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MD's UPDATE STEVE BURKE

Well, just what is the market really up to? On the one hand, we've had reports of staggering growth for the industry in the last quarter whilst on the other hand, we've heard that house prices have dropped for the first time in many months. Confused? I'd say so!!

Speaking as I see things from CPUK World I think the message is similarly uncertain. Over the past two months we've had enquiry levels as high as they've been for 18 months. The enquiries have been particularly strong in the retail and the health sectors and even the residential market appears to be peeping over the parapet with a number of residential schemes being worked on aiming at completion in mid 2011.

What has become clear, is that the temptation exists for Clients to 'test' the market with long tender lists, Dutch auctions and encouraging and accepting bids which are clearly not sustainable. This doesn't just apply to the construction phase; I am hearing from many design practices that their fees are being squeezed to the point where they are not able to carry out the service the client wants. We are all clear that, on the face of it, this may well produce the cheapest tender price but I would urge any tempted clients (and professionals) to understand that it does not necessarily represent the best value for money and there is a very good chance that, ultimately, it will end in tears.

I am all for reducing costs through innovation and alternative thinking and I happen to think that at CPUK we're pretty good at that, but what is currently going on is nothing to do with innovation - quite the opposite; we're in danger of turning the clock back 25 years with all the conflict and misery that will bring. It is the responsibility of all the key stakeholders in the construction industry not to abandon the principles

of collaborative working; we must all hold our nerve and remember what true value for money is all about (that's enough of my soap box!)

On a more positive note, over the past quarter we've seen some significant schemes being secured; after a quiet 12/18 months I am delighted to confirm that we're back working for Peel Holdings with the Starbucks Drive thru opposite the Trafford Centre; following the successful completion of the Tesco unit in Radcliffe for The Windmill Group earlier in the year, we have this week been appointed as contractor on the Sainsbury's at Belle Vue, Blackpool for the same client. Our move to enter the health market continues to bear fruit with a Step Down Facility in Rainford, our first scheme for MerseyCare NHS Trust and sticking with the health theme we will be starting on the Centre for Independent Living Project later this month for client Renova Ltd - another exciting first.

I am delighted to confirm that forward tendering activity looks strong - we've just got to win them!!

CONGRATULATIONS...

to Lee Stephenson and Will Larmour who after several years of day release have both attained degrees this summer. As I have mentioned in the past, studying towards a degree whilst working takes commitment and effort. Well done to them both! Will has the added accolade of being presented with the Tullis Award for the Best Student on Foundation Construction by UCLAN .



Oh no - it's not that time of year again is it?
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COMPLETED PROJECTS

Cottam Lane Medical Centre

Cottam Lane Medical Centre provides a traditional 3 storey building incorporating 11 consulting rooms, 2 practice nurse rooms, a minor operating area together with additional offices for counselling services and community nurses. The building was constructed using traditional building methods and materials to ensure that it blends in with the building's residential surroundings. The Practice Manager and staff consider their new centre an 'outstanding project' and would be happy to recommend us to others. Well done to Neil, Andy, Lex and all the team!



Waste Treatment Plant, Leyland

Design and Build scheme to provide a fully fitted out single storey Administration Centre at the Waste 2 Resources Treatment Plant in Leyland. The Superstructure was a mixture of steelwork, load bearing masonry and render with composite roof deck with Trocal single ply membrane finish. Internally the building incorporates office space, meeting rooms and welfare facilities and is fully fitted out. Architectural features include curved elevations and bullnose eaves details. The scheme was built to a 'Very Good' BREEM Rating. Herbert is to be congratulated for an excellent project and indeed he received high praise from the client as the driving force that made the project a success and for his friendly but firm manner.

Tesco Express, Radcliffe

The project comprises the construction of a new single storey steel framed unit with composite roof cladding. In addition to the realignment of the adjacent main road, the works included associated incoming statutory authority supplies, service diversions and section 278 works to form the new retail entrance to the rear car park. Public interface and their safety was of paramount importance as the site was also adjacent to existing shops, public car parking and residential property. I'm happy to confirm that successful completion of this scheme has led to us being awarded a further project to build a Sainsburys at Blackpool for the same client. Congratulations to Mark, Chris and the team.



Birch Abbey Care Home - Phase 1

The scheme comprised the construction of a new 60 bedroom Alzheimer Care Facility including all associated communal and support areas. Post tender savings of approx £200,000 were achieved through various Value Engineering initiatives relating to alternative programme and construction techniques. The nursing home is fully fitted out and incorporates the latest cutting edge technology and thinking in the provision of Alzheimer Care. A key factor in the construction of the scheme is the construction / public interface. The project is built in two phases with residents being decanted from the existing care facility following completion of Phase one; this in turn allows demolition of the existing building and construction of Phase Two. The residents are delighted with their new facilities and John Wrigley and the team are currently underway with Phase II of this project.

More completed projects on the back page....

CPUK 10TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY Haydock Races

As the 17th July approached and the fantastic heatwave of June faded, both in our memories and in reality - it occurred to me that only in England would we prepare for a summer evening out taking both sunglasses and umbrellas! Despite the fact that we had arranged the event smack bang in the middle of wedding season, we had a great turnout, with a number of people attending a race event for the first time. The seasoned race goers were studying the form, commenting on the racing conditions (soft), and deciding whether to put £15 or £20 on the nose.



The newbies were choosing their horses based on the colour of the jockey's silks, the fact that they liked the horse's name or other equally scientific reasoning - there were also a lot more £2 each way bets. In the end, however, it doesn't seem to make much difference whether you know what you are doing or not, the bookie always wins!



N.B. Apologies to everyone who attended who doesn't appear on any photos - in future we need to make sure that I am not the official photographer when I am having a drink and a gamble!



Learning all about being a racehorse owner - is it tax deductible?

Before the start of the first race, 6 of our party were invited into the centre of the parade ring to find out what it felt like to be a race horse owner. From what he was saying it appears to be both expensive and nerve wracking - you're never quite sure how a horse is going to turn out when you buy it and they are prone to career threatening injuries. Not sure that I will be able to persuade Stuart that a racehorse would be a wise company investment! We also got an insight into being a jockey - the vast majority of whom have never even seen the horses before they ride them. The lads in our group winced a bit when he told us that most stallions are castrated apparently it helps to calm them down - that would be useful in the office sometimes!



Did we win anything? Do we look like we care??

As our marquee was situated right next to the owners enclosure there was always a chance of spotting a celebrity. When Neil Byron saw Michael Owen he took the opportunity to quiz him about why he moved to Man Utd and not Everton - poor lad - there's no escape from football is there! After the final race there was a fantastic performance by Mick Hucknall and Simply Red. There were obviously quite a few fans in the crowd; the people near us seemed to know all words to every song! All in all - a great evening out, I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did.

Jane

Milestone birthday!

I suppose there was no way I was going to get away with having a 50th birthday and have no-one know about it. Even the fact that it was on a weekend (world cup final day would you believe!) didn't stop the girls in the office from decorating the place with giant photos of me - and I don't like having my photo taken at the best of times! Steve is enjoying telling everyone that he is a toy boy even though it is only for 6 weeks! I will get my own back - I'm sure that there are some embarrassing photos of him I can dig out! Many thanks to everyone for the cards, flowers, gifts and good wishes.

Jane



Jubilee Park

Full refurbishment of an existing community building comprising pavilion/ changing room facilities. The scheme was part of the extensive Knowsley 20/20 community initiative. The works included soft strip and demolition, services diversion works and reconfiguration of the existing structure including full fit out of the new space.



Key interfaces existed with a local children's park and playing fields which remained fully operational throughout the construction phase. The scheme was completed on time and to budget. A comment from the client below reflects the success of the project: "It was identified that CPUK had provided an overall service which was above average. Site based personnel were helpful and informative. Office based staff provided a pro-active approach promoting solutions as issues arose on site." Well done to Kenny Boal who managed the job from start to finish.

Achilles Building Confidence Accreditation

As part of the ongoing development of the business, we have recently undertaken enrollment in the Achilles Building Confidence Accreditation scheme. Achilles accreditation is a requirement for all Bovis Lend Lease schemes, but other sectors and clients are increasingly using the scheme as their benchmarking tool for all aspects of Health, Safety and Environmental performance. Accreditation involved a very in-depth auditing process, requiring myself and Steve Burke to spend full two days at head office providing the assessor with details of our existing policies and procedures and being questioned on company attitudes towards safety and environmental issues.

Throughout the audit sessions, several of the sites were called on to provide specific pieces of documented evidence to support the answers that were provided and I am pleased to report that the prompt responses and the evidence provided by the sites, together with the information and evidence provided in Head Office, resulted in our being approved for Achilles accreditation. This approval gives us the opportunity to enter into other construction sectors which have, to date, been out of our remit and confirms the high levels of performance that we operate as a business. Many thanks to everyone who was involved in the process.

Steve Rees



Paul Whittle Safety Award



To help improve & promote SHE standards at Longley Lane, Sharston, a Contractors Monthly SHE Award has recently been introduced. We are delighted to report that Paul Whittle's site was the first winner;

here he is receiving his trophy. Our Congratulations go to Paul and also to Neil Wharram, whose support contributes to Paul's success. A great team effort!

Charity Bike Ride

As if pedalling uphill for 4 days solid in the pouring rain last year, wasn't enough, this year we are cycling further in a day less! Newcastle to Edinburgh - 200 miles. The only thing that makes it worthwhile (other than the pint or two at the finishing post) is the money we raise for charity (last year in the region of £4,500). I have already had a lot of pledges but there is still time if you would like to donate. If I make it back you'll get all the gruesome details, chafing, blisters etc in the next newsletter!

Steve Burke

Congratulations...



to Ben McDermott on his recent promotion to the position of Site Manager. Ben has been with us since January 2004 and is a well known character within CPUK. He has come up through the ranks, starting off as a Section Engineer and progressing past the Sub-Agent role to reach his current well justified position. Ben is currently working away at Bredbury Parkway on the Manchester Waste Treatment and Management Framework scheme, and is meeting the challenges laid down very well. Carry on with the good work!



Welcome to Louise Young who started with us as a QS on 12th July. Louise has relocated from her native Scotland to join us and is currently working on the Centre for Independent Living project at Knowsley for client Renova.