

Welcome to another end of year Newsletter. Firstly it is probably quite important for me to stress that the views and opinions expressed are very much my own based on our experience of the year. I say this because I know that many of you reading will either be working short time or have had to do the most unpleasant task of letting staff go.

Don't forget that the writer is the same person who predicted £1 per litre for fuel (but 2 years ago!!) and predicted £1.50 by August, which, thankfully didn't happen.

Secondly every year somebody phones to say that they got my 'political' rag. Just to say that as far as politics goes the only desire I have is to be financially comfortable both personally and as a business. Thereby my employees should equally feel comfortable. After all whether you are Fencing, landscaping or supplying materials for the same then you are unlikely to ever be a millionaire, unless you were one of the fortunate ones in the seventies.

Politics will only enter the discussion when appropriate, such as with the John major business, whereby, lovely man though I understand he is, he couldn't make a decision to save his life and as a result business certainly suffered.

I believe all political parties follow a cycle. Firstly a breath of fresh air through change, popular, to less popular, to hated.

The only difference I can see between Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair is that Tony got out before his popularity had collapsed. As an individual who benefited under Mrs Thatchers government it is a great shame she is remembered by many for her later reasonably good but very badly executed policies. Tony heard the bomb ticking and decided to hand it quickly to somebody else.

A lot of the problems we are currently suffering are, to a certain extent, beyond our control. I still find myself asking the same question, 'Why should a hospital porter in Gateshead have to queue outside a bank to get his money out safely because somebody in Kansas can't pay there mortgage'. Ironically the same bank that everybody has been trying to put money into following government takeover!!!

What I am critical of is when something could be done and no action is taken. When fuel prices were rising twice a week the duty could have been reduced since the government was receiving higher vat revenues. I had wondered that having 2 chancellors running the country whether this would make us better placed to react to the current situation or not.

Of course our Knight in shining armour was just around the corner. Yes, Terry Wogan, with his children in need. If there was a recession then the monies received should be down, but no, Terry proved us all wrong and yes business

increased as a result. Unfortunately Alistair darlings 'mixed messages' budget undid all of Terry's good work. Just at the point when people needed to feel good he gave and he taketh away. Why oh why put fuel duty up.

I believe that 1993 will be remembered as our last traditional recession. What is happening now has been caused by a combination of greed and the media. Think back in 1993 we had no BBC News 24, no radio 5 live. Sky was still thinking about digital and CNN was something to be bemused at if you could understand them. John Prescott recently appeared on the Today Programme on Radio 4 and said 'you lot talk bloody rubbish, I can't switch you on in the morning as it's depression city, always bad news'. Indeed just today we have a fine example of the Medias' manipulation of the news. Tesco announced a growth in sales of 2%. I'm sure many of you would be delighted with that just now, but the Media report highlighted that this was down 50%!!!! Sounds awful, instead of positive. How can the man in the street be expected to have a spring in his step when under such constant brain washing. Do the media have a hidden agenda??

## **CHRISTMAS CLOSING AND COMPETITION**

No, no Easter egg spotting this year.

We will be closing at 4pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December and reopening at 8am on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

This years' competition is attached.

Find the words in the word search, without making any errors or corrections. Send it in with your name and number on to win one of two £50 prizes. Either off a fencing order or as M & S vouchers. Photocopy for as many people in your office who want to enter. The draw will be made by Tom, Who produced the work for Halloween, in case you hadn't already guessed, on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

## **2008 & NEXT YEAR**

We actually finished our year to end of September on a high note by having an all time record month for sales. We were also delighted to be 7.7% up on overall sales.

However, despite terry's best efforts, the gloom had to catch us up and Octobers sales were 14% down on last year with November expected to be 20 something percent down. We are hearing of manufacturers who are closing for longer than the traditional two weeks at Christmas and I expect more will follow suit.

As for 2009 I'm expecting things to improve during Feb, probably the second Tuesday at about 11.15. Some of this will depend upon which councils have lost money in Icelandic banks. Why did charities have millions tied up in these also? I thought when you gave to a good cause it was for them to use straight away for good purposes not to earn interest. Yes have a bit in reserve but why millions??

Although we have heard that steel prices could rise in May I expect to little changes to prices. But BEWARE, mills who have slashed prices are largely the same ones who were the most expensive last year. So if you price from one of these mills don't be surprised to find yourself left holding the baby when prices increase sharply once demand improves. They didn't think twice about you last year and they won't in the future when you are no longer needed!

## **MEGA DEAL & TREATMENT**

Information regarding the above should already have been received.

## **PRICE LISTS**

New lists are in the process of being sent out or printing. For the second price list in succession sawn prices are reduced. Other prices are revised and an explanation accompanies the lists.

## **NEW ITEMS**

Many of you are enquiring about when we will be moving into next door and increasing our product range.

We are hoping to do this soon, with the latest date for Judi Dench to do the opening now being in January. Despite the current occupants working 24hrs a day to move their items out they are being hampered by wet ground. But watch this space.

Finally, Thank You for your continued business and rest assured that we will try to do our very best for you.