

Best News

March 2004

We're Number One in the Driving Market

Welcome to the first Best News of 2004. Having said that, however, we are already three months into our new financial year and things are really moving fast.

As you are all aware we are one of the largest independent agencies specialising in our market in the UK. However, in the recently published 'Recruitment International Top 100 Survey', the top agencies were listed by total turnover as well as market sectors.

The Best Connection was listed as number 31 out of 100 for total turnover, number five out of 100 for the Industrial turnover and number one out of 100 for the Driving/HGV market. This was really exciting news as it represents many years of investment and focus on these two markets.

The Driving market has seen many changes since we started in 1991, not least the expectation of the clients and the drivers. Everything is led now by quality and customer satisfaction. The Best Connection has succeeded in becoming the number one agency in an exacting market where standards of quality and professionalism are continuously under scrutiny.



We should all be very proud of our number one status. But getting there was the easy bit! Yes it was hard work, and yes it continues to be so. However, staying there will not be an easy task. We are ideally placed to build on our success. We have 45 branches at present, each having specialist driving consultants and years of experience in the market. We must ensure that our processes and procedures reflect the stringent requirements of our clients and drivers. We must build upon our reputation and take the challenge to our clients and we must be part of the long-term solution for our clients and not just a last minute fix to solve a current problem. We must also re-enforce our position as the vital link between the client and driver at every opportunity and especially at this early part of the year.

I must not forget here though the Industrial market. As I confirmed earlier, The Best Connection was ranked fifth with some very big players in the top four positions. This is a very different market from the Driving one. It is highly competitive and market-share driven. I believe we have reached this position not by way of chasing market-share, but on the back of quality of service. Our experience and knowledge of local markets enables us to advise clients with respect to the service they require. Equally, we are able to attract high quality workers as we also have the ability to provide the right sort of work for the right sort of pay. All our industrial consultants compete in the market place with regard to quality first and price second. Congratulations to you all! I am certain that the methods and ideals we follow will continue to keep us at the top of the tree.

The Strategy meeting, which took place in October, was a great day. Although the venue was a little cold, which kept most of the attendees on their toes, there was much lively debate and discussion. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Andrew Higgins to all the senior branch managers and to discuss the ways in which national business could be best handled within our branch network. We have recently appointed two key account managers whose roles are to assist and support the branches in developing new business on the back of national,

The Growing Business Awards – Finalists

The Best Connection, represented by Andrew Sweeney, was shortlisted as a finalist in the Entrepreneur of Year category of The Growing Business Awards in December.

The Growing Business Awards are an independent awards ceremony launched in 1999, run in association with the CBI and Real Business magazine, which are now seen as the UK's most prestigious awards to celebrate the achievement of the UK's innovative, high-growth small to medium sized businesses.

The Awards ceremony took place at the London Hilton and was hosted by William Hague. The evening included a memorable appearance by World Cup rugby hero Richard Hill, and a good-humoured speech by Chancellor Gordon Brown.

This recognition for The Best Connection capped a year in which the company was shortlisted as a finalist in Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, voted Company of the Year by the West Midlands branch of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and was listed in The Sunday Times as one of the fastest growing companies in the UK.

preferred or panel supplier agreements. We must all keep an open mind concerning this development to our company, but it is critical that the local jobs for local people remains the mainstay of our business.

Finally, we have found a new venue for our birthday celebrations. We will be partying at the International Convention Centre on Broad Street in Birmingham. You should all know the date by now but if not, it is Saturday, 24th April 2004. I do hope you will all be able to come along with your partners to what I believe will be an excellent evening. This is the one chance that we all have of celebrating our success and meeting up with people from around the country. Formal invitations will be sent out soon so please keep the date free; I hope to see you all there!

Andy Sweeney – Chief Executive Officer

Personality Profile:

Neil Yorke

Neil is a founder Director of The Best Connection Group. In 1991 he, along with Andy Sweeney and Martin Recci, launched the company from the Tyseley office in Birmingham. But what did he do before that?

Neil has spent much of his life in the Midlands. Born in Birmingham, he was educated at King Edward's Five Ways School in Bartley Green, leaving in 1975 to pursue a degree in Business Studies at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. He chose to specialise in accountancy and after graduating with a BA honours degree, joined a firm of Chartered Accountants in Birmingham as an articled clerk where he began the long road of studying for the examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Passing these took time and heartache and during the process Neil decided to venture south to take a position in a London accountancy firm. "The training and experience of the profession gives a very broad knowledge of many different businesses," he says. Neil confesses his love affair with facts and figures does not come as

naturally to him as we might expect and reveals that he is currently struggling to teach his daughters, ten-year-old Katie and twelve-year-old Charlie, simultaneous equations and long division! (Very helpful dad - although we do believe his domestic science is almost up to scratch!).

Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant, Neil decided to diversify and proceeded to look for a position in commerce by enrolling at a financial recruitment agency in London. They didn't find him a job - but offered him one instead - as their financial controller. So, like many other people in the business, Neil came to recruitment by accident. This was the beginning of the road that would ultimately lead to the creation of The Best Connection.

In 1988 Neil and Andy started their own management consultancy business which undertook a number of varying assignments ranging from an IT recruitment business in Cheltenham, to systems implementation at an electricity generating company. They pooled their skills and energies and in 1991, along with Martin Recci, started The Best Connection employment agency to cater for a growing market trend that has been true to its expectations.

Behind the scenes Neil puts his calculator and computer to one side and indulges in a healthy outdoor lifestyle. He is a keen skier and each year takes his family to the Austrian Alps to catch the clean mountain air (and you need some of this



Neil Yorke

when you work in Halesowen all year!) and back at sea level, he has been known to demonstrate his sailing prowess by showing off his sea legs (although we believe this is not a pretty sight!). In his spare time, when not driving the length and breadth of the UK, Neil has decided to get into the swing to acquire a golf handicap. He is also an active member of the Rotary Club of Birmingham Breakfast that raises money for charitable causes.

Personality Profile:

Liz Felstead – Sharestaff Recruitment



Liz Felstead

In May 1994, Liz Felstead assisted Sharestaff by providing holiday cover for its Shepherds Bush and Hanger Lane branches. The rest, as they say, is history. Today, Liz is responsible for the London teams which include Industrial, Commercial and Event Catering divisions.

What happens in London?

Sharestaff currently runs about 700 temps each week. These are split between both branches and two onsite operations. The team has some of the best clients in the area and they can utilise antipodean temps of excellent calibre. Sharestaff is very proud of its customer service, which enabled the company to grow to a turnover of £9.7 million in 2002.

Moving forward

"Implementing the new systems is proving to be quite a challenge, with each day bringing different obstacles and new achievements, but now there is a light at the end of the tunnel," said Liz. "The team that has been brought in from TBC have tried to keep us on the right track and have been gems (most of the time!)."

The Teams

Liz would like to thank all her staff for their hard work during these testing times and she looks forward to their continued support and dedication.

The Earls Court office is home to: **Paul, Mark, Grigor** and **Allana**, whilst Hanger Lane houses: **Maggie, Maureen, Rob, Jevon**, and **Monica** on the operational side. Payroll comprises **Claire, Wendy, Jodi** and **Lesley**.

Liz believes that Sharestaff/TBC can achieve Number One status in London and the Home Counties, and the whole team is looking forward to a successful and rewarding 2004.

With that in mind, Liz would like to invite anyone with information about business opportunities in the London areas to please contact her.

Preventing Illegal Employment

The Offence

Under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, it is a criminal offence to employ a person aged 16 or over who is subject to immigration control unless:

- That person has current and valid permission to be in the UK and that permission does not prevent him or her from taking a job; or
- The person comes into a category where such employment is otherwise allowed.

The offence only applies to people who started working for you on or after 27th January 1997.

Your Defence

The Act provides a defence. If you establish a defence you will not be convicted even if it turns out that the person is working illegally. In order to establish a defence you will need to make sure that before a person starts working, you see a "specified document" which relates to that person and make a copy of it for your records. Specified documents are:

- A document issued by a previous employer, the Inland Revenue, the Benefits Agency, the Contributions Agency or the Employment Service (or their Northern Ireland equivalents) which states the N.I. number of the person named, e.g., P45, pay slip, P60, a NINO card (new plastic version or the older style) or a letter issued by one of the Government bodies concerned. A document showing a temporary N.I. number (beginning TN) would not be satisfactory.
- A passport describing the holder as a British Citizen or as having the right of abode in or entitlement to re-admission to the UK. The passport can have expired but must not be the old British Visitors passport.
- A passport containing a Certificate of Entitlement issued by or on behalf of the Government of the UK certifying that the holder has the right of abode in the UK.

- A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British Citizen. These are A4 size.
- A birth certificate issued in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) or Republic of Ireland.
- A passport or national identity card issued by a state which is party to the European Economic Area Agreement and which describes the holder as a national of that state.
- A passport or travel document from any country as long as it stamped to show that the person is exempt from immigration control, has indefinite leave to enter, or remain, in the UK or has no time limit on their stay. Certain stamps that may be found in passports or travel documents confirm that the person is free to take any employment.
- A UK residence permit issued to a citizen of a European Economic Area Agreement country.
- A Letter Issued by the IND indicating that the person is a British citizen or has permission to work.
- A work permit issued by Work Permits (UK).
- A passport describing the holder as a British Dependent Territories citizen (Gibraltar).

Avoiding Racial Discrimination

Under the Race Relations Act 1976 it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin or nationality. If you refuse to consider anyone who looks or sounds foreign, this is likely to be unlawful discrimination. The best way to ensure that you do not discriminate is to treat everyone the same way at each stage of the recruitment process. For example, you should not ask people who look or sound foreign for their passport in the first instance if you ask people who look and sound British simply for proof of NI number.

If these guidelines are followed you can be safe in the knowledge that your workforce is legal and you can get on with running the business.

For an in-depth version of these guidelines visit www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk and click on Employers Information. Here you will find some examples of the documents that you will see, examples of UK passport stamps, a guide to travel documents and work permits.

Source: The Immigration & Nationality Directorate website

Working alone

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a leaflet which provides guidance on how to comply with duties towards lone workers under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 (HSW Act).

In addition, the organisation provided the following guidelines:

There are no absolute restrictions on working alone; it will depend on the findings of a risk assessment. There are two main pieces of legislation that will apply:

- **The Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974: Section 2** sets out a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst they are at work.
- **The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999: Regulation 3** states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:
 - (a) the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
 - (b) the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the HSW Act and MHSW Regulations still apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks. Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision and protective equipment, etc. Employers should take steps to check that control measures are used and review the risk assessment from time to time to ensure it is still adequate.

When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back-up should be put in place. Where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, that employer should inform the lone worker's employer of any risks and the control measures that should be taken. This helps the lone worker's employer to assess the risks. Risk assessment should help decide the right level of supervision. There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include some high-risk confined space working where a supervisor may need to be present, as well as someone dedicated to the rescue role, and electrical work at or near exposed live conductors where at least two people are sometimes required.



One in safety



Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g., fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person? Can any temporary access equipment which is necessary, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
- Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person? Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What happens if the person becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

Other measures that a company can take include:

- Door Entry System
- CCTV
- Panic Alarm Button
- Wherever possible an alternative way to leave the building

Reference: INDG73, Working alone in safety, is available free for a single copy, from www.hsebooks.co.uk

Accidents at Work

Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. If you are an employer, self-employed or in control of work premises you will have duties under the Regulations. RIDDOR '95 means the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995, which came into force on 1 April 1996. RIDDOR '95 requires the reporting of work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences. It applies to all work activities, but not to all incidents. You need to report:

- deaths
- major injuries
- accidents resulting in over 3 days off work
- diseases
- dangerous occurrences

Death or Major injury

If there is an accident connected with work and

- your employee, or self-employed person working on your premises is killed or suffers a major injury (including as a result of physical violence); or
- a member of the public is killed or taken to hospital;

you must notify RIDDOR without delay.

Reportable Major Injuries

These are:

- fracture other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- amputation
- dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
- chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye
- injury resulting from electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- any other injury leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or unconsciousness or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to harmful substance or biological agent
- acute illness requiring medical treatment or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin
- acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected material.

Over 3 Day Injury

If there is an accident connected with work (including as a result of physical violence) and your employee, or self-employed person working on your premises suffers an injury which is not major but results in the injured person being away from work or do their normal work for more than three days (including any days that they would not normally work such as weekends), not counting the day of the injury itself. This type of injury must be reported to RIDDOR within 10 days.

Disease

If a doctor notifies you that the person suffers from a reportable work-related disease then you must report it to the enforcing authority (see www.riddor.gov.uk for a full list of reportable diseases).

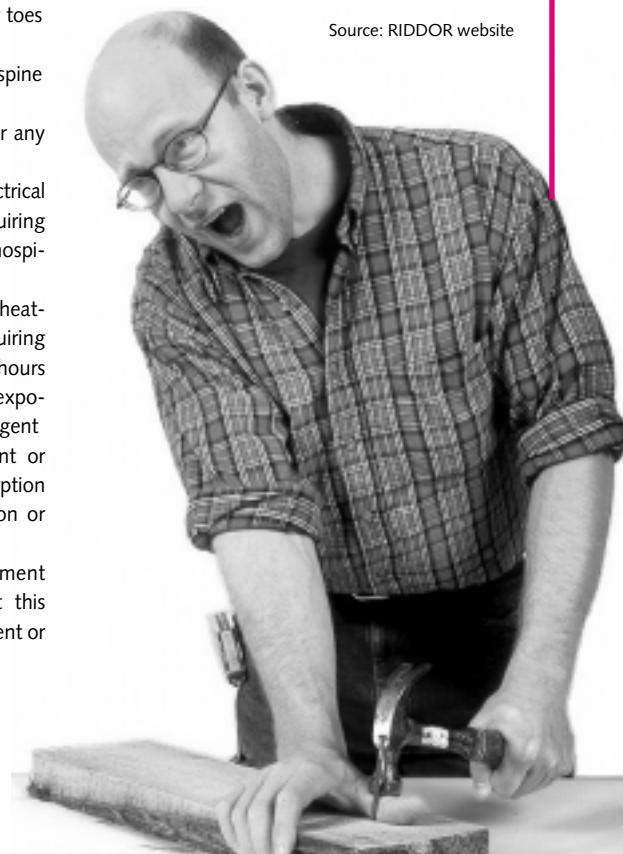
Dangerous Occurrences

If something happens which does not result in a reportable injury, but which clearly could have done, then it may be a dangerous occurrence which must be reported immediately (see www.riddor.gov.uk for a full list of dangerous occurrences).

If you do have to report one of the above, there are different reporting methods open to you.

- **TELEPHONE** – 0845 3009924
- **INTERNET** – visit www.riddor.gov.uk and click on “report an incident”
- **FORM** – complete the relevant hard copy form (F2508 – available from Riddor) **Fax: 0845 3009923**
- **POST:** Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

Source: RIDDOR website



BRANCH NEWS

POOLE: The Curry Club

What is the Curry Club?

Towards the end of last year, the Poole branch of The Best Connection organised a get together of local businesses for a social 'curry club' evening. The event represented an opportunity for like-minded people to network with one another over a few drinks and some good food.

The evening started off with pre-drinks at a local wine bar, which provided a chance to 'mingle' and an opportunity to sell the services of The Best Connection. This was followed by a sit down meal at a local 'curry house'.

The evening was a success and the Poole branch staff were able to get to know ten of its clients on a more personal level. They also managed to talk to people that they had not been able to previously arrange to visit.

In addition, Sunseekers, which is a major user of temporary staff in the Poole and Bournemouth areas, gave the Poole branch the opportunity to tender for some of its business. This is one of the few companies that many employment agencies are trying to see, without success.

The major benefits of the evening were:

- Promoting TBC to local companies
- Building rapport with clients, face to face.
- Introducing the Poole team to prospective users
- Vacancies gained
- More opportunities for temps to work.

New Branch Managers

We are pleased to announce that as from 1st January 2004, we now have the following branch managers:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Angie Aldcroft | Scunthorpe |
| Sheila Eland | Hull |
| Zoë Barnes | Bradford |

New Branches

The Best Connection opened ten new branches during 2003:

**Bristol • Carlisle • Earls Court
Hanger Lane • Oldham • Poole
Staines • Sunderland • Swindon
Tees Valley**

Sharestaff Competing in Belfry Golf Tournament

A team of golfing hopefuls from Sharestaff is set to compete in the Mayor's Charity Golf Tournament at The Belfry on 23rd April 2004. The event, which takes place annually, raises funds for charity by charging each team to compete.

Sharestaff's golfing specialists first took part in the event in 2000, when they won the tournament. The team obviously enjoyed the taste of success because they subsequently competed and won in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The tournament is played in teams of four and in the past, such was the golfing talent at Sharestaff, they entered two teams. Due to retirement and movers, only one team is set to defend the title this year with just one of the original members, so the pressure is on to retain their title!

We wish them all the best and hope to let you know about their success in the next edition of Best News.

BEST TRANSPORT

Support from Transport Industry for Traffic Management Bill

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has repeated its support for the measures planned within the Traffic Management Bill which began its parliamentary course at the beginning of January 2004. The FTA says that roads congestion is a dead loss on the UK economy, costing industry and consumers over £20 billion every year. The new Bill will make a contribution to help contain this wasteful cost.

Chief executive of FTA, Richard Turner, said: "At the time of a growing economy and an increased vehicle population, notably cars, it is absolutely vital that, in addition to extending the capacity of our roads network, we maximise the efficiency of the roads which we have got at present. As such, FTA has been a long time campaigner for many of

the measures planned within the Traffic Management Bill. These include better incident management on motorways, better co-ordination of road works and better control of urban traffic movement.

"The whole purpose of the Bill is to help reduce both town and motorway congestion and to enhance the free flow of traffic. It is not, however, nor should it be, about making money for central or local government.

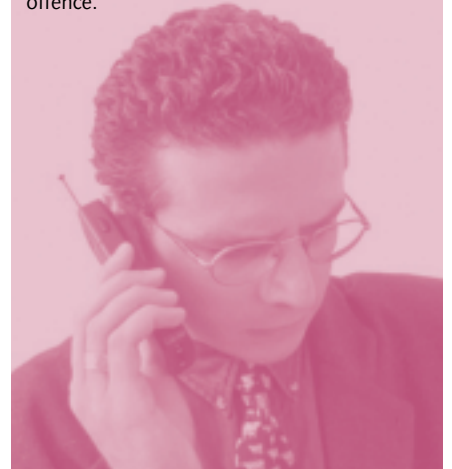
"The Parliamentary process will no doubt take on board critics' fears regarding the manner and operation of enforcement and the development of powers from the police to new traffic officers. FTA is convinced that a sensible and well-managed enforcement regime, specifically targeted to improve the flow of traffic, will produce substantial benefits for road users, industry and the economy."

Source: FTA

Mobile Phone Ban

By now we should all be aware that it is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving.

The ban, which came into force in December 2003, means that offenders can be fined £30 initially – rising to a maximum of £1,000 if their case goes to court. In addition, those caught breaking the ban will receive three penalty points on their driving licence for each offence.



Where to find us

| Location | Tel Number | Fax Number |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Basingstoke | 01256 325111 | 01256 325666 |
| Birmingham | 0121 628 8000 | 0121 628 8004 |
| Bolton | 01204 394400 | 01204394455 |
| Bradford | 01274 747500 | 01274 747555 |
| Bristol | 0117 930 8808 | 0117 930 8809 |
| Burton | 01283 545333 | 01283 545075 |
| Carlisle | 01228 590690 | 01228 590790 |
| Chesterfield | 01246 209222 | 01246 206333 |
| Coventry | 024 76 228040 | 024 76 228042 |
| Crawley | 01293 515333 | 01293 516333 |
| Derby | 01332 291444 | 01332 291222 |
| Dudley | 01384 230003 | 01384 239691 |
| Earls Court | 020 7373 1129 | 020 7373 1770 |
| Halesowen | 0121 504 3000 | 0121 504 3009 |
| Hanger Lane | 020 8998 9910 | 020 8998 6227 |
| Hull | 01482 610 160 | 01482 610 686 |
| Kidderminster | 01562 66555 | 01562 825695 |
| Lancaster | 01524 383438 | 01524 383638 |
| Leeds | 0113 243 1033 | 0113 243 0951 |
| Leicester | 0116 251 2363 | 0116 251 2364 |
| Liverpool | 0151 236 0111 | 0151 236 0999 |
| Manchester | 0161 237 9333 | 0161 237 9444 |
| Newcastle | 0191 230 2007 | 0191 230 2008 |
| Northampton | 01604 629888 | 01604 627444 |
| Nottingham | 0115 958 5880 | 0115 958 5884 |
| Nuneaton | 02476 382211 | 02476 382233 |
| Oldham | 0161 626 4222 | 0161 626 4777 |
| Poole | 01202 682282 | 01202 682482 |
| Portsmouth | 0239 286 4411 | 0239 286 442 |
| Preston | 01772 201777 | 01772 201888 |
| Redditch | 01527 591141 | 01527 591142 |
| Scunthorpe | 01724 876111 | 01724 876222 |
| Southampton | 023 8033 3188 | 023 8033 3199 |
| Staines | 01784 450555 | 01784 450122 |
| Stockport | 0161 968 1964 | 0161 968 1965 |
| Stoke | 01782 209666 | 01782 209777 |
| Sunderland | 0191 5671100 | 0191 5671133 |
| Swindon | 01793 422227 | 01793 422122 |
| Tamworth | 01827 53333 | 01827 53090 |
| Tees Valley | 01642 672655 | 01642 672654 |
| Walsall | 01922 639000 | 01922 636500 |
| Warrington | 01925 629666 | 01925 629777 |
| West Bromwich | 0121 553 7755 | 0121 553 7766 |
| Wolverhampton | 01902 773000 | 01902 773001 |
| Worcester | 01905 731777 | 01905 731888 |
| Worthing | 01903 234500 | 01903 224554 |

The e-mail address for each branch is the.branch@thebestconnection.co.uk
e.g. burton@thebestconnection.co.uk

STOP PRESS!

- The next edition of Best News will feature:
- TBC party • Sharestaff Golf Tournament •
 - Sharestaff/The Best Connection • Website •
 - Personality Profiles • Focus on: South East •



www.thebestconnection.co.uk