. So began a labour of love. Following an arduous battle with the local planning authority, consent was obtained to convert the Manor house into 13 apartments. To one side, occupying the plot once housed by IM Properties, would be a single detached residence. On the opposite side a much larger 1970s office building

would be demolished and replaced with a courtyard of eight character residences, all in keeping and complimenting the architecture of the Manor itself. The whole process was shrouded in irony, and the battle to achieve consent never seemed to reflect the obvious benefits to the Manor that the demolition of ugly buildings and the replacement by character buildings would offer. What Spitfire has done is nothing less than remarkable. The first show apartment opened to the public and sold within a week. Seven of the nine houses were sold off-plan. Several senior executives of the IM Group are among people who have purchased their

new homes at Haseley Manor. As Andrew Edmiston, Managing Director of the IM Group said: "If you have people buying their own product, surely you can't get a better endorsement than that. And who can blame them, the apartments and houses that have emerged at Haseley Manor are just absolutely stunning."

The restoration of the Manor itself has been painstaking. The entire interior of the house has been stripped back to an empty shell. Specialist highly-skilled craftsman have been found to work on and restore historic parts with specific materials used to ensure that every detail has been faithfully restored.

Mike Lapworth, the architect for the scheme, acknowledged the task that faced him and the Spitfire team. He said: "Blending the new with the old and respecting the setting of the Manor house was the key objective of Spitfire's design brief."

"The intention from the outset was to create a timeless design but one which looked established; a truly special place that could have always been there."

Inside the building every one of the 13 newly-created one, two and three-bedroom apartments display the work of these craftsmen. Ornate oak wooden panelling has been restored or replaced, often using traditional hand tools rather than modern power tools. Stone mullioned windows, although now fitted with energy-efficient double-glazed panels, have been brought back to life and features such as the handsome fireplaces had to be carefully removed and meticulously restored. Modern wood- burning stoves now give a warm, romantic glow and are a centrepiece of the rooms.

There have been no compromises in the restoration which is ongoing and due to complete in 2020. The unique character of the Manor has been retained but now includes contemporary features to cater for modern living.

Each kitchen is bespoke and designed for each one of the apartments – no two are alike. Bathrooms and kitchens are equipped with the highest quality fixtures and fittings using premium brands.

All the apartments have been hard-wired for super-fast data transfer and high definition cable and satellite reception.

The whole Haseley Manor project has been a labour of love for everyone involved, from Spitfire's hand-picked trades people to the architectural team and the gardeners and landscapers, all of whom have taken a great deal of pride in their work. Thirty years on from its acquisition the property has now at last realised the potential Lord Edmiston saw in it on day one.





# APPETITE FOR ALTERNATIVES GROWS AMID RETAIL UNCERTAINTY

“CHANGE IS SOMETHING WE ARE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO GET USED TO, DISRUPTION IS THE NEW NORM” SAYS JOHN HAMMOND, UK INVESTMENT DIRECTOR FOR IM PROPERTIES.

The real estate landscape is changing at an unprecedented rate. Values of assets can rise and fall almost as quickly as shares on the stock exchange - nothing seems gradual anymore. So how does IM Properties rise to meet such challenges arising from this uncertainty?

John Hammond has some authority to talk on this subject. Since joining IM in 2010 he has been responsible for the company's acquisition and disposal programme in the UK and the overall performance of the UK investment portfolio. He has been involved in more than £4 billion of transactions across the retail, office, distribution, residential and hotel sectors.

Part of his job is to command a full understanding of the commercial property sector, and to anticipate trends in the market which could create opportunity.

So what are the 'alternative investment' areas? John explained: “They include residential, such as student accommodation; hotels and serviced apartments, care homes and retirement living, car parks, data centres and self storage.

“They are all grouped under the heading of alternatives, but my view is that in time they will break out of this and will become sectors in their own right. Investors have generally had some exposure to these so-called alternatives. But it has

been in the most part quite small in terms of the percentage of portfolios.”

John went on: “On the other hand retail has traditionally been a much bigger part of a standard portfolio. In many cases the UK Institutions have invested 20-30% into retail on the high street, shopping centres and out of town.

“What we are talking about here is a move away from retail and the increasing move into the alternatives sphere.”

John sees the move from traditional retail property investment as being driven by both a carrot and stick approach as companies and people recognise and accept the need for change.

“THE UK IS WAY BEHIND AND IT HAS ONLY BEEN IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE SWING TOWARDS BUILD-TO-RENT”

He explained: “The structural shift in retail, you could argue, has been going on for the past decade. Online sales accounted for just 3% of total sales in 2007 and today it's approximately 20%.

“So, change has been happening for a while, but it has accelerated over the past two to three years compounded by rising costs that include business rates, wages and, of course, Brexit uncertainty. So, in short the sector is going through a period of flux which is leading to dramatic reductions in retail space required.

“Retailers operate on core principles, they make money from floor space and so the more floor space the more money they made traditionally. This has led to decades of rising rents driven by competition for pitch. Retailers happily went about their business buying and building stores and making money from 'these brick buildings whilst in the background the growth of the buying on-line was increasing exponentially. Some existing retailers got it and quickly set about adjusting their strategy. Some didn't and have subsequently died.”

John says that if you fast forward to where we are today a perfect storm has been created with rising costs for the retailer both in terms of goods, staff and property costs. They have ended up with too much physical space and they have had to urgently reduce this.

Increased competition from pure online retailers with lower overheads and more efficient supply chains stand at the gates of the traditional retail outlets.

All of this results in: weaker companies going to the wall and the rise of Company Voluntary Arrangements ahead of administration; falling rents, less demand for space in many areas, capital values falling and distressed sales.

John paints the outline as to why the alternative sector is becoming attractive. He said: “There are fundamental structural changes in society with a shift towards flexibility on all fronts. People are looking to rent their living accommodation rather than buy. This is not only because prices are unaffordable, too many there is a desire to stay foot-loose in terms of employment and location.

This flexibility in turn feeds a more transient trend where accommodation of all types on a flexible rented basis is in demand. This is closely reflected in things such as budget hotels, student accommodation, and even retirement living. Even in retail, we have seen the rise of the pop up store and the fall of traditional department stores.

“Build-to-rent property is a natural move from living in student accommodation. These young people prefer smaller rooms and larger break out and amenity areas. The government want less of the unruly landlord type scenarios with a preference for larger institutional landlords looking after tenants.”

This is a massive sector in other parts of the globe, says John. “The UK is way behind and it has only been in the last five years that we have seen the swing towards build-to-rent,” he added.

Large financial funds never liked the residential





IM PROPERTIES

sector as they were concerned over reputational risk. “But that is long gone,” said John. “People need to live somewhere and the population is growing against a background of a lack of housing. Renting addresses the need and delivers it quicker.

“This sector gives excellent rental growth; it’s more resilient with income spread over a number of tenants and not just one. Landlords get fed up with tenants going bust and being left with holes in their rental income. So now they are taking more of an operational role, which is interesting.”

John sees lots of these alternative investments offering what traditional sectors offered 25 years ago. He explained: “Back in the day most leases were for 25 years. Now the average lease is six years. You can still get 25 years in hotels, purpose-built student blocks and the like, so investors love this lower risk stock.

“With lots of the alternatives your downside is protected, i.e. if a hotel goes bust you, the property owner, can run it as a hotel with minimal fuss. You can’t say that for retail or offices.”

John says IM Properties spotted that this change in attitudes was coming. “However, we have been surprised with the speed at which it has happened,” he said.

Build-to-rent is a key element of alternative investments for IM Properties.

Plans are under way to look at both new sites and to convert parts of underutilised shopping centres to vibrant mixed-use destinations. There are plans afoot for such development at Mell Square in Solihull.

A Travelodge in Battersea, London, which IM Properties owns, is likely to be demolished and replaced with a new hotel alongside a build-to-rent tower of 20 storeys or more with 200 apartments.

Soon, work on Newhall Square in Birmingham will have been completed. This is a £53 million build-to-rent scheme (see the full story on p60) and plans are at an advanced stage for a second project of a similar scale in Cardiff. John said: “We ideally want two of these coming out of the ground a year which is hard work but achievable.”

During the last three years IM Properties has

acquired a total of £140 million worth of hotels. John said: “It’s a sector we like and want to do more in. Our plan is to grow our portfolio through a blend of acquisitions and developments.”

A team dedicated to exploiting the ‘alternative investment’ market has been created within IM Properties and IM Land including the appointment of Asset Developer, Harry Goodman, to spearhead this drive.

Build-to-rent is seeing a big push for the business and Iain McArthur, a specialist in this area was recruited in 2018 and Ross Evans, who worked for Spitfire Bespoke Homes, were brought in to drive this forward.

John said: “We don’t like to jump two-footed into new areas, so we are feeling our way. But I could quite easily see the ‘living’ element of the business growing to a scale similar to our logistics business in time.

“There is a desire to grow the alternatives development arm of the business to a £10m profit line per annum within the next five years. In terms of investment, we should be looking to have a minimum of 25% in this area if not more.”

Have other companies embraced the alternative market in the same way? John answers: “The hottest money in the market right now is for build-to-rent followed by logistics. So yes, others see the opportunity. But we have been in logistics a long time, so we are well positioned for this.

“Build-to-rent is new not only for IM Properties but for everyone. The skill is securing the right sites at the right time. While there is some capital out there willing to grow at any cost, we will do it right. If the market gets overheated, we will wait on the sidelines.

“On its own build-to-rent is a £10 billion market capable of growing to more than £550 billion in the next 10 years. The growth therefore is strong. It is also relatively recession proof. When we enter a recession, it has been proven that rents can actually grow. What a downturn, however, would do is hit confidence and also hit the contractor market. The build-to-rent market is very much development-lead so with that comes risk.”



“BUILD-TO-RENT IS  
NEW NOT ONLY FOR  
IM PROPERTIES BUT  
FOR EVERYONE.”

### Show Home Coming Soon

The Roundelay Collection features a selection of seven detached houses and bungalows from Spitfire Bespoke Homes. Standing within the charming village of Snitterfield, each residence combines stunning architecture with unique luxury interiors.

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Spitfire Bespoke Homes’ advertisement for The Roundelay Collection of seven homes in the charming Warwickshire village of Snitterfield, not far from Stratford-upon-Avon, highlights a prestigious development in what is a key geographical location for the company. In Welford-on-Avon, another Warwickshire village close to Stratford, Spitfire has built 10 homes at its Milbank development while in Stratford itself it is just starting its Consilio development – the largest undertaken so far with 135 bespoke homes off Loxley Road.

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# LEVORG'S LAST HURRAH!

SUBARU'S RACING LEVORG SCORED A DEFIANT VICTORY IN THE FINAL ROUND OF THE 2019 KWIK FIT BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP AS A FITTING CLIMAX TO AN AMAZING FOUR-YEAR CAMPAIGN.



WHEN SUBARU  
FIRST ENTERED A  
TEAM IN THE BTCC  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
BACK IN 2016 THE  
PUNDITS WROTE  
OFF THE LEVORG'S  
CHANCES BEFORE  
THE CARS HAD EVEN  
TURNED A WHEEL.

PHOTOS BY JAKOB EBREY

## BTCC CHAMPIONSHIP



But with 21 race victories, 55 podiums and Levorg driver Ash Sutton clinching the 2017 championship, Subaru proved them wrong! During the four year campaign the Subaru battled it out with racing Hondas, BMWs and a host of other established teams – and often won.

The end of the four year deal with the BMR Racing squad, which ran the Adrian Flux Subaru Racing team, coincides with fundamental changes to next season's championship which would have ruled out the Levorg taking part anyway. Next year new BTCC rules mean that all teams have to run on the same standard four-cylinder in-line engine and the Levorg's boxer engine – part of the brand's essential DNA – would be banned.

So the final round of the 2019 season at the famous Grand Prix layout at the Brands Hatch circuit in Kent proved a fitting finale for the racing Levorgs.

Heavy rain didn't deter one of the largest crowds of the season and provided ideal conditions for the Subarus which excel in the wet.

After a rollercoaster season, 2017 champion Sutton set a blistering time in the penultimate race of the three-race programme at Brands. After an epic battle over 18-laps of the circuit, his Levorg was an astonishing five seconds-plus ahead of a trailing BMW. In racing terms that's as long as a coffee break!

The drama continued in the final race of the day and the 2019 season when Sutton's Levorg, heavily weighed down by the BTCC's bizarre rule of giving the previous race winner a 57kg weight ballast for his efforts, blasted from tenth on the grid to a podium third spot.





Team principal Warren Scott paid a heartfelt tribute to the collaboration with Subaru which resulted in them being regular race winners over the past four seasons.

Scott said: “We have been on an incredible and highly successful journey with Subaru in the BTCC. It was a unique car when we built it and we have taken the team and the Levorg to the very pinnacle of UK motorsport.

“It has been a pleasure to represent Subaru and to share the spotlight of success with the brand has been a fantastic achievement for us both.”

Subaru finished third in the manufacturers/constructors’ points in its maiden season, then in 2017 took second spot in the manufacturers-constructors’ championship while Sutton took the overall drivers’ crown.

In 2018, Sutton in the Levorg scored six victories in the championship - more race wins than any other driver - and was fourth in the championship, and Subaru was fourth in the manufacturers-constructors’ standings.

Sutton took one win and finished eighth in the points this year alongside team-mate Senna Proctor, while Subaru was fourth in the manufacturers-constructors’ rankings.

Paul Tunncliffe, who recently retired from IM, took what was regarded at the time as a ludicrous decision to go racing with the Levorg, looks back with satisfaction and pride at the huge success of the BTCC championships.

## BTCC CHAMPIONSHIP

THE CAR’S  
UNIQUENESS  
BROUGHT SOMETHING  
DIFFERENT TO THE  
GRID, WHICH WE  
THINK CONNECTED  
WITH PEOPLE

He said: “We started as the underdogs and no-one gave us a chance of winning anything. But it’s been a great adventure with huge highs and lows but put the Subaru brand in front of hundreds of thousands of people.

“We were able to demonstrate and prove the huge strengths of Subaru and we certainly opened the eyes of motorsport fans who, until then, had only associated the brand with rallying.”

Paul, who was at the Brands final rounds, added: “With the Levorg we brought something different to the grid. But technical regulation changes worked against the car’s unique configuration with the famous boxer engine and the less aerodynamic estate body which meant it struggled this season.

“It was satisfying, therefore, to enjoy the fruits of success at Brands Hatch, even though we were too late to spoil the party for BMW and Honda. Ash showed just what a formidable competitor he is throughout the weekend, and so we

were left wondering what might have been.

“Sadly, we have to accept that amendments on rulings mean that the Subaru Levorg may have raced for the last time. The car’s uniqueness brought something different to the grid, which we think connected with people – certainly there was never any shortage of Subaru road cars in all the car parks.”

Paul complimented the team’s efforts to get the very best out of the Levorg: “Huge thanks must go out to all at BMR. There have certainly been highs and lows, but throughout I have been impressed by a team that has gone about its business and kept focused on delivering the results.”





# IRISH EYES ARE SHINING AS SALES SURGE

STATISTICS DON'T ALWAYS TELL LIES AND PAT RYAN, WHO HEADS IM'S CAR OPERATIONS IN IRELAND, CAN LOOK WITH SATISFACTION ON AT LEAST ONE OF THEM.

Looking at the third quarter figures for 2019 one stark fact stands out – the car market in the Republic has shrunk by nearly 8% which is a worry for anyone in the industry.

But Pat can afford a wry smile when he reviews Citroën's performance. Pat, his team and a revitalised network of dealerships have seen the brand share of the market increase from 1.68% in 2018 to 1.74% in 2019.

As well as boosting Citroën's market share, latest available figures show that targets for unit sales were also exceeded.

"That may not sound a lot," says Pat. "But believe me to increase share in a declining market is quite something and hides the sheer hard work of our team and some brilliant dealers."

But Pat, who now has almost two years under his belt as Managing Director of Citroën Ireland, is not content with that. He has ambitious plans to accelerate the brand to even greater heights. And key to that is the drive to increase the dealer network.

During 2018 there was a renewal of around 25 % of the dealer network and Pat is on plan to see a similar figure for 2019 as the year reaches its closing stage.

Shortage of product had slowed plans for the vital early part of the year, when there is a registration plate change in Ireland, but September was a stand-out month in 2019 with Citroën's market share surging from 1.96% to 2.65%.

Individual product figures for the third quarter of 2019 are impressive. The quirky C3 has seen

an 18% increase in sales with the C3Aircross SUV being not far behind at a 16% growth. In the commercial vehicle sector, sales of Berlingo vans rose by 21%.

Pat said: "With our programme of expanding the dealer network we have seen sales through the network in the first nine months of 2019 increase by 411 units which is equal to a 27% rise.

"New dealer opening are the key to our growth plans and we are making great headway. After growing the network in 2018 and through to 2019 we have several new openings in the pipeline.

"We are about to appoint a new dealer in Galway and an additional new dealer is being appointed in Cork, the second largest city in Ireland. That brings our outlets in the city to three."

Other new appointments are on the cards for the south east area of Ireland and if they go on to match the results lodged by Fort Motors in South Dublin, appointed in late 2018, sales will increase again. In less than a year the Fort outlet notched up more than 250 sales – quite staggering given the relatively small size of the Ireland new car market.

The fleet and leasing department within Pat's business has been completely overhauled and reorganised. There is now a professional dedicated fleet specialist within each dealership and they have helped to bank early orders going through to 2020.

Pat and his team sit in offices that could not be closer to the heart of the Ireland car market. They moved out of their old HQ close to Dublin airport, to the new location at the high-security National Vehicle Distribution (NVD) centre nearer to the outskirts of the city.

The new headquarters for IM's operations in Ireland are far better than the previous offices. The location in Brownsbarn in West Dublin is immediately off the N7 - the country's main route connecting Dublin to Limerick in the south west. It is surrounded by a bustling industrial community with an array of businesses from

other automotive brands, offices and hotels and is opposite Ireland's Independent News & Media landmark print centre.

"It's the Irish equivalent of IM's distribution centre at Sheerness in the UK," explained Pat. "There can be 10,000 to 13,000 imported cars in the compounds which have been brought from the ports before being sent out to dealers."

Looking ahead to 2020 Pat, who has worked in the automotive industry all his working life and holds an MBA, has a positive outlook. He said: "We have built up a proven ability to attract high-quality dealers, many from other volume franchises.

"Our whole Citroën organisation has been restructured and our forward order bank for 2020 is significantly up. What we have now is far different from the network that IM inherited when we opened the business in 2015.

"We have the financial strength of IM behind us and we are determined to perform at the highest level in what is almost certainly going to continue to be a challenging market."

Pat points out that some of the recent successful sales figures could have been even more impressive. But he has stamped out the pattern of pre-registrations which make the figures look good, but in fact present a false picture.

He emphasised that pre-registrations eventually reduced profits on new vehicle sales. Pat added: "We have taken huge steps forward and there is a real buzz among the business and the dealer network now. It's still work in progress but we are continuing to make great strides forward and everyone is playing their part in that."

The Republic of Ireland is far from alone in seeing a significant fall off in new car sales. It's part of a world economy slump hitting the automotive sector hard.

In the UK registrations of new cars fell by 2.8% from January to October 2019 with some brands down by as much as 57%.

"OUR WHOLE CITROËN ORGANISATION HAS BEEN RESTRUCTURED AND OUR FORWARD ORDER BANK FOR 2020 IS SIGNIFICANTLY UP. WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE NETWORK THAT IM INHERITED WHEN WE OPENED THE BUSINESS IN 2015."



# CITROËN IS THE FUTURE FOR JAMES TOMKINS

WHEN JAMES TOMKINS STARTED TO REPAIR CARS IN A TUMBLE DOWN GARAGE BEHIND HIS DAD'S HOUSE IN GOREY IN IRELAND'S 'SUNNY SOUTH-EAST', LITTLE DID HE KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE THE START OF A HUGE-SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS.

But James has never been short of drive and ambition. He left school when he was just 14 years old because he preferred getting his hands dirty fixing engines and gearboxes to sitting behind a school classroom desk.

Since then it has been hard work, long hours and a dedication to customer service which have proved a recipe for success for James and his seen his business thrive.

Now a new chapter in his automotive business life has started as James is at the forefront of a new wave of Citroën dealers

being appointed across Ireland. And James has grasped the opportunity with both hands.

He said: "Taking decisions in business always has a risk side to it, but I've never been surer of anything before as I am about taking on the Citroën franchise."

Gorey, in County Wexford, is about 65 miles south of Dublin and due to the high cost of houses in the Irish capital, Gorey has become a commuter town. The M11 motorway means Dublin is about one-and-a-half hour drive away.

As James' first automotive adventure as

a teenager gradually expanded he took on a friend as the workload built up. He won contracts to repair cars for the Garda, the Irish police, and big insurance companies started to give him a lot of work as his reputation grew.

In 1996 James spotted an opportunity when he bought a run down site in the heart of Gorey which included a large old Army building. Although that building was not brilliant, the 1.5 acre site was probably the best location in town at the top of the town's main shopping street. It sits as a backdrop to The Monument, a famous

cut limestone Celtic Cross flanked by two cannons which commemorates the 1798 Rebellion.

James said: "Everyone knows The Monument so you don't have to give people directions on how to find us. All the town parades and events start from outside our showroom and there are lots of new developments going on now all around us."

As the business continued to grow, James and his wife, Caitriona, worked in the business, later joined with two sons, Cillian and Seamus. Now he has a dedicated staff of 16 – most of who have been with him for many years - and has made a substantial investment in the company.

Having built a new showroom to replace the old Army building 18 years ago, James demolished that and replaced it with a bright, modern open showroom with space for 13 cars. Upstairs are offices and meeting rooms which will allow for future expansion.

Behind the customer car park is a large 10 bay workshop fitted out with eight ramps and modern automotive repair equipment. James is also an RAC recovery agent and runs his own eight-truck strong breakdown service. He's also planning to build a multi-storey car park on the garage site.

More than a €1 million has been invested by James in the new buildings and he sees that as being vital for future of his business.

James added: "Having such a good company as the IM Group behind the Citroën operation in Ireland is a positive factor in giving us confidence for the future."

Although James and his team have been selling Citroën for less than a year, they have already exceeded their targets for both cars sales and parts. James added: "We've just had a great month. I don't want to say too much because all our competitors would love to know, but let's say both us and IM are more than satisfied!"

"But its next year when we get our hands on the vans that will be a real key date for us. We are already talking to people about it and prospective van customers are approaching us, very keen to find out more.

"I think 2020 will be a real turning point for Citroën in Ireland and we are delighted to be part of the dealer network which I think will go from strength-to-strength."

James has great contacts with many of the sports clubs in the Gorey and Wexford area and many of the team's shirts are displayed on various walls throughout the showroom, offices and workshop.



PAT RYAN MANAGING DIRECTOR, JAMES TOMKINS AND KEVIN HILLIARD SALES DIRECTOR







FROM A COW FIELD TO ONE OF THE NEWEST CAR SHOWROOMS IN IRELAND WAS THE JOURNEY FOR NEW CITROËN DEALER, JOHN ADAMS.

When John Adams started his garage business in Portlaoise 35 years ago he built and opened a Honda dealership. Sitting alongside that showroom were two fields. John built his family home in one field and grazed cattle on the other. But when his son Clive took over running the business it didn't take him long to cast his eyes over the potential of the pasture land which overlooks the Ballymacken roundabout on the busy R425. It's one of the key approach roads to Portlaoise, a key town in the Irish Midlands. Clive explained: "We realised that drivers had to slow down for the roundabout and that meant that they had a direct view of the site. It was then that I started to think about

a second car dealership and what a great vantage point it would have for potential customers." A planning application was put in during 2015 and it took two years to win approval, but it was eventually granted. It then took about 18 months for the €1 million new showroom and workshop to be constructed. The showroom was complete before Clive, the Managing Director of John Adams Car Sales, had secured a franchise for what was one of Ireland's newest dealer complexes. He recalled: "It didn't take us long to decide Citroën had a great future here and we wanted to be part of it. They have a great range of good value family cars and of course the van range is so strong."

Clive has the automotive business in his blood. He learnt his trade from an early aged helping his father and then went to Bolton Street College in Dublin to study Motor Industry Management. His father had worked for various automotive companies including Fiat, Lancia and BL, rising through the management ranks. Clive followed in his father's footsteps and worked in a variety of roles in the trade from a technician to parts and after sales. He can also remember valeting cars until 10.00pm to make sure customers took delivery of their cars in sparkling condition! Clive took over running the sales side the family Honda business and his brother, Glenn, led the parts and service operation.

Padraig Clancy, who was one of Ireland's foremost Gaelic football stars, joined the business from Renault in 2019 to head the Citroën sales side and can hardly be missed. Standing at 6ft 5ins and with a mop of striking red hair, the amiable Irishman has already won over many new customers. He's renamed the Ballymacken roundabout as the 'Adams roundabout'! The new Citroën dealership, which has been designed for future expansion, is a statement of intent, says Padraig.

Clive thinks the next year will still throw up challenges, even though he fully agrees with Padraig's optimism regarding the brand going forward. Clive pointed out: "There are pressures around 'green issues' in the automotive sector and the effects of Brexit and the general slowdown in the world economy is something we will have to contend with.

"But we now have a fantastic new showroom and we have a great range of cars and vans for a wide cross-section of people." Clive and Padraig have set out a programme to raise Citroën awareness in their local community. This ranges from being involved in local golf classics to supporting swimming clubs, local gaelic athletic associations and rugby clubs.

CITROËN



"BUT WE NOW HAVE A FANTASTIC NEW SHOWROOM AND WE HAVE A GREAT RANGE OF CARS AND VANS FOR A WIDE CROSS-SECTION OF PEOPLE."







# ORDERS TAKEN AHEAD OF NEW HYBRID-ELECTRIC SUBARU LAUNCH IN IRELAND

**EVEN BEFORE SUBARU'S  
NEW FORESTER E-BOXER  
HYBRID WENT ON SALE,  
CUSTOMERS IN IRELAND  
HAD PLACED ORDERS.**

One existing Forester customer will even be returning home from Australia to see the car he ordered while 10,000 miles away! He had chatted to his dealer back home and was so impressed that he placed his order.

Ireland's Subaru boss, Pat Ryan, says dealerships have responded very positively to the new Forester. He said: "We've had a great response and several dealers have pre-sold to existing customers as well as a couple of conquest sales to the brand.

"The customer who was on holiday in Australia placed an order for an XE Premium in Crimson Red with a black/brown interior after he heard about the new car there. He rang his dealer here in Ireland who talked him through all the specifications and options and the customer placed his order there and then."

The final element of dealer training in sales and aftersales for the new e-Boxer took place at the end of November at the training centre in Subaru Ireland's new headquarters in Brownsbarn, West Dublin.

Pat added: "We have great facilities here in training rooms and garage work stations that provide a complete package to our dealers. Our dealers are currently looking to the future with the e-Boxer and

most would not have a hybrid vehicle if they have been with other brands.

"Our new offices are ideal for sales training. As well as the great training rooms we have a brilliant mix of driving conditions right outside the front door with the N7 offering long stretches of motorway."

The mountains and rural back roads are close too. Pat said: "All are areas where we can demonstrate the driving dynamics and considerable benefits and safety features of the new Forester e-Boxer."

Motoring journalists were given the opportunity to push the new Forester along at the Rally School of Ireland. It gave the writers a chance to test the car's Driver Monitoring System designed to help protect both driver and passengers alike.

Pat pointed out: "The fantastic Eyesight system is still a very important product for the safety of the occupants and other road users. To reinforce the message to the Press we demonstrated emergency braking in both front and rear collisions scenarios.

"Finally the journalists had a real treat with some rally action on the track in two Impreza WRX Rally Spec cars. Professional drivers made sure they finished the day safely, but on an absolute high!"

# GOING GREEN MAKES BUSINESS SENSE

GOING 'GREEN' IS MORE THAN  
JUST A TREND AS BUSINESSES  
ARE RAPIDLY CHANGING THE  
WAY THEY WORK TO TAKE  
ACCOUNT OF SUSTAINABILITY  
AND RELATED TOPICS.

The IM Group is already using environmentally friendly products and techniques across almost all sectors of the business – and has been doing in surprising ways for longer than many people might realise.

For example, when IM Properties redeveloped 55 Colmore Row in Birmingham city centre, it wrapped the whole building in 2,445 sq metres of a special PVC protective material. This is a fairly common practise on landmark locations, but the wrapping is then usually scrapped once the project has been completed.

However, IM Properties had the foresight back in 2015 to use a material that was easy to re-cycle and it went on to become yurts for needy people in North Africa and Greece.

On the automotive side of the business the first alternative fuel cars were introduced to the market in late 2019 with the Subaru XV e-Boxer and Forester e-Boxer.

Customer and dealer reaction in the UK, Ireland and the Nordic markets to the new models has already proved to be strong and positive. Alongside these hybrid cars, pure electric plug-in cars are likely to be added to the range in the near future.

Figures from the Society of Manufacturers and Motor Traders

(SMMT), the UK trade body responsible for collating new car registration figures, has reported that alternatively-powered cars – although still small in volume – is showing the largest growth of any sector of the market.

At the IM Group's new headquarters herbs are grown for the restaurant on the rooftop balconies and the majority of the fruit, vegetables, meats and even fish are sourced from local supplies. This reduces food air miles and, of course, means that only the freshest of materials go into meals prepared in The Bridge restaurant.

Many 'green technologies' were used in the building of The Gate, IM Group's stunning new headquarters. Solar panels reduce both energy bills and the dependence on grid fuel supplies while the clever design of the building lets in more natural light and again reduces the lighting bill.

At many of IM Properties' development sites surface water is directed into flood prevention lakes. At Blythe Valley Park, for example, the water is gradually filtered via a series of reed beds. By the time the water is feed into nearby streams you could, in theory, drink the water as it is by then that clean.



# THE SEVEN-YEAR BATTLE TO BUILD AT THE LAKES



SARAH MILLWARD

IM Properties first became involved in plans to build 750 new homes at The Lakes at Curborough just north of Lichfield in 2012. Three adjoining landowners were keen to realise the value of their land and were in need of a highly experienced land promoter to realise the sites potential.

The land totalled more than 605 acres which could provide up to 4,000 plots.

Following initial discussions with landowners, IM Properties applied for planning permission for the first 750 homes, a primary school, community centre and care home in early 2014. The vision for the site was to be centred around the existing

community comprising an existing countryside centre and fishing lakes, all of which were to be preserved under IM's plans.

Within months the local council rejected the planning application. Yet at around the same time planning Inspectors found that the council's own Local Plan pinpointed a shortfall of 900 houses in the area.

But instead of giving up, IM took that decision to go for a formal Judicial Review against the Lichfield local plan as well as appealing the planning decision which led to a two week long public inquiry in March 2015.

Other formal documents were being exchanged at the same time as the appeal, including studies on ecology, highways and updated statistics on housing demand and population projections.

At one point IM had to invoke the ancient right of giving evidence to a Government Select Committee and plead as 'commoners' which meant one of the team appearing in person at the House of Commons.

All of this was soaking up time and the resources of IM Properties. But it didn't dent the determination or enthusiasm of the IM Land and IM Properties teams.

Just to add another twist to the story, IM's experts had concluded that the only realistic way that the whole site could be developed would be via an access road to the north of the larger site. But, advisors for the HS2 high-speed rail line objected to this because the access road clashed directly with the route they were looking at for the new rail line.

The solution seemed to be a bridge over the proposed HS2 railway line but that would be costly for HS2.

So while IM had to wait on the planning decision on the land, they joined battle with HS2 and in January 2016 gave evidence before the HS2

Select Committee seeking a guaranteed access to the site. Assurances were given by HS2 but only on the condition that IM won its appeal.

In February 2017 Sajid Javid, who was then the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, ruled in IM's favour on the planning appeal and granted outline planning permission for the 750 houses.

You may have though that would be the end of the long running conflict. But no! Lichfield Borough Council legally challenged that decision.

So the fight was then taken to a two-day hearing at the Planning Court heard by one of Britain's most prominent judges, the Rt Hon. Lord Justice Singh. After considering all the evidence, he ruled in IM's favour in September 2017 and only then did Lichfield District Council finally concede.

Jonathan Dyke, IM Land's Strategic Land Director, said: "Even at this stage it had been a long battle and we had to stick to our guns. The council's position meant that we had to fight every inch of the way and it created a huge amount of extra work.

"We kept on good professional terms with the council's officers and everyone could see the merits of the plan which was simply to provide homes and a new school, where there was a pressing

need for them. But then the HS2 involvement meant we had another fight on our hands."

Despite the final legal ruling, HS2 didn't seem to want to address the issue of access to the land and it took the involvement of high ranking officials from the Housing and Regeneration department of the West Midlands Combined Authority to get serious talks going.

In the background throughout 2018 IM staff had to put in many hours of work on very detailed plans for both aspects the 750 houses and the infrastructure surrounds of the vital northern access road.

Sarah Millward, IM Lands Planning Director said "Following the positive appeal decision by the Secretary of State, there was a further 12 months of intensive work relating to the reserved matters application and full application for the spine road and associated infrastructure."

So seven years from the start of what appeared to be a fairly straightforward plan to build new homes and create a new community, IM Properties are at last able to sell on parcels of the land to house builders.

IM PROPERTIES



Jonathan Dyke looked back on the saga. He said: "It was a planning battle of huge proportions but I am very proud of everyone at IM who did a very professional job. Soon we will see the first houses going up but the families who move in will probably have no idea of the mammoth task it took to get their new homes built."



# THE FUTURE IN FOCUS

BY THE TIME THIS EDITION OF THE IM REVIEW LANDS THERE WILL HAVE BEEN ANOTHER UK GENERAL ELECTION AND 2020 SEES ANOTHER US ELECTION. THESE DAYS THE OUTCOME OF ELECTIONS ARE EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT AND THE IMPACT OF THESE TWO ELECTIONS WILL LIKELY BE PROFOUND WITH COMPETING CANDIDATES FOLLOWING VERY DIFFERENT AGENDAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC.

Should the UK elect a more pro-Brexit parliament this time around it seems certain that the UK will, finally, leave the European Union – something that not only affects the UK but also the whole of the EU in a dramatic way. If President Trump is awarded a second term by voters what will that mean for the threat of trade war between the US and China in particular? The outcome of these two elections will affect every global market in which IM is present.

With so much changing in the motor industry and with Chinese investment into the UK and Europe being so significant, China's trading policy and any changes to it will have an impact to both our car and property businesses. China is poised to take advantage of the new regulatory regime that prevails in the EU's motor industry since it possesses some of the world's best battery manufacturers. And their trade surplus with America provides the funds with which they are able to make significant and strategic investments around the world. Both of these facts spell opportunity for IM's key businesses; but for those opportunities to be realised the free flow of trade around the globe is important. Some might say that Brexit speaks against that, but I don't believe so. The chance for the UK to trade more freely with other markets post Brexit and, ultimately, to gain a degree of continued free trade with Europe has

always seemed to me a prize worth pursuing.

We have never been afraid of change or even threats. But we do value being able to anticipate and respond well to whatever comes. You can be sure we will be paying attention! Change and confusion always bring with it the chance to grow – if you can spot it. We remain committed to all three of our main businesses; property, cars and finance. I expect there to be many discussions within our company over the next 12 months about how we position each of these businesses to take advantage of whatever these political changes might mean for us, especially in the wider context of what else is happening in our markets. There is so much happening within our business and we have to plan forward at least a few years. But, crucially, we retain the flexibility to be able to accommodate adjustments that some of these differing eventualities might require of us.

I sincerely hope this UK Christmas election, the first in nearly 100 years to take place in December, helps the UK and the EU to plot a clear course regarding Brexit – uncertainty is the most difficult thing for us to manage. For a company like IM – used to taking quick decisions and managing risk but hungry to grow – even if this next period is difficult to predict, of one thing we can be certain: it will be exciting!



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\*Representative example: Citroën C3 Aircross PureTech 110 manual Flair. OTR Price: €24,715 (RRP) €23,965 + Recommended Delivery Charge €750). Deposit: €8,585.94, Total Amount of Credit: €16,129.06, 36 monthly payments: €225, Duration of Agreement: 37 months, Total cost of credit: €1,511.94, Optional final payment (GFV): €9,391, Documentation & Option to purchase fee: €75 each, Representative APR: 3.9% fixed PCP Finance. Minimum 10% deposit required. Finance is arranged by First Auto Finance Ireland Ltd, the exclusive agent of Close Brothers Limited, trading as Close Brothers Motor Finance in Ireland. You will not own the vehicle until the final payment is made. Finance Eligibility Criteria apply. Warning: You may have to pay charges if you repay early, in full or in part, a fixed rate credit facility. Subject to status. Over 18s only. Ts & Cs apply. \*RRP (Recommended Retail Price) excludes €750 recommended delivery charge & optional extras such as metallic paint. †5 year unlimited Citroën car warranty is made up of 3 years' manufacturer's warranty & 2 years' extended warranty. Offers end 31.03.2020. Information correct at time of print. See [citroen.ie](http://citroen.ie) for details.

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