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ashton burkinshaw

DECEMBER 2006

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Landlords survive the legislative hurdles of 2006!

Now only "Function Creep" can blight the rental market in 2007

In 2006 the rental market saw the implementation of a raft of new legislation and celebrated the 10th anniversary of buy to let, the force that re-vitalised the rental market.

Next year looks set to be legislation-free, apart from the implementation of mandatory tenancy deposit protection in April, and landlords and tenants can look forward to continued growth in both the supply and demand for good quality rental property. Only "Function Creep", the process where national and local government find new ways of widening the imposition of existing legislation and regulation, can dampen the current optimism in the private rented sector.

"If a landlord has managed to fathom out the intricacies in HMOs, EDMOs, HHSRSs and DDAs, he should be able to look forward to enjoying a less onerous 2007 in terms of all the legal paraphernalia associated with letting," forecasts Graham Harrison, Ashton Burkinshaw's CEO.

"However some change in the market may be expected," continues Graham. "ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents) research shows that as soon as the grace period elapsed last summer for landlords of HMOs, Houses in Multiple Occupation, significant numbers left the sector. Should this trend continue, next year could prove difficult for tenants on low incomes".

EDMOs, Empty Dwelling Management Orders, were widely misunderstood by the public and the press after a classic example of Function Creep by a local authority. A misguided attempt was made to attach an EDMO to a property under probate, but after this it became

understood that EDMOs are designed to retrieve empty or derelict property to help lessen housing shortages.

HHSRS, Housing, Health and Safety Ratings have arrived without disruption. They were introduced to ensure that all housing leaves the 19th century and enters the 21st century as homes fit for habitation by the standards of 2007.

2006 was rounded off with the arrival of the DDA, the Disability Discrimination Act. This has also arrived without causing disruption, undue cost or upheaval. The rumours were untrue and landlords will not have to alter physical features in their properties, like widening front doors or installing chairlifts when it would be obviously uneconomic to do it.

Professional bodies serving the private rented sector, such as ARLA and the NAEA, will continue to spend a considerable amount of time pleading with government to licence all lettings agents as the surest way of abolishing the cowboys and the rogues. Ashton Burkinshaw is very much at the forefront in encouraging the government to impose compulsory licensing for all letting agents, not only to protect the interests of its own landlords, but all landlords in the UK.

"Although ARLA membership soared during 2006 and is set to continue growing next year, we cannot regulate the whole market. We need government help with this one," commented Adrian Turner, Chief Executive of ARLA during his annual review of the rental market.

Says Graham Harrison: "Next year, landlords will still have some learning to



Graham Harrison,
Chief Executive
of Ashton Burkinshaw



Adrian Turner,
Chief Executive
of ARLA

do. All recent surveys seem to show that they have yet to absorb the requirements of mandatory tenancy deposit protection (TDP). However, they have until April 2007 to decide whether to comply through insured schemes or to use the custodial scheme, where deposits have to be banked with a government appointed agency.

"With the implementation of all the parts of the Housing Act 2004 that cover the rental market, both landlords and tenants should look forward to continued and steady growth in rental housing. ARLA research predicts an average growth in tenancies of 20-30,000 per year for the next ten years," he added. For tenants in 2007, buy to let will continue to increase the range and improve the standard of housing available while young households will not be forced into owner occupation at a financially precarious time of life.

ARLA's Adrian Turner believes 2007 augers well for landlords, tenants and letting agents within the self-regulated sector. "We now have the framework of ethical standards, consumer safeguards and good quality property," he said. However, he warned that only vigilance and strong lobbying will contain the progress of Function Creep in government. "We have to be very aware that only a strong, competitive market will keep standards improving. And we must be very aware that these positive market forces can be quickly destroyed by over-legislation and by over-zealous, empire-building administrations at all levels of government, local, regional and national" he added.

10 years on and Buy to Let hailed a triumph

At the tenth anniversary of its launch by ARLA, buy to let has proved to be a force for good in the housing market and a major industry in its own right. This assessment was presented by ARLA on September 26th, in a specially commissioned report, "Buy to Let, The Revolution – Ten Years On."

More than a million households now live in properties rented out by small private landlords, many of whom bought the homes to top up their pension income. These property assets are worth well over £120 billion and the buy to let sector contributes over £30 billion to the economy. This contribution is worth more than that made by all the pubs, hotels and restaurants in the country and is four times more than contribution from the motor industry.

The report forecasts an average growth in numbers of buy to let tenancies of 20-30,000 a year over the next ten years while demand for buy to let mortgages will grow faster as the sector is relatively under-mortgaged. It also shows that buy to let has spread the reach of the Private Rented Sector into areas that previously had little or no private renting. This has had the knock-on effect of reviving housing markets and assisting in inner city regeneration.

In the mid-1990s less than half of the property within the PRS was owned by individuals, now they own two-thirds of the sector. This is due not only to individual desire to invest in property but also because corporate organisations have been running down their property assets. This private ownership has occurred without the buy to let investors becoming financially stretched. Investor landlords have substantial cushions of their own wealth including equity in owner-occupation, employment and other non-rental income. Without buy to let, the ARLA 10 year report asserts, the Private Rented Sector would be a great deal smaller.

A shrunken Private Rented Sector would have provided for less choice in housing and standards would not have been raised so high. Competition between landlords in the provision of rented property has brought considerable gains to households in rented accommodation. This is one of the reasons why more people rent their home. The benefits of renting particularly appeal to young mobile people. Changing lifestyles, affluence, employment patterns and financial circumstances have combined to encourage more young people to rent rather than own their homes, as they may have done in previous decades. However, most tenants, as they age, will build up savings, maybe have children and so – the report suggests - succumb to the benefits of home ownership. But today, many young people are moving to home ownership at least a decade later in life than they did before.

"ARLA went out on a limb to launch the modern concept of buy to let in September 1996, backed by a far-seeing panel of mortgage lenders. Our aim was to bring more and better quality property to the Private Rented Sector," said ARLA's Chief Executive Adrian Turner. "Ten years on we are the first to admit that we could never have foreseen the success this was to be for both investor landlords, their tenants and the Private Rented Sector."

Ashton Wingate, Frances Burkinshaw and Douglas Rogers, the individual companies prior to the merger into Ashton Burkinshaw, have been members of ARLA since July 1985 and were the first members in Kent to join the Association. Ashton Burkinshaw Chairman, Philip Cook, and Director, Frances Burkinshaw, are both past Chairmen of ARLA, and were both very much involved in the creation of the buy to let scheme as members of the ARLA National Council; indeed the phrase "buy to let" was penned by Frances Burkinshaw.

Therefore the Company, our landlords and tenants, have all benefited from our directors' extensive expertise and in-depth knowledge of buy to let, and this is reflected in the forward-thinking stance of the Company. AB continues to be represented on ARLA's National Council, and two directors are national industry trainers.

The full report, "Buy to Let, The Revolution – 10 years" on is available in PDF format on the ARLA website.

AB strengthens

Philip Cook, Chairman of Ashton Burkinshaw, has recently confirmed the appointment of Tim Rose as a non-executive director of the Company.

Tim is Managing Director of Emerging Market Economics Ltd, a leading UK based consultancy firm offering strategic and policy advice to blue chip corporate clients and governments throughout the world. Tim has over 20 years' experience in providing strategic and management advice to large corporations and small and medium sized companies both within the UK and internationally.



Tim Rose, Ashton Burkinshaw's newly appointed non-executive director

Ashton Burkinshaw

Ashton Burkinshaw is at the forefront of calling on the Government to introduce compulsory licensing for letting agents – and stop rogue traders.

Over the years many lettings offices have been 'here today, gone tomorrow', sometimes with the owners disappearing without a trace. Clients have turned up to the office chasing rents only to find it closed or with new occupants in residence with no responsibility for the outgoing firm. Tenants vacating their rented property also turn up to collect their deposit and find themselves in the same position – where is their money and how will they recover their rent or deposit? Perhaps they will but most likely they will not!

With buy to let mortgages running at record levels, there is renewed pressure for legislation to force all letting agents to be registered and licensed. Of the 2 ½ million properties in the Private Rented Sector, under a million are let through a regulated agent. The result is that landlords and tenants could find themselves unprotected and out of pocket if their letting agent went bust or AWOL. Unfortunately, all too often the police do not take action and the letting agent gets away scott free!

As a member of ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents) and as a long-term member of the ARLA National



AB in the spotlight at franchise exhibitions

Residential lettings is a fascinating profession, filled with variety, detail and legal knowledge and an ideal industry in which to invest because of the exciting opportunities for growth. This was the message given to members of the public who visited the Ashton Burkinshaw stand at the KM Kent Franchising Exhibition which took place at the Mote Park Leisure Centre in Maidstone 14-15 September.

As a British Franchise Association member, Ashton Burkinshaw (Franchising) will also be taking a stand at the forthcoming British and International Franchise Exhibition which takes place at Olympia, London on 23-24 March 2007. The exhibition is the leading franchise exhibition in the South, and attracts high quality visitors who are serious about running their own businesses. At the exhibition AB is hoping to sign up some more high calibre franchisees to take the expansion of the business further.

For more information about this event call 020 8394 5230 or visit the BFA website www.franinfo.co.uk

board direction

After a successful career working in the City of London structuring complex financial instruments in both developed and emerging markets, Tim moved into consultancy advising corporate clients to grow and restructure both established and start up businesses in a number of sectors. He has worked with numerous small and medium sized companies within the UK with annual turnovers varying from £300,000 to in excess of £12 million enabling many of these firms to double their turnovers through organic growth and strategic acquisition.

As a Chartered Director and an MBA in finance, Tim's academic credentials are impressive and have given him a rigorous analytical approach. His wide experience provides in-depth knowledge of company operations in a

number of sectors which, together with his hands-on commercial approach and strong communication skills, have contributed to his successful leadership and guidance to a number of firms which have led to a number of non-executive directorships. In addition to this professional experience, Tim has a portfolio of buy to let properties in the Colchester area where he lives with his wife.

On Tim's appointment Philip Cook commented: "We are delighted that Tim has agreed to join the board of Ashton Burkinshaw. His wide experience of business and the financial world strengthens our board significantly and will, I am sure, greatly assist us to build on our success as the leading letting agent in Kent and Sussex."

calls for industry licensing

Council, Frances Burkinshaw, Director of Ashton Burkinshaw Ltd, has seen many such occasions over the years. Across the country, lettings businesses have sold themselves as professional, honest, hard working agents, persuading decent people to entrust them with their properties and deposits, only to find later on that they have lost out.

How can we ensure that this does not happen in the future because at present there is no licensing for agents whatsoever? **The only way is to persuade the Government that letting agents must be registered and licensed.** Only those agents who can meet certain high standards would be able to be licensed. Those high standards would include holding monies in a ring fenced 'client account' which could not be touched should the firm go under; ensuring that the firm became a member of a professional body, such as ARLA, who would have redress against that agent and who would have an efficient complaints procedure; this professional body would also have Client Money Protection cover meaning that the clients' rent and tenants' deposits would be covered by insurance.

New legislation is coming into force in April 2007 regarding tenants' deposits but there is no such legislation being introduced to protect rents for landlords! Is their money

not important too? There are also a huge number of unregistered agents desperate for business who are prepared to undercut ARLA members. Landlords would be unwise to think they were saving money by going with them. You get what you pay for. Non-registered agents are more likely to have untrained and unqualified staff who may cut corners with tenant references in order to secure their fee.

But so many people merely look at the cost; they also look at the 'offer of the month' without considering the potential future loss to themselves. If a professional agent does not reduce its fees on a regular basis, it is probably because it is actually offering a better, more professional service. It is probably not cutting corners to be able to reduce fees. Indeed, an agent should not be allowed to cut corners simply to be able to 'appear' to offer a good service at a reduced rate.

A truly professional agent will not be able to avoid certain costs; the less professional agents may be able to. These costs would include: - membership of a professional body, Client Money Protection insurance, professional indemnity insurance, employer's liability insurance not to mention the costs of employing adequate staff to carry out the duties of an agent as per the agreed contract.

Every agent will sell themselves well; that is their talent and their business. Surprisingly some of the larger chains are still not ARLA registered so it is important not to presume that they are because they are a recognised brand.

Says Frances Burkinshaw "Ashton Burkinshaw welcomes the day when the letting industry will have to be registered and licensed, and taking the nationally recognised ARLA examinations will be mandatory for all practising letting agents. Together with ARLA we will continue to press for licensing in order to promote best practice in the industry so that all landlords' interests are protected".

Frances Burkinshaw, Director of Ashton Burkinshaw Ltd



AB knows its Bacon!!

We are delighted to introduce and welcome a father and son team to AB.

Father member, John Bacon, started his career in estate agency in 1963. During his career he has spent time in selling new homes and, over the last 15 years, in the lettings industry in Tunbridge Wells working for Oakley Prior, before it was taken over by Connells. John then moved to E J Nye in Paddock Wood.



John has recently joined the Tunbridge Wells office as Branch Manager. He comes with a wealth of experience in property and client liaison. He is married with two children, and his interests and hobbies include sport, in particular cricket, electronics, music, films and reading.

John Bacon

"I am delighted to have joined a company which believes in offering an exceptional service to its clients, both tenants and landlords, leaving the rest of the competition in the shade" says John. "I very much look forward to servicing AB's clients in the Tunbridge Wells area and to working with such an enthusiastic team".



John's son Martyn, has joined AB as Negotiator at our Tonbridge branch. He started out as a trainee auctioneer at Clive Emson Auctioneers covering the southeast corner. Martyn then moved to E J Nye Estate Agents as Residential Sales Negotiator based in East Peckham where

Martyn Bacon

he was for three years covering the local villages and Tonbridge. Martyn's hobbies are golf, football, tennis and socialising with friends and one of his top goals is to own a new Audi TT in the near future!

"Joining AB has been an excellent career move for me and I am looking forward to all the challenges that I am about to undertake. My aim is to continue to make the Tonbridge office the leading letting agent in the town and one of the top three offices in the whole of the Company", says Martyn.

"John and Martyn are welcome additions to the AB team," adds Graham Harrison CEO. "Their enthusiasm and energy will really strengthen the teams at Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. We wish them every success and sincerely hope that Martyn very quickly realises his dream of owning an Audi TT!!!"

AB expansion into West Sussex!!

We are delighted to welcome another franchisee who will be opening an AB branch in Haywards Heath at the beginning of January. This will be AB's first West Sussex branch – a move that is very exciting for the Company! AB now has a total of four franchised branches in addition to its wholly owned branches across Kent and East Sussex. We're expanding fast!

Geoff Rawlinson hopes to take occupation of his new Haywards Heath premises at the start of the New Year. Geoff has been living in the Haywards Heath area for the last 30 years. His early career was in the banking and airline industries. In 1976 Geoff moved to Dubai to manage a building company. The following year Geoff returned to the UK, married his wife Chris then moved from London to Sussex, where he spent several years working for Laker Airways. In 1981 Geoff, together with a business partner, came up with the idea of starting a company that would purchase foreign coins from businesses and charities. From an idea this unique business concept was turned into a multi-million pound turnover company, dealing with the major banks and charities in the UK and Europe. This business expanded into a property and letting division, purchasing and letting properties in Florida, Spain, France Portugal and Tenerife, where Geoff first got involved in the property and letting industry.

At the end of 1995 an opportunity presented itself for Geoff to move into the leisure industry, where he turned a derelict building into a modern state of the art fitness studio. His attention to detail and ability to create a special working environment for staff and members alike created a fantastic atmosphere. This business was sold in June 1999. Says Geoff "I am always being stopped by ex-members asking if I would consider opening another establishment, which I consider a supreme compliment."

Geoff has a bit of a sporting past to say the least! As a young man he reluctantly shunned cricket and soccer (two sports he excelled at) and concentrated on hockey, playing for the United Banks, captaining Middlesex under 23's and playing mixed hockey for the South of England. He also played hockey for Hounslow Hockey Club, who at the time were one of the leading two clubs in the country. When Geoff moved to Haywards Heath in 1977 he continued playing county hockey but now for Sussex and also mixed hockey for Sussex and the South. He captained Mid Sussex Hockey Club for five years until a cruciate ligament injury ended a very enjoyable career. But he came out of retirement a few years ago to play for Mid Sussex Veterans and captained them for a couple of years before reaching the tender age of 50 when he decided again to retire - just before being asked to play for England over 50's in the forthcoming hockey World Cup which he declined!! Geoff has now swapped his hockey boots and stick for a career in letting and property management!

Ashton Burkinshaw was looking for franchisees in the Haywards Heath area. "I saw this as an excellent opportunity to get involved in the letting industry", says Geoff. "After meeting with the Ashton Burkinshaw directors I was immediately impressed with their industry knowledge and the pride and passion they had for their brand. I believe their business ethos is first class and mirrors my own belief in giving a quality service and looking after clients and customers alike.

"This has already been a great experience for me and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the AB team, particularly Chief Executive Graham Harrison who helped me put my business plan together from concept, ready to rock and roll in a few short months. I just can't wait to actually get started!" he continues.

"We believe that all our franchisees are motivated people like Geoff Rawlinson who have the commitment to make their own business work," says Graham Harrison. "When they buy into our brand, our business style and our reputation, we can give the help, support and establishment that they need. It is a great way to step into the scary world of property – but success does not come on a plate. Franchisees need to want it, work for it and be prepared to motivate those who work with them to achieve their goals."

The Company is expecting to open another franchised branch in Canterbury in February.

For more information about Ashton Burkinshaw's franchise opportunity, contact Tony Mundela in the strictest of confidence, on 01622 844320 or email franchising@ashtonburkinshaw.co.uk

Geoff Rawlinson, new franchisee of AB's Haywards Heath branch





The maze of Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988

Following various recent court cases much has been written in the professional press regarding the means for a landlord to obtain possession of a property let under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST). Needless to say, the jargon used in such articles is very technical and quotes this Act, that Section and Clause etc. – more than enough to take in even for those 'in the know'.

We were going to reproduce one of these articles but then realised that, as landlords, you employ us to sift through the maze of legislation; you really do not need to be bored by the technicalities of Section 21(1)(b) or Section 21(4)(a) in this seasonal newsletter. There is, however, a very important message for landlords to understand and we will try to simplify the situation to ensure clarity. The majority of tenancies which we arrange are for a period of one year. If you were to require

possession at the end of that year, we would have had to serve notice on your behalf by at least 10 months into that tenancy under Section 21(1)(b). Some tenancies are not, however, renewed at the end of the term – probably because you are not certain of your plans – and the tenants remain in occupation under a Statutory Periodic Tenancy. In this instance it is essential that you give a minimum of two clear periods to a tenant under Section 21(4)(a). Let me give you an example:-

- a tenancy commences on 14th November 2005
- we do not renew the tenancy on 14th November 2006 as you are not sure of your plans
- on 18th November 2006, however, you decide that you do want to return to your property
- we will serve notice on your behalf but this notice will not expire until 13th February 2007

From this you will see how important it is to keep a track of dates. If you do not, you may find that you have to give nearly three months' notice to a tenant to vacate. The worrying fact is that if the notice is only day out it will fail in the courts. Many landlords and unfortunately some agents are not fully aware of the rules and how they operate. We therefore ask that you keep us fully in the picture with regard to your 'future plans'. We can then try to ensure that we gain possession of your property as and when you require it.

Ashton Burkinshaw is here to help guide you through the maze of legislation which constantly bombards us at the moment. We pride ourselves on the fact that we keep fully up to date; we are inquisitive by nature and take the time to give advice which is essential to keep ahead of the game.



Landlords unprepared for imminent legislative changes

In the run up to mandatory Tenancy Deposit Protection, evidence is growing of a split between professionals in the lettings industry and most private landlords.

This part of the Housing Act 2004 will now come into force next April; the legislation has been postponed from its original implementation date of October 2006. This delay in implementing mandatory deposit protection has been used to good effect by some landlords in the Private Rented Sector. This is shown by the survey for the three months to the end of September conducted for the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, TDS. At the same time the lettings industry has proven itself to be increasingly prepared for the new deposit regime. The evidence for this comes from the number of lettings agents who have joined up and the caseload for the scheme's adjudicators. Three out of ten landlords now claim to fully understand how compulsory deposit schemes will work but, overall, the number of landlords who are aware of what they must do when mandatory deposit protection becomes law next year has remained static.

"This is disappointing," said Lawrence Greenberg, Chief Executive of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme. "It demonstrates to us that while the more professional landlords are gearing up for the new deposit protection regime, it is likely that a great many landlords in the Private Rented Sector will be dangerously ill-prepared for the start of mandatory membership of a deposit protection scheme."

Meanwhile, the number of letting agents who have joined the scheme for regulated agents, has been increasing at an average of over 75 a month, despite the delay in implementation of all mandatory schemes. There are now well over 1,300 letting offices already operating in the voluntary Tenancy Deposit Scheme. In addition, the caseload for the adjudicators has also grown. This is now running at over 60 dispute resolutions a month, against just 25 in the same quarter of 2005.

"As an industry, the rental market is gearing up successfully for implementation day next April," said Lawrence Greenberg. "The problem is that too many private landlords have put the whole subject of

mandatory deposit protection on the back burner. This is dangerous and the problem we are now seeking to address."

Although mandatory tenancy deposit protection will not come into force until next April, the voluntary scheme (TDSRA) for the regulated agents has been running for the last two and half years. It was launched with the backing of all three professional bodies that are active in the private rented sector: ARLA, the Association of Residential Letting Agents, the NAEA, the National Association of Estate Agents and RICS, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Ashton Burkinshaw was a founder member of the TDSRA and indeed one of its directors was instrumental in defining the original Government pilot which led to the setting up of a company to run the scheme. Landlords or tenants in any doubt about the new TDP legislation should seek advice from any member of AB's staff at any of its branches. Full information for landlords, tenants and letting agents is also available on www.tds.gov.uk or on 0845 226 7837.



Christmas trees for schools

Ashton Burkinshaw offices are providing AB Christmas trees for local primary schools in the run up to Christmas.

This is the latest community initiative by AB who earlier in the year involved local primary schools in a design a 'To Let' board competition. The competition was a huge success and underlined the importance of individual branches supporting their local community. The children had great fun creating their works of art and AB got a newly designed 'To Let' board in the process which was used to advertise every available AB property throughout the southeast.

"We hope that the Christmas trees, presented with specially commissioned "ab" silver apple baubles, will provide the main focal point for Christmas celebrations in the school, and will give the children and school staff some festive excitement!" says Graham Harrison, CEO.



RECENT APPOINTMENT



Georgina Burkinshaw AB's new Training Officer

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Georgina Burkinshaw as Ashton Burkinshaw's Training Officer, a new role within the Company.

Georgina has been with AB since 1996 when she began her career as an Administrative Assistant at the Tenterden branch. Three years later she moved to Tunbridge Wells to be a Negotiator and was promoted to Branch Manager at Lewes in October 2001. In April 2003 Georgina then moved back to Tunbridge Wells as Branch Manager. Georgina's new position as Training Officer will be based at AB's Head Office in Maidstone and will involve training members of staff in a classroom format in Maidstone as well as on-the-job training at the different AB branches.

"Having worked in the branches for over 10 years, I can use this experience to make my mark on the way staff are trained in an effort to increase and maintain the high standards across AB," says Georgina. "The Company endorses the national ARLA qualifications and the moves towards raising standards in the profession. It is AB's policy to support all staff to achieve the technical awards," she continues.

"We are thrilled that Georgina has joined the training team," says Graham Harrison CEO. "We take industry training very seriously at AB and Georgina will be training all members of staff in each of the disciplines within the Company as well as towards attaining the nationally recognised qualification."

"Her work will be under the guidance of the management team; indeed two of our directors are involved in the setting and training of ARLA's Competency Tests and we ensure that all our staff are fully trained from the outset and take all the ARLA exams over the course of their employment. Ashton Burkinshaw has one of the highest percentages of professionally qualified staff in the country".

"We believe that both clients and staff benefit from this investment in training which is bound to improve upon our already high standard of customer service and contribute to the long term success of our business," he added.

AB supports the Dragon boat festival

Ashton Burkinshaw has for the third year running sponsored the spectacular Funraisers Dragon Boat Festival which took place in September at Bewl Water in Lamberhurst.

Crews of 16 paddlers (plus a drummer) raced over a 200 metre water course in Chinese-style dragon boats in an amazing display of paddle power, raising money for a wide range of good causes.

The Dragon Boat Festival is the largest event of its type in Europe with 50 teams competing in 10 dragon boats watched by over 6,000 spectators. This year's Dragon Boat Festival raised over £130,000 for local, national and international charities and provided an action packed day, full of activities for all the family.

Not only is AB one of the regular sponsors of this exciting event but Daniel Burkinshaw is part of the "Funraisers" team; a group of six friends who organise the event every year. Director, Frances Burkinshaw, was delighted to present the winners' trophies and medals.

"Over the nine years that the Funraisers have been organising this fantastic event, a staggering £900,000 has been raised for charity", says Daniel Burkinshaw. "Next year is the big one. As it's the event's 10th anniversary we are determined to smash the £1 million mark! The Dragon Boat Festival is a unique event that allows local companies and organisations to get a team together and race for their favourite charity. It is an exhilarating day for the competitors and a thrilling show for the spectators. We are hoping for a huge amount of support next year. So if there are any fit and eager landlords out there looking for a challenge - get in touch, we need you!"





The Ashton Burkinshaw Bouncy Castle at Otford Primary School's Summer Fete

Letting with a bounce!

Ashton Burkinshaw's Sevenoaks branch was the proud sponsor of the bouncy castle at Otford Primary School's Summer Fete.

"Ashton Burkinshaw was thrilled to be able to support Otford Primary School at their annual summer fete", says Barbara Tremble, Senior Negotiator.

"It was a fantastic day and the weather was perfect! The fete raised over £4,000 which we are told will be spent on a new science area equipped with weather monitoring equipment. AB is always very keen to work closely with the local community. Both the children and local schools are fundamental to any area we operate in", she continued.

Lettings take to the airwaves



Director, Frances Burkinshaw with Rocket FM's Breakfast Show presenter

Ashton Burkinshaw joined the Rocket FM Lewes Breakfast Show in October to help promote the town of Lewes and the services available from local companies. Lewes Branch Manager, Jacky Nash, and Ashton Burkinshaw Director, Frances Burkinshaw, were invited by the Breakfast Show's presenters Dino Bishop and Ruth O'Keefe to talk to their listeners about the active lettings market in Lewes and the need for good quality housing in the town.

AB is major sponsor of Rocket FM Lewes, an independent community radio station which takes to the air during the weeks leading up to Lewes' big Bonfire Event. During the interview Frances Burkinshaw talked about a few of the most recent pieces of legislation to affect landlords and the lettings market. She indicated that many landlords are still not sure what their new obligations are under the Housing Act 2004, in particular the new legislation relating to the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) which came into force in April. Also many landlords are confused about the forthcoming legislation on Tenancy Deposit Protection (TDP) to be introduced in April 2007 which is aimed at protecting tenants' deposits irrespective whether they rent their property through a letting agent or deal directly with a landlord.



Lewes Branch Manager, Jacky Nash speaks into the microphone during the show

AB Buy-to-Let seminars in 2007

Following the success of past Ashton Burkinshaw Property Investment Seminars, the Company will be running a further series of similar seminars for existing and new landlords in 2007.

The seminars will be specifically designed for buy to let landlords who have an interest in increasing their portfolio and who need advice and help with portfolio management, property and location selection, marketing and support in managing multiple tenancies. Many landlords continue to value the professional advice given by Ashton Burkinshaw, especially in understanding all the highly publicised legal responsibilities and current regulations associated with letting and managing property.

These seminars will be held at various locations during the late Spring and Summer of 2007 at locations around the southeast. All AB landlords will be advised of the dates and venues of these seminars in the New Year.

Ashton Burkinshaw success at London Triathlon

Ashton Burkinshaw's Chislehurst branch raised over £600 for the National Autistic Society (NAS) at the 2006 Michelob Ultra London Triathlon in August.

Adam Porter, the 19 year old son of Lloyd Porter, franchisee of Ashton Burkinshaw's Chislehurst branch, was sponsored by Ashton Burkinshaw to take part in the world's largest triathlon. Sporting both the company's eye-catching "apple" logo and the NAS logo, Adam successfully completed the mammoth swim, cycle and run event in London's Docklands. He achieved a personal triumph by completing the Super Sprint category in 55.18 minutes.

This Triathlon was the event's 10th anniversary and was its biggest yet, with over 7,000 participants taking part from all over the world. Thousands of spectators lined the course and over £1 million was raised for various charities.

Before the event, Adam actively fundraised and collected sponsorship money for the NAS on behalf of AB. Adam is working at the Helen Allison School, a National Autistic Society school in Meopham, during his gap year before he starts studying Sports and Development at Worcester University.

"Taking part in the London Triathlon was the most amazing experience," says Adam Porter. "Apart from being a feat of personal endurance, it was great to be able to raise some money for the NAS and promote the vital role that the NAS play in their communities. The NAS exists to champion the rights of interests of all people with autism and ensures that they and their families receive quality service appropriate to their needs. It is a wonderful charity to support and it gave me the motivation to complete the event and to get through the pain barrier on numerous times throughout the day!"



Adam Porter collecting his medal at this year's Michelob Ultra London Triathlon.



Christmas Greetings

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy, Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.

					U				B		H
		A				N		W	O	S	
B	N			I			R	U	K		A
		R	A	S			I	O		N	T
	S		H			R		B			W
I	U						W	O			
				R	H					A	N
	K			A		B		I		O	
T	A		R	O			W	K	H		
A		S	O	U			K			I	B
	H	W	T			N			S		
K		B					R				

CHRISTMAS TEASER!

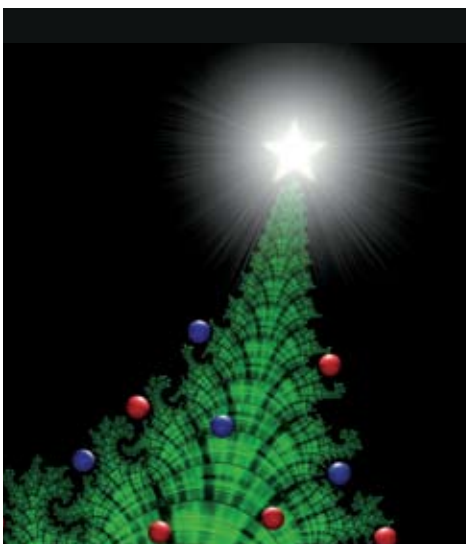
Sudoku is a game that is seemingly taking over the world. But sometimes a 9 x 9 puzzle is just too easy! Here is our more fiendish puzzle but this time using a 12-grid puzzle. 12 letters are required to spell our company name Ashton Burkinshaw. Those letters are A, S, H, T, O, N, B, U, R, K, I and W. To complete this puzzle successfully each letter must appear **just once** on each horizontal line, each vertical line and in each 12 box grid. It looks more difficult than it is. With a little logic and some patience you will be able to find the solution. Anyway you were looking for something to do between meals on Christmas Day!

A number of the spaces have been filled in to get you going and we wish you the best of luck in filling out the rest. Please send completed puzzles to Ashton Burkinshaw Sudoku, 5 Clarendon Place, King Street, Maidstone ME14 1BQ and the first correct solution picked out of the hat after the closing date of 31 January 2007 will win a £25 Choice High Street Voucher.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ **Tel:** _____



For your guidance and information our opening times over the Christmas period are as follows:

Tuesday	December 19 th	9 am to 12.30 pm
Saturday	December 23 rd	9 am to 2 pm
Sunday	December 24 th	Closed
Monday	December 25 th	Closed
Tuesday	December 26 th	Closed
Wednesday	December 27 th	10 am to 3 pm
Thursday	December 28 th	10 am to 3 pm
Friday	December 29 th	10 am to 3 pm
Saturday	December 30 th	9 am to 2 pm
Sunday	December 31 st	Closed
Monday	January 1 st	Closed
Tuesday	January 2 nd	Normal working hours