



How rail forum could help HS2

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Rail composite firm back on track after being derailed by Thameslink contract



BY OLIVER ASTLEY

A DERBY rail company which was forced to restructure when Bombardier lost out on the £1.6 billion Thameslink contract is back to full strength and hoping to increase turnover by 30%.

Composite manufacturing and tooling firm Datum has won contracts on a number of significant rail projects and has expanded its workforce. It is involved in manufacturing cab fronts and interior



Managing director David Taylor, left, with lead hand Steve Burden, inspecting a component.

panels for Alstom's Juniper 458 and is supplying Bombardier with toilet modules, panels and cab fronts for its two multi-million-pound contracts with Southern Rail.

The composites division of Datum, headquartered in Longbridge Lane, is also working with Swadlincote rail couplings specialist Dellner on prototype composite components.

In addition, the company is making fire-retardant composite panels for cab interiors, supplying Siemens with products for its depots and is working with Derby firm Gar-randale on a contract with Merseyrail. A deal has also been secured with Doncaster's Wabtec to produce cab-front bonnets for 321 Class vehicles.

Currently turning over about £2 million, the company is anticipating further growth in the coming years.

Part of this optimism is down to the fact that hundreds of carriages in the UK

have to be re-fitted to make them accessible for disabled people. On this project, Datum is working alongside Sheffield-based Birley Manufacturing and APA Design, in Litchurch Lane, Derby.

Managing director David Taylor said: "Making carriages compliant for people of reduced mobility is a big area for us. It has the potential to secure jobs, help us grow in the future and widen our customer base with train operating and rolling stock companies. In the next 12 months, we are hoping to expand significantly and have already taken on a number of youngsters aged between 18 and 24. If all goes to plan, we are hoping to achieve further growth and recruit more staff."

Bombardier winning two contracts for Southern Rail was an important part of helping the firm get back on track after it was forced to make redundancies.

Mr Taylor, who serves on the executive board of Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, said: "We were delighted when Bombardier won the Southern Rail contracts.

"It was a very difficult time for us and others after the Thameslink contract went to Siemens but Bombardier continued to support local businesses and helped us to get back up to the same level where we were before, and we have ambitious plans for the future."

Outside the rail sector, the company is working on converters for precision laser cutting equipment and bespoke furniture. It is also involved in supplying the construction sector.

astley@derbytelegraph.co.uk



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How rail forum is on track to keep city's train industry in the limelight

TODAY, rail is still a key industry in Derby and an intrinsic part of the city's economy.

The city, along with its surrounding area, is home to several rail companies whose products and expertise are in demand the world over.

The claim is that this region has the largest cluster of rail-related businesses in the world.

But it could all have been very different if it had not been for the part played by the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum.

In the early 1990s, the government of the day was pushing ahead with plans to privatise British Rail.

Back in Derby, the alarm bells were ringing. Privatisa-



For 20 years, the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum has been providing a collective voice for rail-related businesses in the region. Business editor Robin Johnson looks at the key role it has played.

tion meant the breaking up of British Rail and all the companies within it, scattering them to the four winds.

It also meant a significant hiatus in business to the supply industry. The most significant issue of the time in Derby saw the BREL train-building works (now Bombardier) go without a new train order for 1,064 days.

And other rail companies

were suffering similar pressure from the lack of civil and signalling projects on the railway infrastructure.

Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, the trade unions and rail businesses recognised the devastating effect the loss of the rail industry in the city would cause.

They engaged the support of Derby MPs Margaret Beck-

ett and Bob Laxton and formed an organisation - the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum.

The main objective was the survival of one of Derbyshire's oldest and most respected industries.

The forum would bring together private sector rail companies to retain industry expertise in the city.

"We decided to get together

with the local politicians to form a lobbying group for promotion of rail orders," recalled Colin Walton, current rail forum chairman.

"It was one voice saying, 'Look, rail is important to us and we are very concerned about having no orders and membership and a channel for business opportunity. The result was a move to create a business-led regional trade association - which is

orders did eventually come." Post-privatisation, the forum still had an important job to do.

The focus needed to move from the crisis agenda, which caused its formation, to one of information provider to the membership and a channel for business opportunity.

"The result was a move to create a business-led regional trade association - which is

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Artist's impression of a HS2 train

what the forum is today. Mr Walton, a former UK chairman of Bombardier, said: "We still needed to promote the rail sector even when times were good. If orders became scarce again, we needed a voice."

The forum began welcoming rail-related businesses and became self-funding through subscriptions and commercial activity.

Today, the forum is involved in a wide range of activities to benefit the membership.

But a greater focus is now placed on providing information and business support for its members, which today numbers around 120.

These members come from all aspects of the railway industry, including the original founders from local government and the trade unions.

The organisation is managed through an executive committee, the business members of which are elected bi-annually.

Alongside Mr Walton, the board is made up of representatives from rail-related businesses both large and small, along with people from the local authorities, the unions, Network Rail and East Midlands Trains.

Mr Walton said: "The forum is Derby and Derbyshire-centric. However, the tentacles spread right across the UK. There are associate members spread up and down the country.

"So, we are not a parochial organisation. We are now reaping the benefits of this because we now received visits from the secretary of states, director generals, who come to Derby specifically to see us.

"They meet the smaller companies, which helps give them a better idea on how the supply chain is fairing."

The claim by DDRF is that this area has the largest cluster of rail companies in the world.

"That's a fact," said Mr Walton. "We took the decision to actually shout this and no one has challenged us on it."

These are exciting times for

A London Underground train at Bombardier's Litchurch Lane factory. Below, Colin Walton, a chairman of the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum.

rail. The Government is investing heavily in the UK network through numerous major projects.

There is the electrification of huge swathes of track across the country including the Midland Main Line, which serves Derby.

There are other large projects such as Thameslink and Crossrail, which require new infrastructure and rolling stock.

Mr Walton said: "I've gone on record by saying that if the Government wanted to place

"Overall, I think the rail industry in this area has got a good future."

COLIN WALTON

one single order for everything it does on railways, if it placed the order with DDRF our members could fulfil everything.

"From infrastructure, the concrete, the signalling, the gantries, the trains - our members could do the lot."

Further down the line is another ambitious project, High Speed 2.

The latter has so far polarised opinion - with some saying the multi-billion project is essential, while others claim it would be a huge waste of money.

Whether people feel they are necessary or not, all of these projects present opportunities for Derby's rail companies.

could be very different if the rail forum had not been around.

He said: "I believe that some of the bigger companies would still be here but they would each be doing their own thing. Because of the forum they share their plans. Some of the smaller rail businesses would not have come into the area and maybe some wouldn't be around today.

"Overall, I think the rail industry in this area has got a good future.

"Of course, we can't guarantee we'll get any orders because we have to fight for them fair and square, but we can and will continue to promote for rail investment.

Success breeds success. If we can show the Government that rail investments with DDRF members is a good return on your money, then we're more likely to get more."

johnson@derbytelegraph.co.uk



MY WEEK

Ken Davies, organiser of the Graduate Engineer Show at The Roundhouse, talks about the week he finds more exhibitors, helps with homework and lets off steam doing the ironing.



MONDAY

Living in Littleover and working in central Derby, I make it a habit to walk to the office at least three times a week. I see it both as free gym membership and a time to think. I get to work at around 8.15am.

My business partner David Reeks arrives at about the same time. We share an office in Friar Gate Studios and meet to set out the day's agenda.

David and I are currently organising The Graduate Engineer Show, taking place at the Roundhouse on Wednesday, October 30.

It's an exciting development for us, bringing together some of the UK's largest engineering employers with the best engineering talent from universities across the country.

To host this event in Derby, the heart of engineering heritage, is particularly exciting and we have been thrilled by the positive response it has received.

More than 50 of the UK's most prestigious rail, aerospace, automotive and petrochemical companies will be there, including Bombardier, Shell, BP, Rolls-Royce, Airbus and Jaguar Land Rover.

This afternoon we have a meeting with a key client for the show.

I have dinner with my wife Ranjit and daughters Nathalie and Abigail before helping with the homework. They seem to get more than I ever did!

TUESDAY

The day starts with several telephone conversations with the deans of university engineering faculties.

I grab a bacon sandwich at the Bean Caffe, miraculously placed a few yards from our office.

We are actively recruiting a couple of new members of the team and interview some potential candidates in the afternoon.

Afterwards, I have a number of calls with clients about exhibits they are bringing to the show.

After work, I normally relax with a good book, or listen to music. I play the guitar and count as wasted any day that goes by without playing for at least 20 minutes.

If we have time, my eldest daughter Nathalie and I take turns to play each other a song on YouTube.

I've now been introduced to the delights of Paramore and Don Broco and she knows the back catalogue of Joni Mitchell and Rickie Lee Jones. I think she got the better deal.



WEDNESDAY

A walk to the office, followed by another full-on day. We wanted to create a website which reflected Derby's position in the global engineering community and have developed a site called www.derbyengineer.co.uk, which has proved very popular.

Derby is seen as a centre of engineering excellence around the world and people take a real interest in the developments taking place here.

We spend the morning developing story ideas for the site. In the afternoon, I turn my attention to the show again. I spend the last hour ensuring our Facebook page and Twitter account are updated. With a graduate audience, it's vital we use social networking successfully to spread the word.

THURSDAY

On Thursdays we issue the latest information on the show via our e-mail newsletter.

Much of the morning is taken up ensuring the site is filled with interesting copy and the logos of exhibiting companies are all included.

We travel to London in the afternoon for a meeting about an engineering centrepiece for the show.

FRIDAY

Another four major companies have signed up for the show.

The afternoon is spent putting together an article about graduate recruitment for a rail publication.

I love Friday evenings as I try to spend as much time as possible doing as little as possible.

SATURDAY

I catch up on a few jobs at home, then Ranjit and I do our share of ferrying the girls about.

I am a lifelong fan of Wrexham FC; one of the few benefits of being in the Conference means you can normally listen to each game live on the radio.

SUNDAY

After a Sunday lunch, we go for a family walk.

Later, I'm let loose on the ironing, which I find truly relaxing. There it is - I've come out of the ironing closet!

Stagecoach boss stands and delivers rail praise



BY OLIVER ASTLEY

THE leading light behind the Stagecoach Group has praised Derby's rail professionals for making the city one of the major success stories of the industry.

Sir Brian Souter, chairman of the Stagecoach Group, was speaking at a dinner at the Roundhouse - an event that brought together some of the nation's most senior rail professionals.

The night was also the culmination of fundraising efforts for the Railway Children charity, which helps vulnerable youngsters.

More than £85,000 was raised. East Midlands Trains donated the use of a high-speed train for a rail tour, bringing in £34,531.

At the dinner, Sir Brian offered a personal donation that doubled the amount.

Andy Ridout, managing director of railway training and recruitment firm Advance TRS, raised £12,777 by competing in a 140-mile triathlon in Norway.

David Horne, managing director of East Midlands Trains, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to have been

able to donate such a significant amount to such a worthwhile charity.

"We have been a firm supporter of Railway Children for many years and our staff have been instrumental in raising thousands of pounds through charity bike rides, special trains and selling commemorative badges."

A further £3,600 was raised

on the night and Sir Brian gave a rare speech about his career, which started with a couple of second-hand coaches back in 1980.

Stagecoach Group now operates 8,100 vehicles in the UK, carrying 2.5 million passengers a day.

At the dinner, organised by Mainspring, Sir Brian also spoke about the Govern-

ment's hasty sell-off of the railways two decades ago and his clinching the lucrative South West Trains franchise.

Next year's rail industry dinner will be held in Derby on October 9.

The event is backed by some significant firms, including Garrandale Engineering, Porterbrook Leasing, Rail Vehicle Engineering, Vix

Technology, Ford and Stanley, ABC Electrification and McGinley Support Services, as well as the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, the Railway Industry Association and RTM magazine.

MPs Dame Margaret Beckett, Pauline Latham, Lillian Greenwood and Chris Williamson also attended.

oaasley@derbytelegraph.co.uk



From left, Haydn Abbott, chairman of the Railway Children; Pauline Latham, MP for Mid Derbyshire; Leo Beckett and Dame Margaret Beckett, MP for Derby South; Chris

Williamson, MP for Derby North; BBC Radio 4 presenter and event MC Garry Richardson; Mainspring chairman and dinner organiser Howard

Johnston; Sir Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach; and Colin Walton, chairman of Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum.

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Big names in rail industry lined for forum's annual conference



BY OLIVER ASTLEY

THE most influential figures in the UK rail industry will be speaking at next year's Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum conference.

Confirmed speakers include Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin; Lillian Greenwood, the Shadow Minister of State for Transport; Claire Moriarty, director general for rail at the Department for Transport; Martin Griffiths, chief executive officer of Stagecoach Group; and Michael Roberts, director general of the Association of Train Operating Companies.

Additional speakers are being lined up for the event. Rupert Brennan Brown, spokesman for the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, said:



Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin is one of a number of influential figures who will speak at next year's Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum conference.

"This is a key event for the local rail industry, and the calibre of speakers shows just how highly our local supply chain is regarded by the wider rail industry.

"Our annual conference

will take place just days into the new control period which lasts five years and will see billions of pounds invested in improving the railways for both passenger and freight customers. This is a major opportunity for all those interested in the future of the railway network to understand what this massive level of investment will mean to both suppliers and users of Britain's railway."

The rail forum is also holding a parliamentary reception at the House of Commons in February. Hosted by Mid Derbyshire MP Pauline Latham, it follows the success of a similar event held in April this year.

It will bring together rail forum members, local MPs, members of both the Government and shadow transport teams as well as stakeholders from across the industry.

Colin Walton, chairman of the rail forum, said: "There is an enormous interest in the world's largest rail cluster in both Westminster and Whitehall. This is an opportunity for our members to meet Parliamentary representatives from all parties and explain how important the railway sector is, not just to the economy of the East Midlands, but also to UK PLC.

"We are particularly pleased that both Patrick McLoughlin and Lillian Greenwood have already agreed to attend."

astley@derbytelegraph.co.uk

New products to go on show in Germany

A HEANOR composite materials firm has developed two new specialist fire-retardant products for the rail industry.

Cytec Industrial Materials, based on the Heanor Gate Industrial Estate, will be demonstrating its pair of fresh advances at the Rail-Interiors Show in Cologne next month.

The first new product, known as MTM@ 348FR, is a type of epoxy resin to be combined with glass or carbon fibre for the manufacture of lightweight components.

Dubbed XMTM30, the second is produced from a recyclable source and designed for the production of interior components such as wall panels, window frames, partitions, archways, floors, ceilings, standbacks, luggage racks, seats and doors.

A paper on the benefits of the new materials will be delivered at the Cologne show, which is being held between November 12 and 14.

Dr Richard Horn, Cytec rail market manager said: "We are very excited about the development of these two new products as they complement our existing phenolic and epoxy rail-focused pre-pregs."

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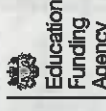
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We must ensure our fight is not wasted

MY VIEW

Mick Millichamp, of Unite the Union, argues that the hard work and campaigning that kept trainmaker Bombardier in Derby must not go to waste.



UNITE has been involved in the rail industry both for Derby and nationally for more than 100 years.

Our members made the tracks, built the infrastructure and the trains that run on them, as well as maintaining them on a daily basis.

While ensuring Unite members are safe and well-paid, we've a vested interest in ensuring that Derby continues to be a hub of rail activity and providing job security.

So we were pleased to be able to work with the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, the Derby Telegraph, MP Chris Williamson and many

others on the campaign to save Bombardier.

It saw thousands of local people join together and take to the streets to show their support for Derby's rail industry.

The fight was taken to Parliament. What we must ensure is that effort was not wasted.

As well as the 1,500 jobs in Bombardier, at least 6,000 supply-chain jobs in businesses reliant on Bombardier's success, were also saved.

We showed the procurement process was flawed and in future it must include an assessment of what the socio-economic impact would be of placing an order outside the UK.

Unite, not tied to any particular company takes a pragmatic approach. As far as we're concerned, it's about existing jobs being made secure and new jobs being created in Derby.

The lessons learned from the Bombardier campaign need to be understood. The HS2 project is supposed to boost the UK economy - so let's make sure it does.

Derby is well placed to provide all the elements required. If HS2 isn't the answer then what is?

A decision needs to be made soon, stuck to and delivered.



Thousands of local people join together and take to the streets to show their support for Derby's rail industry.

Unite all companies when they win orders to ensure they are actually carried out in Derby.

HS2 is going through the usual political ping-pong that happens with every major infrastructure project.

The lessons learned from the Bombardier campaign

The franchising system to decide who gets to take projects out of the publicly owned rail system has been a disaster from the start.

The best-run franchise recently has been a nationally owned one.

This Government finds it acceptable to allow French and German nationally owned companies to run British railways - but the successful British Government-run franchise was not allowed to bid for, let alone win, a contract that would have kept profits in the British economy.

So we clearly have the technology, the people and the brains in Derby to build a vibrant, successful rail industry in the UK.

All we need now are the politicians to recognise and support it - with actions rather than words.



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Engineers join the Network

BY OLIVER ASTLEY

A DERBY engineering firm has been appointed to work on the Network Rail maintenance depot in the city.

BSP Consulting, of Pride Park, is responsible for the structural engineering at Miller Construction's £7 million project.

Work is now under way on the site, close to the Chad-desden Triangle, off Wyvern Way. It is expected to be operational next summer.

The depot is being built to consolidate Network Rail's maintenance operation and provide a base for the team responsible for the electrification of the Midland Main Line. About 400 maintenance staff from around the East Midlands will share the site with 50 electrification maintenance specialists.

BSP business development director Jef

Todd said:

"BSP Consulting has been a member of the



Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum for a year now and this has helped us to develop our rail sector business across the company.

"It is an exciting time for the construction industry in Derby, with projects like Castleward, which BSP is also involved in, under way as well as developments in the rail sector."

It is the latest rail-related contract for the com-

pany, which was part of the team that refurbished Telecom Towers next to platform one at Derby railway station.

An innovation used in the design of the depot is Building Information Modelling, allowing those involved to develop a keen understanding of how a building will run.

BSP director Carl Hilton said: "We have adopted Revit Structures software and have been using Building Information Modelling on a range of projects, including the One Friar Gate Square offices in Derby. It allows us to generate and manage digital representations of physical and functional characteristics of a building."

castley@derbytelegraph.co.uk



Carl Hilton, BSP director and, below, an artist's impression of the Network Rail depot.

RECRUITERS REPORT 100% GROWTH

A DERBY rail recruitment firm is reporting 100% growth over the last 12 months and has purchased premises on Pride Park after securing contracts with high-profile engineering consultancies, Ford and Stanley, a member of the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, is currently refurbishing offices in Royal Scot Road to enable it to grow further.

The business has a dozen staff. Two more are set to join before Christmas and the aim is to bring a further six on board by the end of 2014.

Daniel Taylor, newly promoted to head of rail practice at the company, said: "The rail consultancies that we deal with have been recruiting and we have secured first-tier supplier status with a number of major rail businesses in the UK."



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How a train's journey can be analysed in an instant, thanks to Ian's product

BIG INTERVIEW

After 10 years of developing software for some of the biggest names in the rail industry, Ian Duffy, of ID Computing is ready to launch TrainScape, a product he hopes will result in big changes in the industry. Oliver Astley reports.

ACCURATE information gathering means major cost savings for train operators, Network Rail and rolling stock companies.

The potential to iron out operational inefficiencies and nip any maintenance problems in the bud are important goals for the entire global rail industry.

Ian Duffy, of ID Computing, based at the ID Centre, in London Road, Derby, has come up with just such a product.

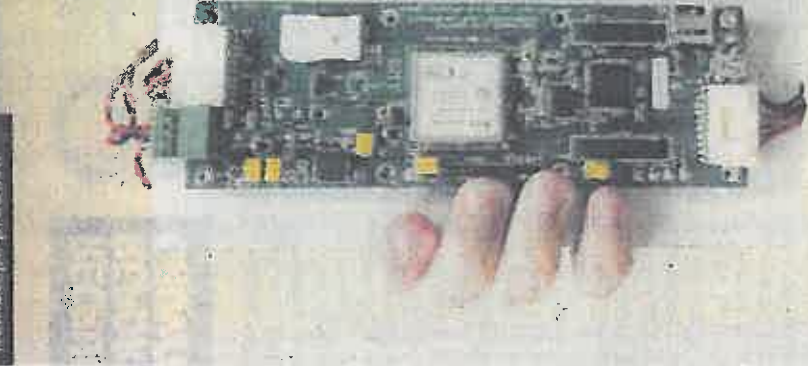


He might be a one-man rail software band at the moment but, having had a £14,000 loan approved by the Derby and Derbyshire Enterprise Growth Fund, his business is about to start on the next stage of its development.

The cash helped him to take time out to develop and demonstrate his TrainScape software for the Railtex exhibition earlier this year.

It is a software product that can store and analyse data on

Ian Duffy of ID Computing with his TrainScape product.



Celebrating 20 Years
Derby's Derbyshire
Rail Forum

the condition of rail industry assets and produce reports from a variety of sources.

It is being tested with data from a track-side monitoring system to count axles, weigh trains and monitor the condition of wheels.

Ian says: "I had never done anything like the Railtex exhibition before but there was a lot of interest."

"I've always wanted to be more than just a software services company and to develop my own products but it has been a slow process.

"Then I heard about the Derby Enterprise Growth Fund and made a conscious decision to go for it."

The track-side hardware comes from Plymouth-based partner firm Vortek and trials are taking place in both the US and Australia.

This partnership came through a former colleague from British Rail Research, formerly based at the Railway Technical Centre, in London Road, where Ian started his career.

Appropriately enough, in 2009, Ian moved into his current premises at the ID Centre, a business incubation Derby, returning to the place where his professional journey began, now re-christened the RTC Business Park.

A member of the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum, he is celebrating a decade in business this year.

He says: "The company I was working for back then produced ISDN and internet-based alarm panels and I wrote the software for the

CV: IAN DUFFY

IAN DUFFY spent three years studying advanced mathematics and theoretical physics at the University of Cambridge.

But his childhood hobby had more influence on his career.

His dad was a computer programmer and so, as soon as personal computers hit the market, Ian was introduced to the Sharp MZ 80k in the late 1970s.

He started writing simple computer programs when he was aged 10.

So, by the time he left Trinity College, he had more than a decade of software experience.

In 1991, he started out his working life at British Rail Research, at the Railway Technical Centre, in Derby.

Seven years later, he joined Polaris Telemetry, also in Derby, eventually becoming head of software development.

When the company went bust, he saw an opportunity to become a freelance software developer, and launched ID Computing.

After initially working from home, Ian returned to the Railway Technical Centre, in London Road, taking an office at the ID Centre.

Computing and the original idea for its own TrainScape product was some work for Virgin Trains managed by Serco Railtest.

Ian says: "Five years ago, I worked for them to produce a software tool called Vortex for analysing their black-box data."

"They use this tool every day to inform them about fuel efficiency, driver behaviour, speed profiles and to work out who's at fault when a train is late.

Seeing how successfully Virgin used this tool, Ian thought that the product had significant potential and the idea for TrainScape was born.

He says: "I thought that other train operating companies would be interested in this kind of product but then widened its scope to include data from other sources too."

"It has been on the drawing board for a long time because I've always been focused on producing software for other people. "It's good to know that the software can tell operators that on the 3.40pm train to Crewe there is a wheel flat on the seventh axle on the left-hand side."

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during a period of seismic activity.

Subsequent years saw Ian working for some of the biggest names in the rail industry, including Virgin, Network Rail, Balfour Beatty, Bombardier, Siemens and Serco Railtest.

Many of these projects involved the collection, collation and analysis of data.

He says: "At British Rail Research where I started my career there were probably about 1,000 people so I was relatively well connected in the rail industry which helped me establish the business."

Prior to the World Cup being held in South Africa, Ian worked on a project to remotely monitor and control CCTV cameras in stations. However, key to the latest stage in the evolution of ID

receiving stations. Unfortunately, it went bust. However, I had always fancied being freelance or running my own business and all of a sudden I didn't have a full-time job to give up so it wasn't that difficult a decision to make."

He set up ID Computing from home. Former employer AEA Technology was an early customer.

Ian says: "I did some work for them on Vampire which is a vehicle-modelling package where you can build a virtual train and model how it behaves dynamically. I was asked to enhance it so it could simulate earthquakes for the Japanese Central Railway company."

This work drew on his academic background as a physicist, working out the various forces that are brought to bear on the wheel and rails

"Delay attribution is important because there are fines for train operating companies if they are at fault."

IAN DUFFY

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UCK

Fleet of railway industries helps keep city's economy moving along



TALKING BUSINESS

Russell Rigby, of Rigby and Co, talks about the impact of the rail industry on the commercial property market.



Helping businesses see clearly in 2013

THIS year, the Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum celebrates its 20th anniversary.

I am not a train spotter or enthusiast but I am a regular passenger and I have worked on a number of property projects for rail companies over the last 15 years or so. As a consequence, my admiration for the rail sector in Derby has grown immeasurably.

Appropriately enough, the DDRF's 20th birthday coincides with the 20th anniversary of the day the first spade was put in the ground at Pride Park.

As agent to Derby City Council from 1993 up to completion, I was fortunate enough to be heavily involved in a number of relocations to Pride Park.

A number of these deals involving rail consultancies, including Interfleet Technology, Midland Main Line (as they were then), Delta Rail and AEA Technology.

The contribution that the rail industry makes to Derby's economic output is hugely significant.

Despite a plethora of office buildings occupied by rail-related businesses, I still feel that many people still view Derby's rail connection in terms of manufacturing, assembly and train building, rather than the services



delivered from brand new offices.

During the very early difficult years on Pride Park, when business confidence was patchy and fragile and it was difficult to get companies to commit to relocation decisions, the role played by those pioneering rail companies was crucial in building momentum.

Remember, the first office

development on Pride Park, delivered by Peter Gadsby, centred on Interfleet Technology's headquarters. In keeping with other businesses which subsequently moved to Pride Park, Interfleet also made the short hop across the line from the RTC Business Park, in London Road, where a number of rail businesses remain.

Interfleet had been the sub-

ject of a management buyout which resulted in a transformation in its business outlook and image.

The operation went from being seen as a band of technicians in a drawing office with pencils behind their ears to a group of slick, suited, corporate rail teams travelling the world to advise on all manner of projects.

Its new headquarters, off

Roundhouse Road, gave the company a facility that matched both its potential and ambition at the time.

Interfleet's bold decision to become the first office occupier on Pride Park matched the bravery of similar decisions taken by DPT, the first-ever occupier on Pride Park and subsequently by Derby County.

We have much, therefore, for which to thank Interfleet and those related businesses, as we look across a development which is now home to in excess of a billion pounds of capital investment and houses about 14,000 employees.

The success and appetite of those and subsequent rail-related businesses is now, though, providing a separate challenge as Derby tries to plan for and plot the next wave of new office development across the city.

Much of the attention, quite

"The contribution that the rail industry makes to Derby's economic output is significant."

rightfully, has been directed on promoting "Suits on the Street" within the city centre and specifically, the Cathedral Quarter Business District and other locations around the inner ring road.

However, many occupiers who are now in the market for space continue to name-check access and proximity to the railway station as a key driver when planning where to put their next facility.

By definition this retains a strong focus on that area of Pride Park closest to the station and the eastern side of the city centre - where there are pockets of office development available but distant from other distinct office destinations within the Cathedral Quarter.

With further investment planned for the RTC Business Park in London Road, as it transforms into a 21st-century hub for innovation and transportation, the potential of Derby's rail sector and its impact on the commercial property market continue to be very closely aligned and points to a prosperous future.

Mountaineer teams up with outdoors brand

A DERBYSHIRE mountaineer who has scaled some of the biggest peaks in the world has agreed to become a brand ambassador for an outdoor equipment firm.

Nigel Vardy, of Belper, is taking up the role with Alfreton-based Terra Nova Equipment.

Mr Vardy has worked with the company for a number of years, testing its products. The firm has also supported his various expeditions, including Mr Vardy's quest to be the first Briton to climb the seven highest peaks on the seven largest islands, which he completed in 2007.

He recently announced that in April he will lead a team in the Ice Man Polar Race, billed as the world's toughest Arctic ski race.

Carolyn Budding, Terra Nova's marketing director, said: "We are working closely with outdoor enthusiasts from various sports who are providing valuable feedback and commentary on products from our three brands: Terra Nova, Wild Country and Extremities."

"Terra Nova and Nigel have a long-standing association. We are delighted that he will be a brand ambassador for our ranges."

Rail firm proud to be chosen for comms contract

DERBY firm Yellow Rail has secured a contract to install and manage wireless communication systems for trainmaker Bombardier.

Based at the ID Centre on the RTC Business Park, it is the first deal it has secured with its Litchurch Lane neighbours.

The project includes the fully managed installation of GSM-T, the international wireless communications system for the rail industry to link trains and railway control centres.

The project is being delivered at the Ramsgate depot on Class 375s and 376 Electrostar fleets, both manufactured by Bombardier.

The project is due to be completed in August 2014.

Yellow Rail managing director Andy Kevins said: "It is a privilege for the company to be able to support the world's largest train builder in the delivery of this project and we look forward to working with the Bombardier site team over the next 12 months."

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All change at city rail consultancy as trio gain promotion



Michael Grace has become Interfleet's regional director for the UK.



BY OLIVER ASTLEY

DERBY rail consultancy Interfleet has appointed a new regional director for the UK.

Michael Grace has been brought in after former regional director Jonathan Wragg was promoted to the role of group operations director.

A chartered engineer and holder of an MBA, Mr Grace will be responsible for Interfleet's UK business. He has spent 20 years with Interfleet and was previously UK business development manager.

As well as undertaking commercial and operational roles, Mr Grace has previously led international sales, headed Interfleet's operations in Australia and worked extensively in Sweden following Interfleet's acquisition of TrainTech AB, rebranded as Interfleet Technology AB in 2008.

Mr Wragg also played an important part in the firm's acquisition by the SNC-Lavalin Group in October 2011.

An MBA and a chartered engineer, Mr Wragg's achievements at Interfleet include directing a number of major train-fleet investment programmes for a wide range of clients.

He has also provided strategic consultancy to clients in areas such as rolling stock strategy and franchising activities.

Alongside the appointments of Mr Grace and Mr Wragg, Thomas Quernheim has also been made regional director for central Europe.

Mr Quernheim is one of the founders of Die Ingenieurwerkstatt, bought by Interfleet in 2010, and he was previously a team leader at Interfleet's office in Wiesbaden.

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Congratulations to the Derby & Derbyshire Rail Forum on their first 20 years. We're proud of our city's rail heritage and are excited about our involvement in the future of the UK's railways.

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Derby firm is clear about its neighbourly aid

A DERBY firm has used its expertise to help a neighbour get into the rail market.

Derby and Derbyshire Rail Forum member FPA Consulting has supported Clear Environmental Consultants in getting the certification it needs to work on the UK's rail infrastructure.

Both firms are based in Verron Gate. Clear Environmental Consultants wished to develop compliant rail systems and enlisted FPA Consulting to help the company pass what's known as a Link-Up Core Module Audit.

Clear Environmental Consultants is a specialist in advising on water and wastewater hydraulic modelling and ecology services.

Operations director Steve Hogg said: "We are very pleased with the service provided. FPA quickly understood our business, wrote the documentation, explained it to us and supported us through every step of the process."

FPA Consulting has been developing compliant systems for over 16 years.

Managing director, John Barke said: "It was great to support a client so close to home."



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Marketing team on the move to bigger base



BY OLIVER ASTLEY

Having doubled in size over the past few years, Brief Your Market now enjoys a turnover of £3 million and expects to increase that figure by at least £1.5 million in the next 12 months.

Director and co-founder of the business Rick Palmer said: "We have the right product at the right time and the business has been very successful."

"At the moment, we are looking for more team members and we are always interested in talking to good software engineers."

"By taking a lease on the new office, we will double the amount of space available to grow the business."

"There will be comfortably enough room for 60 people and maybe 70 or more."

When the company moved into Jessop House three years ago, just four people were working in the office. The business had previously operated from Mr Palmer's kitchen.

He said: "We are Derby people and travel around the UK all the time so it's an ideal central location."

Brindley House was formerly the home of Salt, the commercial lending arm of the Derbyshire Building Society.

A deal for the new lease was struck by property agent Steve Salloway, who negotiated with the Nationwide Building Society and landlord Morgan Industrial Properties.

astley@derbytelegraph.co.uk



Bombardier on schedule with Southern order

TRAINMAKER Bombardier is on schedule to have all 26 Southern Class 377 Electrostar trains delivered by the end of the year.

The first Southern Class 377 Electrostar train of the initial batch of 26, made up of 130 vehicles, has successfully entered passenger service.

The Class 377 train, manufactured at Bombardier's plant in Litchurch Lane, Derby, started operating

between London Bridge and West Croydon at the end last month.

Southern Railway praises the firm for having produced the vehicles in record time.

A spokesman for Bombardier said: "The train performing exceptionally well in service and we are pleased to have met our schedule."

Southern also has a further 40 dual-voltage carriages on order from the firm.



Katy Grace heads up the engineering division at EMBS.

in approach. This sector has a very traditional view on recruitment and we've enjoyed challenging and transforming the way that companies hire engineering people.

"Our experience has shown that, when companies in the engineering sector employ the services of an agency, the fees charged are disproportionate to the levels of service delivered."

EMBS, a former winner of the Small Business of the Year title at the Derbyshire Business Awards, has seen its People Transfer product used

by high-profile companies such as chocolate manufacturer Thorntons, IT infrastructure firm Computacen-

ter, furniture retailer Dune Mill and swimwear manufacturer Speedo.

Miss Grace said: "Having worked for traditional recruitment agencies for many years, it is clear to me and my clients that this approach represents the future."

"The model is so in-tune with what organisations actually need that the inter-views from HR and engineering managers has been astonishing."

"We have the knowledge, experience, resources and networks to deliver real value and the services to businesses achieve their recruitment goals at a significantly reduced cost."

AN engineering recruitment service in Derby has achieved 41% growth since the start of the year.

East Midlands Business Services, in Friar Gate, launched its People Transfer engineering recruitment division in September last year in response to increasing demand from technology sectors, including rail and aerospace.

It is now the primary recruitment services partner for more than 30 engineering companies across the East Midlands.

These include Progress Rail, Cullum Detumers and Ross and Catherall, as well as a number of businesses with-

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