

The Star

# BUSINESS

Monthly

## California Dreaming

From Steel City to Silicon Valley



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## Welcome

**A** GENERAL election may be months away, but thoughts are already turning to the changes a new government might make.

This month, we bring together a group of leading local businesses and business advisers who share their views on the state of the economy and discuss the effectiveness of the measures the current government has taken.

The Round Table event, sponsored by Hart Shaw, also reveals the actions panellists would like the next government to take to benefit business and the city region economy.

For some, a helping hand comes not from government but from a more local support network. Alex Gardner talks about the pain of losing a restaurant business and her new lease of life as she launches a fresh venture with help from the Attercliffe Business Connection.

Another person to turn his life around is Paul Moorhead, who turned his negative experiences of insolvency and debt into a positive. After his company folded in 2000 - and realising he hadn't had the sort of support he might have expected from the experts - Paul re-trained as an insolvency specialist and has now set up his own practice in Rotherham.

Meanwhile, we look at new opportunities for the region in sporting and business spheres. Lorenzo Clark and Glenn Mauchlen-Dobson look ahead to the 2012 Olympics and ways in which the city can capitalise.

And we meet David Richards, the Sheffield-born entrepreneur who made it big in California's Silicon Valley - but is building new business links in his home city.

## Fiona Firth, Editor

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Cover image: David Richards of WANdisco



## Buy 4 Sheffield

## Launch of an online one-stop shop

**E**VER tried doing business with the public sector? Reams of paper, thousands of questions, right down to the colour of your socks? Well public sector partners from across Sheffield are putting a stop to that.

Buy4sheffield is an online one stop shop for all public sector procurement opportunities in the City. No matter what size your business is, or what you're selling, you can find out about every opportunity available to you with just a few clicks of a mouse.

Over two and a half thousand businesses have already registered on the website - the first of its kind in the country - where business opportunities for the Council, the city's two universities, college, NHS Sheffield, public transport and emergency services are promoted. You can register to too at [www.buy4sheffield.co.uk](http://www.buy4sheffield.co.uk)

Coun Paul Scriven, Leader of Sheffield City Council said: "The website provides a lot more than just opportunities for business. We also provide procurement mentoring. We found that a lot of businesses became disillusioned with the procurement process and gave up trying to engage with the public sector. By providing guidance and training we have been able to help people sell themselves better and boost their businesses' future fortunes. These sessions are designed to give practical help and advice to businesses who want to do business with us and our partners. We'll help to steer you through the procurement process giving you tips and advice on how you can make your bid stand up."

The buy4sheffield team hold a series of workshops offering help and advice on public sector procurement. All of the workshops are free and open to all businesses across the City. They include advice on how to register with the online procurement service at [www.buy4sheffield.co.uk](http://www.buy4sheffield.co.uk), myth busting question and answer sessions, writing a better tender response, sector specific advice and much more.

Buy4sheffield was created in direct response to feedback that the Council needed to make key information, for instance on



Paul Scriven launches Buy4sheffield

tender opportunities and current contracts, more accessible to all. The Council, 'BiG Make it Your Business', and other public sector bodies in Sheffield have listened and are acting directly on what they've been told.

Coun Scriven continued: "We wanted to make it easy for people to do business with Sheffield and knew we had to start with ourselves. Times are tough enough for businesses and we want to ensure Sheffield comes out the other side of the recession by looking to how we, in the public sector, can help." After listening to local

businesses who wanted to create a more business friendly and less off-putting environment to encourage them to do business with us. We've slashed the red tape of the past and provided a virtual one stop shop. Making it easier for businesses to find, bid for, and compete for our business."

This is just the start. [www.buy4sheffield.co.uk](http://www.buy4sheffield.co.uk) is working with Sheffield's public sector organisations to standardise and simplify the procurement process, provide further information and seek more innovative opportunities to

help create more successful business relationships.

Buy4sheffield is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Businesses can access the portal at [www.buy4sheffield.co.uk](http://www.buy4sheffield.co.uk)

■ For more information about the range of procurement seminars and workshops available go to [www.buy4sheffield.co.uk](http://www.buy4sheffield.co.uk) and click on Procurement Support Programme or contact the team direct on 0114 205 3901 or by emailing [bigprocurement@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:bigprocurement@sheffield.gov.uk)

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# It's greener at Lakeside

By **Fiona Firth**

**G**REEN initiatives have always been high on the agenda at Doncaster shopping outlet Lakeside Village.

But now they've taken environmental awareness even further than basic recycling and keeping down energy costs.

The centre has teamed up with Sterecycle in Rotherham - the world's first autoclave recycling plant for unsorted household and commercial waste.

The technology is able to divert over 70% of residual waste away from landfill, using steam to process unsorted waste into a variety of reusable materials and an organic compost-like material.

Lakeside Village centre manager Cheryl Sadler said: "It's high on our agenda to really look at our recycling but also our environmental impact as well."

"Last year we achieved ISO 1401 environmental accreditation and we keep looking at things we can do."

"For about three years we've been recycling cardboard and plastic. All our tenants sort their waste and segregate it into general waste and cardboard. A lot of stores have lots of spare plastic coat hangers and we recycle those too."

"We go into our tenants and do meter reads on a quarterly basis, our head office collates the information and if anything looks a bit strange, we encourage stores to look at things such as turning off lights, use timers etc."

"We've done roadshows with Doncaster Council where we've given out free energy-saving lightbulbs and they've had roadshows and 'green weeks' here."

"On a monthly basis, we do a charity clothes collection for Bluebell Wood hospice - people bring in their unwanted clothes and bric-a-brac to support Bluewell Wood's stores in the region."

"We are involved with Doncaster Community Recycling partnership



who have provided boxes to recycle things like milk plastic bottles, pop bottles, glass coffee jars.

"But we were still sending quite a lot to landfill. Our centre administrator, Patsy Panks, had seen Sterecycle on the internet and we wanted to suss it out with a visit. Three of us went down and donned helmets and rigger boots and looked round the plant. "We had the full tour - smells as well! But it was impressive to see what they do and the end product, which is a compost."

"So now, our general waste - including food waste from the cafes and stores - that would have gone to landfill now goes to Sterecycle."

She added: "We can't just keep

putting things in the ground. We are very conscious of anything we produce at centre level in the form of waste and we do our utmost to make sure it is disposed of in an environmentally friendly way."

"It's been a learning curve for us all. It's been an education but I think we are very much grasping it and running with it."

"So many people are recycling at home now, it's becoming the way forward and it's easier for people to get behind initiatives like this."

The use of steam or "autoclaving" in the waste sector has been relatively small-scale and limited to sterilising medical waste. Its application to new technologies for household waste

processing is being driven by increasing pressure on local councils to find green alternatives to landfill due to tighter environmental regulations, including the EU Landfill Directive. Sterecycle's recycling process also provides an alternative to the controversial use of mass burn incineration.

Sterecycle's clean waste treatment process "steam sterilises" the unsorted waste at low temperatures in large 40 ft long sealed vessels called autoclaves, using a combination of steam and pressure, treating 20 tonnes of waste in each batch. The waste is then sorted using recycling processes such as size screening and magnetic separation. The process is able to sterilise and recycle the steam cleaned metals and plastics as well as convert the waste food and paper into a high quality organic fibre (sterefibre®) that has many applications, including as a renewable energy source or as a soil enhancer for land remediation.

Duncan Grierson, CEO of Sterecycle, said: "We are delighted to help Lakeside Village manage their waste disposal in a more environmentally friendly and efficient way. Sterecycle's technology offers a clean alternative to the landfilling of waste."

"Partnerships such as this are good for the environment and also help the UK meet the tough targets set by the EU on reducing the amount of waste going to landfill."

## Fact File

- **The Rotherham Sterecycle plant - operational since August 2008 - has a capacity to handle 100,000 tonnes p.a. of waste and, following a £10m investment, is in the process of expanding to 200,000 tpa - equivalent to the waste produced by a town of 400,000 people;**
- **The number of workers at the plant, built at a former 30,000 square feet British Steel site in Rotherham, will increase from 34 to more than 50 after the expansion;**
- **Its steam autoclave process - based on patented technology - converts unsorted household 'black bag' waste into approximately 50-60% organic fibre and 20% recycled non-organics such as metals, plastics and glass - to recover over 70% of waste, which is diverted from landfill;**
- **Sterecycle has been awarded a seven-year contract to handle unsorted domestic waste from Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley councils.**

Shopping outlet teams up with the world's first autoclave recycling plant

Left: Lakeside Village manager Cheryl Sadler (front, left), deputy centre manager Medi Parry (back, third left), and centre administrator Patsy Panks (front, right) recycling with, from left, Addidas shop workers Gavin Poyton and Dawn Derbyshire and cleaner Rebecca Luhanga.

Below: Patsy Panks and Cheryl Sadler, at Sterecycle  
Photo: Steve Parkin



## HOW GREEN WAS MY COMPANY? with Ross Bray

**Ross Bray is the senior director of European Operations at WANdisco, one of the world's leading providers of distributed software development solutions, which has its European operation based in Sheffield's Electric Works.**

**1. How interested are you in green issues?**  
I am very interested. As a technologies company we realise the impact we have on the environment by using equipment that is heavy on electricity and which, therefore, has an impact on the wider community because we are a global company with a global reach.

**2. Do you make active efforts to encourage your staff to think green?**  
Yes. We ensure our people think before they use things like lights or air conditioning and make sure they close down their workstations and monitors when they aren't using them. We also encourage them to think about the way they travel to work - 90 per cent of our team walk, cycle or use public

transport into work, which is one of the advantages of being based so centrally.

**3. How do you get to work - car or public transport?**  
I'm the one who uses my car! I have to. I live in an area of the city that isn't well catered for by public transport. And because the hours that I keep are so long, mainly because of conversations between Europe and California, I'm coming in and going home very early and very late.

**4. Recycling - do you think it's an important part of business life?**  
Absolutely. Business accounts for a hell of a lot of waste, the majority of which can be recycled. It should be an easy thing to do.

**5. And at home?**  
I always recycle at home. On our weekly trip to the supermarket we always drop off everything we've collected over the past week at the recycling point. And I have a composter in the garden!

**6. Do you buy organic?**  
I'm not particularly into the whole organic thing, though I do believe in buying local and buying seasonal.

**7. Light bulbs - traditional or energy saving?**  
Energy saving every time. It's all energy saving at home and it's the same at Electric Works, which was built around the idea of energy saving.

**8. What's the worst thing you and your company are doing to the environment?**  
Travel I suppose. Our CEO and quite a few of our management team regularly have to fly backwards and forwards between Europe and California. In the past year I've done probably four trips, which I don't suppose is that much but it's still a lot more than most people.

**9. Would you consider energy saving devices like solar power?**  
Personally, yes. In work terms we're tenants in a serviced building which means making those decisions is quite difficult. Perhaps in the future it might be a possibility.



**10. What will happen to your company in a post-oil world?**  
We are all heavily reliant on energy to power our computers, which is what our business is all about. But I'm very hopeful that there will be alternative energy and we will be able to continue to meet demand. In fact, I don't think it will make that much of a difference to our lives - we'll still travel in cars and planes but the fuels will have changed.

TECHNO TALK

with Chris Muscroft

Chris Muscroft is Commercial Director at Highlander

In association with



IT seems that IT and communications in general gets more and more complicated with each passing year.

I say this as someone who is intrinsically embedded within the industry, but I have to admit, it still amazes me how even the simplest solutions are becoming more and more complex.

Take mobile phones for instance.

For most organisations, gone are the days where you can look at last year's phone bills, compare them with the tariffs being offered for this year and get the best price you can.

Now there's a multitude of things to consider including how they impact on the operation of the business, particularly for those organisations where staff, management and directors spend a portion of the working day away from the office.

Firstly, you have to think about what the device is going to be used for. This ultimately has an impact on the type of handsets you choose but also how they connect to your internal systems.

Most of the advance digital phone systems in businesses today have a mobility offering where you can integrate a traditional mobile phone into the structure of the network. For example, you can transfer a call to a mobile as if you were transferring to an internal extension. However, many companies are wanting much more from their devices.

Whether your considering Blackberrys, i-phones or Windows mobile devices, these units are now being configured so they have instant access to email (linked directly to your Exchange email server), the internet for web browsing and more recently, direct integration with your internal applications - I can now send out an invoice or process an order with my phone.

The suggestion I would give is make sure you engage with your I.T. provider to get the best advice on which technologies suit best and how best to implement them. Highlander has recently been selected by O2 as a partner to provide this guidance, largely due to our experience on the infrastructure platform, but also because we manage all the communication offerings including services on lines and connections (for reduced costs on telephone bills) and traditional telephone systems. We now have the expertise to add mobile devices and integration to this portfolio.

For further advice on your mobile contract or mobile devices, I'd be happy to take your call on 0114 292 3800.

# A tale of two cities

By Fiona Firth

**D**AVID Richards looks around Sheffield city centre with a sense of wonder. It's not the city he left 20 years ago.

These days, home for the Chief Executive of WANdisco - a global provider of distributed software development solutions - is the affluent and glamorous Silicon Valley in northern California.

But, in the last year, he has built new links with his native city, relocating WANdisco's European centre from London to Sheffield.

"The changes here are unbelievable," says Richards, 38. "I never used to come into the centre of Sheffield because it looked like a bomb had hit it. In the 1970s and '80s when I was growing up, it was a hole. Now it's beautiful.

"Sheffield needed significant investment and finally got it. There's still a way to go - the city has to keep on developing and continue to be business-friendly. Council leader Paul Scriven is extremely business-friendly. There's a quid pro quo relationship between business and the city."

WANdisco's European base initially moved in to Sheffield Technology Park and is now installed at the Electric Works - with the aim of creating up to 50 jobs.

Richards stresses: "We are surrounded by like minded people and businesses - providing an environment in which WANdisco can thrive. This will also enable us to capitalise on partnership opportunities. Sheffield's reputation for creative and digital industries is growing rapidly and we are glad to be maximising on this."

He adds: "The jobs we are creating are not data processing, call centre jobs. We are moving core development to Sheffield and the jobs being created will be some of the best paid in the city."

"I've moved my sales director up from Marlow. He's a single guy, so he loves the abundance of night life here and he lives in a penthouse in the city centre. The quality of his life has improved substantially.

"There's just this assumption



that business can only happen in London. But, when I had a meeting recently at the Financial Times, it took over two hours to get from Heathrow to the FT offices. Yet in that time you can get from St Pancras to Sheffield."

The Sheffield move has given Ows-fan Richards the chance to set up links with his favourite football club and to develop a friendship with internet entrepreneur and Wednesday chairman Lee Trafford.

He met Trafford, co-founder and former chief executive of Sheffield broadband provider PlusNet, during a tour of the city with Creativesheffield's Business Investment team.

"In California, there are many, many internet entrepreneurs but here Lee's an unusual fish," says Richards. "Lee made a series of very important introductions for me. Now he's on our advisory board and I'm on his advisory board. We help each other. We're very much alike in a lot of ways."

WANdisco has also entered into a Platinum Partners agreement with Sheffield Wednesday and Sheffield Children's Hospital, helping to raise hospital funds and awareness of campaigns.

Richards was born and bred in the city - his parents still live in Crosspool and his grandmother in Ranmoor.

Business was in his blood. His great-grandfather started a Sheffield steel business and his grandfather and father achieved high ranking roles in steel firms.

But former Tipton School pupil David opted for a degree in Computer Science at Huddersfield

University before heading south to join consultancy company Druid Systems in Surrey.

"I was doing a very senior role, being a management consultant for large companies so I learned a lot about how to run a business," he recalls. "I suppose I got lucky. Mine was not a traditional graduate job. I fell on my feet. Within two or three years I left to start my own business doing consultancy. A couple of years into that, I decided I'd like to work overseas. I'd just met my wife - then my girlfriend - and told her I wanted to take off. I looked at Saudi Arabia, but that wasn't my scene."

The couple opted instead for the USA.

"I arrived with two suitcases at JFK to do a consulting job with a company in New York," says Richards. "We moved from a small apartment in the outskirts of London to a 4000 sq ft place in a gated community, with a private beach in New York! We loved it but got itchy feet after about six months.

"We went to Atlanta but really didn't like it and we were about to give up on the States when we arrived in San Francisco.

"I knew about Silicon Valley and about some of the great companies there but I'd sort of had this vision in my mind that Silicon Valley would be an industrial place - a bit like the Don Valley."

He grins: "But it's the opposite of Don Valley! There's a great coastline, hills, Lake Tahoe, Yosemite National Park. And the Bay area is this beautiful place. We loved it.

"I started a business in the middle of the internet boom. We raised \$20 million from a couple of venture capital firms and the business was reasonably successful.

"We exited it two years later and immediately started another business without the need for venture capital. That was in existence about 12 months before a public company, NetManage, came and bought us. I went to work for NetManage as senior vice president and general manager. It was the first time since I was 22 that I'd worked for someone else."

He laughs: "That lasted about nine months - and I decided to start my own investment fund."

Then he met Dr Yeturu Aahlad.

He recalls: "An Indian bloke came through the door. He looked a bit like Einstein! But I was really impressed with him - he's a genius. He presented me with a business plan which solved a problem that's existed in computer science for a long time - active-active replication. It means creating copies of data and allowing that to be edited at the same time. From 2000 to 2005, he'd just thought about solving this problem. He presented me with 20 pages of mathematical hieroglyphics."

Those 'hieroglyphics' formed the basis of WANdisco - Wide Area Network Distributed Computing.

Richards eventually became President and CEO while Dr Aahlad remains Chief Scientist and inventor.

"I brought in a management team and we've built a business around it, raising no venture capital," says Richards. "The business has been profitable since day one and is one of the fastest-growing private software companies in the world. The growth has been exponential and continued growth is forecast for the foreseeable future. We have products to come out to fuel that growth."

Not even a global recession can halt WANdisco's progress.

"It actually helps," explains Richards. "In recessions, people automate things. Budgets have tightened but, whereas in good times people look for big, colourful projects, in recessive times they look internally. They look to fix problems - such as slow networks. And that's what we do."

Despite establishing a business foothold in Sheffield, Richards and his wife Jane are happy to pursue the American dream in California's high-tech hub with their children Harry and Poppy.

"I always struggled with the UK because, if you go to Eton and Oxford, you are going to get the best jobs," says Richards. "It seems to be ingrained. All I ask for is a level playing field. In the USA that exists. People talk about the American Dream and people in the UK are cynical of it. But, even if you are born the lowest of the low, it is still feasible that you could end up a millionaire."

He adds: "At home in California, we have a swimming pool and a spa, a couple of acres of land where our kids run around. My son plays 'soccer'. There's a lot more family-oriented things going on - there's less of a pub culture. My kids have two accents. They speak in English accents to us and American to everyone else."

Yet he sees a link to home.

"I was showing someone round Ranmoor recently and it struck me that Sheffield was once the equivalent of Silicon Valley," muses Richards. "When you look at the houses where the steel barons used to live, you realise that Silicon Valley is to the IT revolution what Sheffield was to the industrial revolution."

WANdisco boss on life in the USA... and new-look Sheffield

Left: David Richards of WANdisco

Photo: Stuart Hastings

Far left: David admires the Peace Gardens

Photo: Stuart Hastings

Below: David with his wife Jane and children Poppy and Harry at Sheffield Town Hall

