

Pupils right to pin their hopes on printing help

WHEN budding business leaders from Balcarras School in Cheltenham asked the Bigger Printing Co for help, managing director Seb Stanley didn't hesitate.

The nine six formers were vying for the winners' trophy in the Gloucestershire Young Enterprise competition and needed some printing done for their trade stand.

Seb, whose company in Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham, specialises in large-format printing, took their designs and produced six premium-quality PVC banners on a high-tech large-format digital printer.

Their joint efforts paid off – the Balcarras team won the top prize at the Spirax Sarco Gloucestershire Young Enterprise Trade Exhibition.

The students' MD Shivani Kotecha, 16, said: "We found Seb and the Bigger Printing Co on the internet, came here on a visit, and he was really helpful. The artwork looked totally amazing."

For Seb Stanley, it was a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic team.

"I was really excited about it because they put such a lot of effort into the project and they really wanted to win. They deserved to have businesses helping them."

The Year 12 pupils called their company Hippocampus. Their winning product was a USB memory stick, called a U-Pin, which can be attached to fabrics with a giant safety pin.

"One of our group lost her memory stick and had to do all her French course work again," said Shivani.

"We did some research and discovered that more than 200,000 USB sticks are lost in the UK each year, so we reckon there's a market for a memory stick you can't lose."

As well as Shivani, the rest of the The Hippocampus team was Sophie Collins, Josie McCarthy, Ella Mason, Georgi Weaver, Tasha Watmore, Ed Johnson, Andy Crossley and Jonny White.



■ Sebastian Stanley, managing director of The Bigger Printing Co, Balcarras pupils Tasha Watmore, Ed Johnson, Josie McCarthy, Shivani Kotecha, Sophie Collins, Jonny White, Georgi Weaver, Andy Crossley

Eight jobs lost in latest cutbacks

GLOUCESTERSHIRE escaped fairly lightly as Lloyds Banking Group announced its latest job losses last week.

Eight jobs are to go in the county as the banking group edges towards its planned 15,000 redundancies nationwide.

The part-state-owned bank, which also owns the C&G brand, announced the next 550 roles to go as it slims down its staff numbers.

Thirty nine jobs will go across the South West with six in Cheltenham and two in Gloucester.

"The roles are going across different divisions," said a Lloyds spokeswoman.

"The six roles in Cheltenham are in the wealth and asset finance."

Seven jobs will go in Bristol, seven in Plymouth, ten in Bournemouth, two in Somerset, three in Exeter and one in Andover.

The British bank, which is 41 per cent owned by the taxpayer, announced that nationally the axe would fall across a broad sweep of departments, including risk, insurance and commercial banking.

The job losses are part of a major overhaul launched in 2011, aimed at strengthening the bank's capital base.

Touch of green marking anniversary with award

BY BUSINESS EDITOR BEV HAWES

STROUD husband and wife team Steve and Jackie Peet are celebrating 30 years in business with a prestigious award.

Keeping up with the latest eco building techniques is a priority for the couple's Slad-based Bear Construction Cotswolds Ltd.

And they have been rewarded with the Master Builder of the Year South West Award for Energy Efficiency after being nominated by a client.

The family firm is now in the running to become the UK's best builder in the finals of the national Federation of Master Builders awards in London tomorrow.

"It's a great way to celebrate 30 years in business," said Steve. "Since our launch in 1983, we've worked with hundreds of local people, building extensions, carrying out renovations and maintaining homes."

"Our experience working for the National Trust since 1989 has given us particular expertise working with Cotswold stone and listed buildings,



■ Jackie and Steve Peet of Bear Construction

but key to our success has been the satisfaction of our many clients in and around Gloucestershire.

"As most crafts people know, it's word of mouth which keeps businesses like us going, with customers recommending us to friends and colleagues."

Jackie is a staunch supporter of the Stroud Businesswomen's Network,

one of Gloucestershire's most successful networking groups.

"Women are key to making decisions about home improvements, so meeting other women at the Network means I can dispel any mystery surrounding building work," she said. "We've won several clients through the Network as a result."

Steve and Jackie have a richly-experienced team of carpenters, joiners and stonemasons and cover the whole range of building skills.

Their team includes Roger Cowley from Dursley who, in his spare time, teaches ballroom dancing on cruise ships and Dave Smith, from Eastington, whose claim to fame is building the circular brickwork housing the clock on the former Stroud and Swindon Building Society HQ at the entrance to Stroud.

They were nominated by the owners of a 17th century cottage near Stroud.

"As well as extending the cottage and replacing the Cotswold stone roof, we insulated the whole building – floors, walls, roof and windows – and installed a reclaimed oak floor," said Jackie. "The clients were so pleased, they nominated us for the award."

Steve added: "It's essential to keep up with all the latest ways of making homes warm, and saving energy, as well as having all the traditional master builder skills. We're just as happy doing small jobs as we are a major construction challenge, as our customers well know."



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