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A SEA CHANGE FOR NEW AB FRANCHISEE!

Ashton Burkinshaw is delighted to welcome Lloyd Porter as Franchisee of its newest branch in Chislehurst which opened in April.

With more than 23 years in the submarine cable installation business, you may think Lloyd is the unlikeliest person to be found running a residential letting business! And he certainly has had the most varied and interesting of careers, bringing to Ashton Burkinshaw a mass of business knowledge and experience.

Lloyd, aged 49, started as a draughtsman in the paper making industry before moving to STC Defence Systems as a Design Draughtsman and Project Engineer. It was here that he first became involved with submarine cable installation and cable equipment, supporting the Russian fleet of cable lay vessels. He also worked on the design and implementation of Seismic towed arrays.

After a period of working as an engineer in the paper and book binding industry and then a move into the telecommunications electronics industry where he was the Drawing Office and Mechanical Engineering Manager of SELTEC Ltd, Lloyd then returned to STC as a Development Engineer in Submarine Systems. Here he was responsible for the design build and implementation of a modular suite of cable installation equipment.

Alcatel then took over from STC and Lloyd continued with them as Principle Mechanical Engineer on installations, cable transfers, cable repairs and engineering projects until 1999 when he left to start his own business, ICS (Installations) Ltd installing fibre optic telephone cable under the oceans around the world.

Lloyd Porter is a good example of a "property amateur" turned "professional property agent". Lloyd decided he needed a new challenge and interest – but he still wanted to be his own boss. After a lot of research, buying a franchise seemed the most obvious path to follow. "I needed a new focus and was tired of all the travelling that was involved in cable installation. My children are both studying at college and I knew it was time for a change in career. Although I felt confident I had a fairly good business knowledge, I really was unsure about what industry I should invest my and my family's future in. I needed to set up in a business of my own but with the support and advice of an organisation that had already established a successful operational system", says Lloyd.

Lloyd came across Ashton Burkinshaw through a franchise advertisement in his local newspaper. "An Ashton Burkinshaw franchise was just what I was looking for. Although I knew something about residential lettings, having invested in a couple of my own 'buy to let' properties in the past, and had a good background in general management, Ashton Burkinshaw were able to offer me a franchise which would give me a thorough training in its products and help on the business side. Without Ashton Burkinshaw's comprehensive franchise support package I would not have been able to become an ARLA member, implement the right marketing programme, been able to select the right software, sort out which insurance to promote (or indeed be regulated to sell it) or had a proper out of hours emergency service - or a million other things. Ashton Burkinshaw is teaching me everything I need to know about residential lettings, property management and the Ashton Burkinshaw business", continues Lloyd.

Ashton Burkinshaw has a high profile in the lettings industry in the South East. With twelve branches across Sussex and Kent, their directors and seventy staff have more knowledge and experience in lettings than many of the larger corporates. Managing Director, Ashton Burkinshaw (Franchising) Ltd. Frances Burkinshaw, a leading member of ARLA who was their Millennium

Chairman, has been letting property since 1970 and introduced the idea of franchising to her fellow directors.

Ashton Burkinshaw are opening further franchised businesses in the South East in the next couple of months - with more to follow by the end of the year. They are currently looking to open franchises in Canterbury and Eastbourne.

“We are looking for motivated people with the commitment to make their own business work,” said Graham Harrison, Chief Executive. “When they buy into our brand, our business style and our reputation, we can give the help, support and establishment that they need - but success does not come on a plate. You have to want it, work for it and be prepared to motivate those who work with you to achieve your goals.”

Achieving goals is something Lloyd Porter understands well. His discussions with Ashton Burkinshaw started earlier this year and his franchise opened in Chislehurst in April. Up until then Lloyd worked from another Ashton Burkinshaw office, learning how the company operates and undergoing the ARLA training courses and Competency Tests that ensure that you now what you are talking about. (When the talking is legal, this really helps!)

“ I’m absolutely thrilled with my new life,” says Lloyd. “I know that some people are slightly surprised that I have come from a non-property background, but I have the training, the Ashton Burkinshaw brand and most importantly, the amazing support that you can only get with a franchise of one of the best names in the business.”

“I am working six days a week as I build this business, but I really, really enjoy what I am doing and I love getting up in the morning and going to work.”

Photo: Lloyd Porter, new AB Chislehurst franchisee

