

blakemore retail

IT'S YOUR NEWS

THE MAGAZINE FOR **BLAKEMORE RETAIL EMPLOYEES**



Blakemore Retail Celebrates Success at Managers Conference 2014



Blakemore Retail Conference
Outlines 2020 Vision



John Kelly and John Dyson
Fundraising Hits £28,000



Blakemore Retail Showcases
Latest New Store: King's Lynn

Introduction

As the summer draws to an end (*and despite a rather wet August Bank Holiday*) we are grateful for what has been a relatively dry and sunny summer. This has helped achieve a good start to our financial year, with sales exceeding budget.

Following a successful trial period of operating Subway franchises in our stores, we have now embarked upon an accelerated rollout programme and opened four more in the last month alone. Our most recent was Bradley Cross Roads in Grimsby, whose opening weekend sales were spectacular and beyond all forecasts. By the end of the financial year we will have more than 30 stores with a Subway, and our Fresh Food department and Store Development team are currently working hard to make this happen.

Alongside Subway we are re-launching our own Food To Go brand with exciting new products and brand new packaging designs, so stores that have not been selected for a Subway can look forward to a reinvigorated Food To Go range. We continue to invest in the future of the business and our latest new store opening was Kings Lynn, which opened in July and included a Subway from launch. Sales for both the new store and Subway are encouraging.

Despite numerous delays we have at last transferred our Ramsgate store from an old dilapidated building to a new purpose-built location. I would like to thank the staff for their patience as I appreciate how difficult their working conditions have been.

We are looking forward to further new stores at both Louth and Glemsford opening later this year. Louth will be a petrol forecourt with both a Subway and Greggs franchise. This will be the third Greggs department for Blakemore Retail, with the first one at Brumby Corner,



which opened as a trial back in July, and Leegomery, which is due to open in September. We are continuing with the upgrading of our Post Office network and are pleased to have opened four brand new offices at Llanmartin, Chirk, Kirkgate and Birmingham Airport. These are all doing very well and we are looking forward to many more coming on board in the coming months.

I was delighted to be able to hold our annual Managers Conference in June after missing 2013. What an honour it was to have Sir Chris Hoy as a guest speaker and for me personally to have the pleasure of interviewing him live on stage. I would like to thank Camelot for making this possible.

Finally, since the last edition of It's Your News we have said farewell to some long-serving members of the management team with the retirement of Steve Sheppard (*Fresh Food Coach*), Chris Bond (*Area Manager*) and Trish Gregory (*Trainer*). I wish them all a long and healthy retirement. Their retirements have naturally brought about new additions to the Fresh Food, Training and Operations teams and I would like to welcome all of the new starters to the Blakemore Retail family.

Geoff Hallam

Contents

- Introduction - Geoff Hallam.....2
- Managers Meetings.....3-10
- New Greggs Franchise Partnership 11
- Your Development Programme..... 12
- Post Office Network Transformation.... 13
- New Stores 14-15
- New E-learning Programme..... 16
- John Kelly and John Dyson Fundraising..... 17
- ChildLine Fundraising..... 18-19
- Community Volunteering.....20-23
- Blakemore Foundation Charitable Giving...24-25
- Laura Horsefield BITC Volunteering Award ...26
- A.F. Blakemore Community Awards.....27
- Blakemore Retail Awards 201328-29
- In the Spotlight30-31
- Customer Care Awards32
- Long Service Awards33-41
- Attendance Awards42-43
- Retirements.....44-45
- Staff Lottery Winners46
- Staff Football Tournament.....47
- Competition Corner47

Send Us Your Stories

It's Your News is written by A.F. Blakemore's Corporate Affairs department.

If you have any stories or photos that you would like to see featured in the next edition, please contact:

Rachel Adams
Communications Officer
radams@afblakemore.com
0121 568 2908

2020 Vision - Working Together

Blakemore Retail Outlines 2020 Vision

More than 600 delegates gathered at the Blakemore Retail Managers Conference in June to hear senior leaders from across the company deliver the business's 2020 Vision.



Managing Director Geoff Hallam presents his business review



Delegates construct their vision for 2020 during the conference breakout session

Key speakers from Blakemore Retail presented on the company's biggest ever investment programme and the key strategies in place to help the business achieve its goals for the year 2020.

The two-day event took place at the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham and was attended by store managers, field staff, support staff and suppliers.

In his opening address, Blakemore Retail Managing Director Geoff Hallam highlighted the company's achievements from the previous year and the ongoing investment in the business moving forward: "This year will be a record year for investment in the estate," he said. "During 2014/15 alone we plan to invest £12 million in store development."

Senior leaders followed on from Geoff with 2020 strategies for store acquisition and development, transformation of the Post Office network, technological innovation and sales growth.

SPAR UK Head of Marketing Philippe Rondepierre announced investment in further television and media advertising following on from the success of SPAR's national media campaign last year.

Central to the 2020 Vision is also major investment in the company's foodservice offering. Plans to extend the Subway franchise to 100 stores over the course of the next two years were announced, as

well as the commencement of a brand new partnership with Greggs bakery. Olympic track cyclist Sir Chris Hoy was the conference's inspirational guest speaker, providing delegates with an exclusive insight into his extraordinary sporting career as well as answering more personal questions from members of the audience.

At the end of the first day delegates participated in breakout sessions, during which they discussed the potential challenges facing the business in the lead up to 2020 and ways in which they would tackle them.

These sessions were then followed by a World Cup-themed gala dinner, with all guests dressing up in football shirts to

celebrate the start of the tournament. Live entertainment was provided by musical act West End Experience and singing, dancing and comedy trio The Sundaes.



West End Experience



Geoff interviews Olympian Sir Chris Hoy MBE



West End Experience

Business Review

Blakemore Retail Managing Director Geoff Hallam opened the conference with a review of last year's performance and looked forward to future strategies to help the business achieve its 2020 Vision.

2020 Vision - Working Together

Sales for 2013/14 came in at £449.3m, just under budget but beating 2012/13's figure of £443.5m. Geoff said: "We're not quite where we wanted to be, but we've achieved a healthy increase on last year. We had a great summer and a good run in the lead up to Christmas."

Geoff highlighted how, despite profits being down on budget, the business made significant investment across its estate throughout last year and will continue to do so this year in order to achieve its key targets for 2020.

Outlining store development plans for more than 70 sites for the remainder of this financial year, Geoff said: "This year will be a record year for developing stores. As a business we're not standing still but are making constant investment. This year alone we plan to invest £12 million in store development."

In addition to the opening of eleven new stores during the course of 2013/14 and several site relocations, Geoff cited the transformation of the Post Office network as a key area of investment. Twenty-eight Post Offices have been upgraded to the new Mains and Locals formats in accordance with the Post Office's national development programme, extending Post Office trading hours and services.

Looking forward, Geoff explained that growing the company's foodservice offering will be central to the business achieving its 2020 Vision: "Food To Go has increased from 14% to 20% of convenience shoppers' shopping missions in one year. This is a fantastic opportunity for Blakemore Retail; we're really, really good at Food To Go."

Geoff highlighted the success of the seven new Subway franchises introduced last year across the estate, explaining that all sites had added to overall store sales and complemented SPAR's existing Food To Go ranges. Over the next two years Blakemore Retail will target the



development of a further 100 Subway stores across the estate.

Brand new for 2014 is a trial with Greggs bakery. On 25th July Blakemore Retail became the first convenience store operator in the UK to partner with the chain when it opened a Greggs counter at Brumby Corner in Scunthorpe.

In his review of the wider convenience market, Geoff highlighted both challenges and opportunities for the sector. He stated that despite the fact that shoots of economic recovery have begun, retail prices and people's shopping habits have not necessarily changed: "Shopping around for the best deal has become the norm, and value will continue to matter to our customers."

Convenience industry research suggests that demand for local shopping is expected to continue, spurred on by factors such as people shopping little and often, more single households, longer working hours and an ageing population.

Summing up Blakemore Retail's performance over the course of the last year, Geoff said:

"We've come a long way in the last 12 months, improving customers' perception of value for money, product range and availability, community involvement and quality of fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and fish. Last year we saw a £1.07 million improvement in profit."

"Throughout 2014/15 we plan to invest £12 million in the business."

"Blakemore Retail has a great future and great people to help us achieve it."

Keep On Running: Food on the Move

Deputy Managing Director Stuart Adkin's presentation focused on Blakemore Retail's strategy to improve its 'food on the move' offer.

Stuart highlighted the rapid growth in the number of people eating out, and how Food To Go and a comprehensive snacking range is now what customers expect to see when they enter a convenience store.

He pointed to the huge sales opportunities for stores selling sandwiches, pasta salads and fruit snacks. A new range of fruit snacking lines will soon form part of the meal deal.

Stuart also highlighted the opportunity for growing sales of hot drinks. Costa Coffee is now available at 75 sites and is being considered for a further 100.

Key to the business's Food To Go strategy is the expansion of Blakemore Retail's Subway network. "Customers want a brand that they can trust," said Stuart, "so Subway is a great brand to have in our stores."

Stuart explained how, contrary to expectations, the introduction of Subway restaurants across the estate has



detracted very little from stores' pre-existing Food To Go offer and has instead increased footfall. He said, "We have implemented Subway restaurants at nine sites now, but our aim is to get to 100 sites within the next two years."

Looking to continue the success of Blakemore Retail's partnerships with leading brands, Stuart then announced a Food To Go trial involving the introduction of Greggs bakery counters at three sites. He said: "Greggs is another great, trusted brand that will enhance stores."

Stuart explained that Blakemore Retail would continue to grow its in-store Food To Go offering, developing new ranges such as breakfast-on-the-go solutions.

Towards the end of the year the business will begin a rebranding of its Food To Go departments with new product packaging, marketing and a brighter, more modern looking foodservice counter.

Blakemore Retail will also be introducing a premium Food To Go range for more upmarket stores as well as a new value Food To Go range promoting SPAR's '£1 Value' message. The trial of a value Food To Go range at Hay Lane has already proved successful, increasing sales by 68%.

Growing Together

SPAR UK Head of Marketing Philippe Rondepierre focused on SPAR UK's Selling Plan.

The plan focuses on growing basket spend and bringing new shoppers into SPAR, especially the convenience sector's most valuable target customer: the younger female shopper.

Philippe pointed out that if SPAR wants to generate a higher basket spend, the single largest opportunity for the business is to grow top up shopping, which is primarily driven by fresh foods.

Stressing that value continues to matter to customers despite the beginning of the economic recovery, Philippe highlighted the success of the award-winning SPAR brand, which has generated £20 million sales since its launch. Following on from the successful Italian and Winter Warmers ranges, he encouraged delegates to look out for new additions to the SPAR brand summer range this year, including new ice creams.

Philippe then reflected on the success of the 2013/14 media plan: "Television advertising provided us with some

amazing results in 2013/14. Like for like, Italian ready meal retail sales were up 74% year on year, and our Covent Garden and Innocent advert led to a 100% increase in sales for these products."

Plans are in place for another five bursts of television advertising in 2014/15, during the months of August, October and

January, and also during the Easter period and run up to the May bank holiday.

Philippe said: "What we are asking for from you is a commitment to making these things happen in store. We need the business to really get behind our media plan because it has the capability of delivering a minimum of £40 million worth of extra retail sales."



Great Availability

Store Operations Director Chris Bacon stressed that product availability is the single most important customer need.



"A shopper will start shopping elsewhere for a product if they face availability issues more than twice," he said. "Potential lost purchases due to gaps cost the business £10 million in sales each year."

Chris urged store managers to follow the following advice in order to ensure that great availability is achieved at all times:

- **Complete Zap a Gap checks**
- **Implement planogram changes**
- **Complete regular item level stock checks and update stocks**
- **Follow correct claims and wastage procedures**
- **Make full use of Suggested Ordering and do not adjust day-to-day lines**
- **Make sure you are aware of promotions, changes in trends, weather, competition and local events, and adjust orders accordingly**

Chris explained that Promotional Compliance Audits will be carried out across Blakemore Retail. Every store will be visited four times per year to check for promotional compliance on promotion product availability, shelftalker availability, stands, headers, posters, active selling and produce quality.

Chris then handed over to Area Manager Carolyne Barker, who presented on the fantastic store standards achieved by one of her store managers, Linda Carrington from Thorngumbald.

Carolyne reported: "From 2006 to 2013, Linda managed to achieve a 50% sales increase at her store, simply through great management, great customer service, great store standards, great promotion support and great availability."



Carolyne Barker congratulates Linda Carrington (left) on her achievements

more humorous highlights of Trish's career, including the day she came into work with a pair of odd shoes!



Geoff Hallam thanks Trish Gregory for her 24 years of service

Innovation and IT

Finance Director Derek Clifton looked to the future in his presentation and spoke about the company's plans to innovate and introduce new IT capability into the business.



Ways in which the company can improve its operation with other parts of A.F. Blakemore and serve the end customer were highlighted in addition to how innovation can reduce costs.

The multi-depot system (MDS) was identified as a key project to help develop greater consistencies across the Blakemore distribution operation to help improve data collection and efficiencies.

Derek showcased a range of new Business to Customer initiatives that have been introduced or are due to be piloted across the estate, such as contactless payment, self-service checkouts, in-store digital advertising, smartphone apps and the Sparkle coupon scheme.

A new energy management system is another example of ways in which innovative technology can help to achieve financial savings. Derek said that the new system, which includes light sensors, timers, and automatic temperature controls could potentially reduce electricity usage by 10%, equating to a £850,000 financial saving.

Mystery Shopper Review

The importance of Mystery Shopper visits and how these results can help improve the in-store shopping experience were highlighted by Regional Manager Owen Davies.

Owen explained that Mystery Shopper visits are undertaken by "professional" customers who check specific areas such as standards, service, availability, training and other key initiatives.

He said: "This approach helps us assess adherence to procedures and processes, check on standards and availability and identify how stores can improve their customer service, which in turn will boost sales and profitability."

All stores will receive eight Mystery Shopper visits a year, looking at three specific areas relating to the store, customer interaction and service and could take place on any day at any time.

Owen then walked through examples of how the Mystery Shopper programme has identified stores that provide excellent customer service and those where improvements are required.

He went on to highlight specific areas that have been picked up through the visits, including the need for stores to shout about the great work that they do in their community and improve Active Selling participation.



Owen said:

"If we increase our score related to Active Selling from 38% to 50% this has the potential to increase our weekly sales by £300,000."

The final part of the presentation identified the top performing regions and stores, with the overall estate achieving a score of 81% after five rounds. Brewood is currently at the top of the leader board with 99%.

In summary, Owen said:

"We want to improve our customers' experience and exceed their expectations. We want our staff better trained to give excellent SPARKling Service and we want higher standards with better availability."

"We are doing well but we want to do even better, and if we achieve all of these things we will boost our sales and our profits."

Focus on Fresh Foods

Fresh Food Development Manager Matt Teague treated delegates to an interactive presentation that stressed the importance of creating moments of WOW for customers.

Matt pointed to the increasing pressure put on fresh sales from the competition in addition to ongoing research that has identified the growing importance of fresh foods to customers.

The importance of creating moments of WOW for customers based upon what they see, feel and taste was highlighted as a key mechanism for boosting customer loyalty.

Matt went on to show how the leadership behaviours identified through the Leading the Blakemore Way development programme can be applied to growing customer loyalty.

"By being passionate about our purpose, giving clear direction, encouraging and coaching colleagues and speaking up for quality and standards we can create



moments of WOW and grow customer loyalty," he added.

Delegates were invited to participate in proceedings by voting on key themes using the red tomato and green pepper system employed on TV show Ready Steady Cook, and Matt also invited delegates up on stage to participate in a "blind" test to demonstrate how easy it is to spot produce unsuitable for sale.

Matt called upon store managers to assess their business and launch an eight-week development programme to grow produce sales, stressing that this will not be achieved by luck but by relentless hard work.

"Fresh is not a destination but a way of life," he concluded.



Operation EXcellence

Regional Manager Brian Cherry spoke about Blakemore Retail's Operation EXcellence programme for 2014/15 and the positive impact that this will have in the face of increasing competition.

Operation EXcellence will reward Blakemore Retail's Store of the Year for 2014/15 with a trip to the 2015 SPAR Convention in Barcelona.

Brian said that the growing number of multiples entering the convenience market has meant that fresh sales are becoming increasingly important for Blakemore Retail as it seeks to grow its share of the market.

Excellent people, product, presentation and process were highlighted as key areas of focus to meet the increasing demands placed upon the company.

This year's Operation EXcellence Store of the Year awards will be based upon four audits that will help decide upon 12 finalists, consisting of nine fresh and three convenience stores. Four overall winners will then be selected, comprising three fresh stores and one convenience store.

Brian reminded delegates that "positive attitude creates excellence" and said that this would be a key factor in deciding who makes it to Barcelona in 2015.

Placing Stores at the Heart of the Community

Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt joined Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell to celebrate some of the company's most successful community stores.

The duo highlighted the Blakemore Foundation, employee volunteering and the company's support for ChildLine as three key ways that the company can support the local community.



Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt

Kerry took to the stage first and spoke about the company's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation, showcasing case studies from Elton, Broomhill, Crewe and Dolgellau Post Office as great examples of how stores can make the most of the fund.

Since 2010 the Blakemore Foundation has donated £222,527 to good causes supported by Blakemore Retail, via 3,602 donations. 2013/14 was a record year for the estate, with the awarding of 1,746 charitable donations worth £82,000.

Liz then spoke about the company's volunteering programme and the ways in which this enables colleagues to volunteer in local communities in work time.

Elstead, Bassaleg Road and Trowbridge were all presented as stores that have supported their local community through volunteering, and a video demonstrating the great work undertaken at Upton was also shown.

Liz described how volunteering can help develop workplace skills and increase morale, engagement and pride in the

company before encouraging delegates to focus upon communicating the great work that they do in the community and follow the Blakemore in the Community Twitter page.



Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell



The National Lottery

Camelot Senior Customer Business Manager Yvonne Fennell reminded delegates that the National Lottery is one of customers' biggest shopping missions.

"The National Lottery is the main reason for visiting SPAR for one in four shoppers, or one in three in Rollover weeks," she said. "National Lottery shoppers buy, spend and visit more." Yvonne stressed that stores should make the most of events, as they are key to driving footfall, sales and profit.

"Selling is simple: one in five will buy when prompted, so talk to your customers and point out key events and opportunities for winning." Yvonne then looked forward to September, when players will see a better, reinvigorated EuroMillions and the launch of Mega Friday, when at least 10 winners will win £1 million and a millionaire experience on the last Friday of every month.

Yvonne summed up by thanking Blakemore Retail for the £213 million that it has raised for National Lottery good causes since its partnership with The National Lottery began in 1994. In recognition of this achievement, Olympic track cyclist Sir Chris Hoy MBE presented Blakemore Retail with an engraved plaque.

Yvonne commented: "We're very grateful for our partnership with Blakemore Retail. Thank you for all the money you

have raised for National Lottery Projects."



Sir Chris Hoy MBE presents MD Geoff Hallam with an engraved plaque in recognition of Blakemore Retail's contribution to National Lottery good causes

Delegates Discover Most 'Pointless' Region

The second day of the Retail Conference kicked off in high spirits with a Blakemore version of hit TV quiz show *Pointless*.

The Most "Pointless" Region Challenge was hosted by Dale Parmenter, who was joined by *Pointless* friend Caroline Wills. The contest featured regional managers Owen Davies, Brian Cherry, Mark Podmore and John Brooks along with Post Office Controller Stewert Waldron.

The managers all invited a member of their regional teams to join them on stage before being asked a series of "pointless" general knowledge and retail-related questions.

After progressing through a series of heats, a hotly contested final took place between Owen Davies and Brian Cherry, with Owen and partner Gavin Jones from Valley finally being crowned *Pointless* Champions 2014.



Blakemore Retail managers battle it out to be crowned *Pointless* Champions 2014

NSPCC ChildLine Fundraising Hits £303,212

Staff across the Blakemore Retail estate were officially praised for raising a record-breaking £303,212 for the NSPCC's ChildLine service.

The massive achievement provided the curtain call for this year's conference, with the NSPCC's Kirsty White and Maribeth Lloyds both publicly thanking the company for all of its hard work. Delegates were reminded of the wide range of activities that staff have taken part in this year to raise funds for the charity and shown how the money has helped to provide advice, help and information to young people across the country.

Kirsty and Maribeth also provided a recap on the ChildLine Schools Service and the impact this has had upon educating primary school pupils on recognising signs of abuse.

The presentation culminated in the announcement of Blakemore Retail's top fundraising stores for 2013/14, which were:

- South East – Wyberton (£2,347)
- South West – St Fagans (£3,779)
- East – Winthorpe Avenue (£5,351)
- West – Aberystwyth (£8,132)



The NSPCC's Maribeth Lloyds and Kirsty White present Kerry Hunt and Geoff Hallam with a plaque to thank Blakemore Retail for all of its ChildLine fundraising

Football Fever Strikes Blakemore Retail

At the end of the first day of the conference delegates enjoyed a World Cup-themed gala dinner and after-party. Staff enjoyed a three-course meal before partying the night away in their favourite football shirts. Some delegates even designed their very own Blakemore Retail sporting gear!

Here is a selection of shots from the evening's celebrations:



Blakemore Retail Partners with Greggs

Building on the success of its franchise partnership with Subway, Blakemore Retail has begun a trial with iconic high street brand Greggs.

As part of the trial, three stores have been selected for development: Brumby Corner in Scunthorpe, Leegomery in Telford and the company's new forecourt development due to open at Fairfield in Louth.

On July 25th Brumby Corner became the first of the three sites to implement a Greggs franchise within its store. The Greggs product range is typical of a modern Greggs store but on a smaller scale, consisting of sandwiches, a cake counter, hot savouries, coffee and a small fresh bread offer.

The store also has a new breakfast bar with seating for four and will offer three link-save Greggs promotions. Meanwhile, Brumby Corner's pre-existing SPAR Food To Go offering has been retained but scaled down.

The store's regional manager, John Brooks, commented: "So far customers have been pleased with the introduction of Greggs, and many are commenting on how we have updated the whole store, including the Post Office.



"We as a business are always looking for ideas that will strengthen our offer, and by taking up the Greggs franchise we are building a business willing and able to meet the challenges of a very competitive retail sector.

"The Greggs brand will add value to our own SPAR brand and give existing and

new customers a further reason to shop in our stores."

When the store's local college students return to study in September, Brumby Corner's Greggs sales are anticipated to rise to £6,000 per week, where previously Food To Go turnover had been £3,000 per week.

Strategy Days Pave the Way for 2020

At the beginning of the year Blakemore Retail ran a series of strategy days for field and store management to lay the foundations for the business to achieve its 2020 Vision.

Throughout January, February and March, fourteen meetings took place across the Blakemore Retail estate to discuss the practical steps that the business can take to achieve long-term sustainable growth and its target of £620 million sales by the year 2020.

Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt commented: "The main aim of the strategy days was to communicate the business's plans for the next six years. The meetings were an excellent opportunity for everyone to generate innovative ideas, share best practice and have their say on shaping the business's future plans."

At each session a regional manager and director delivered presentations detailing

Blakemore Retail's profit improvement plans, which included store acquisition, investment and refit policies as well as plans for the expansion of the Subway franchise.

Delegates presented on new ideas that could be implemented into Blakemore Retail stores and discussed the ways in which they could play a leading role in the implementation of the 2020 strategy.





Employees Celebrate Your Development Programme Success

Blakemore Retail's well-established *Your Development Programme* has helped to develop yet more future leaders for the business.

Your Development Programme is a coached management development course aimed at staff already performing at a supervisory level as well as newly appointed managers. Tailored to learners, the programme can take anything from six to 12 months to complete.

The course consists of nine modules covering every area of the retail business: Operations, Managing Legalities, Customer Service, Human Resources,

Loss Prevention, Fresh Food, IT, Forecourts (where applicable) and Commercial Awareness.

Following completion of the programme successful graduates can then proceed into management positions.

Here are a few photos of recent graduates of the *Your Development Programme*:



Callum Chue – Wylde Green



Cath Williams – Elton



Lez Cooper – Wylde Green



Michael Ashford – Cotteridge



Jack Morris – Gwersyllt



Vince Lucas – Westbridge



Jamie Basinger – Bethesda



Steph Wakeman – Much Wenlock

Fresh Academy Produce Seminars



The Guild Academy has developed a new fresh produce training seminar to improve stores' fresh produce offering.

The training seminar, under a new programme called Fresh Academy, has been set up in response to recent consumer research from Him! that found that despite shoppers scoring Blakemore Retail highly for staff, service and shopping experience, it scored lowest on its range of fresh produce.

Training Manager Anita Goodwin said: "The aim of the interactive Fresh Academy seminar is to improve Blakemore Retail's training programme for fresh foods and focus store managers on their produce selection to ensure quality, range and availability."

The seminar looks at practical approaches to current challenges whilst providing stores with the tools to achieve profitable sales.

Facilitated jointly by members of the Training and Fresh Food teams, the fresh produce seminar consists of a three-part one-day session with some pre-work and a post-course assignment.

A seminar has been held for store managers across each region of the business.

Here are a few photos from the seminars:



Blakemore Retail Transforms Post Office Network

Blakemore Retail's transformation of its Post Office network is well underway, with the introduction of two new Post Office formats: Mains and Locals.



The network transformation, carried out in conjunction with the Post Office's national modernisation programme, is being implemented by the business in an attempt to bring a new, modern approach to Post Office services.

The two new-style formats extend the availability of Post Office services in line with store opening hours and therefore offer a more convenient service to customers. The new Mains and Locals will also help to improve branch layout and product range.

Blakemore Retail has now completed its Locals conversion programme, with 16 targeted Post Offices having been transformed into the new operating model. The Mains conversion programme is now in progress.

Post Office Controller Stewert Waldron said: "Like any major change, there have been a few customer concerns. However, we have managed these by meeting with opinion formers where required and have dispelled their issues. Customers are now starting to use the extended opening hours open to them, which will help keep queues to a minimum.

"Moving forward, we are expecting many more opportunities to be offered to Blakemore Retail for both Main and Local formats, and these new sites will be integrated into stores in conjunction with our Mains conversion programme.

"Eventually, our whole Post Office estate will be either Mains or Locals, and we are busy planning the conversions of these over the next couple of years."

Here are a few photos of recently transformed stores that now offer Post Office services from the main retail counter:



Monkton



Docking



Llanharry

What Are the New Main and Local Formats?

Main branches offer Post Office services from both a dedicated Post Office counter and the main retail counter. The Post Office counter will provide the full range of Post Office services, while the retail counter will offer more limited services outside of the dedicated counter's traditional hours, usually for as long as the store is open.

Local branches fully integrate the Post Office within the store, offering services from the main retail counter rather than a dedicated Post Office counter. This means that services are available for much longer than before, from early morning until late at night, seven days a week. Services are however more basic than those provided by Main branches.

Stores in Focus

Stores in Focus

New SPAR Opens at Wath-upon-Dearne

In February Blakemore Retail opened a brand new store at a prime retail park location in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.



The new SPAR is situated on the recently developed Onyx Retail Park on the outskirts of the town of Wath-upon-Dearne, off the busy A633 road.

Despite its unusual positioning for a convenience store, the retail park location has proved to be key to Wath's success.

The store benefits from an abundance of free parking and proximity to major roads, as well as the draw of other big-name retailers on the same retail park.

Wath's customer base has proved to be particularly diverse, including people on their commute to and from work, parents on the school run, locals from the nearby housing estate and people visiting the store's neighbouring fast food outlets.

The store's area manager, Ruth Mutton, said: "The high volume of passing trade on the retail park has provided the new store with a strong customer base from which to build, making the site an ideal location.

"The retail park is on the edge of a new housing development so there are many homes within walking distance of the store."

To cater for both commuters and locals from the neighbouring housing estate, the store focuses on food on the move as well as stocking a range of everyday essentials.

The SPAR has a 2,000 sq ft sales area and offers a wide range of fresh produce as well as Food To Go, Costa Coffee, news, lottery, an off licence and PayPoint services. It also features all of the latest energy-saving features such as automatic lights and doors on the chiller units.

To celebrate its launch, the store hosted a fun day in March involving a free prize draw, face painting, balloons, colouring competition and product sampling.

The SPAR has already started to get involved with its local community by supporting local good causes such as Wath-upon-Dearne Community Partnership's town gala.

New Stores

Since the last magazine Blakemore Retail has welcomed the following stores to its estate:



Two Dales
Matlock, Derbyshire
Opened: November 2013
Average weekly sales: £22,000



Hasland
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
Opened: November 2013
Average weekly sales: £21,000

King's Lynn Welcomes SPAR and Subway

Blakemore Retail's most recent new store is a purpose-built SPAR-Subway site at King's Lynn in Norfolk.



Capitalising on the recent success of the company's dual-brand model, the 2,292 sq ft store combines a great SPAR convenience range with a fast-food offering from Subway, the leading sandwich restaurant chain.

Situated on a busy residential road, opposite one of King's Lynn's largest parks and within walking distance of the town railway station, the store appeals to a wide demographic including commuters and the local neighbourhood.

With its well-known and trusted brand, the Subway concession has been introduced to help enhance the store's profile and drive sales and footfall. The



Subway counter provides a made-to-order alternative to the ready-made SPAR convenience offer and should help the store to attract some of the area's younger residents.

The store's regional manager, Brian Cherry, said: "The SPAR is in an ideal position, with King Edwards School, King's Lynn Town Football Club and the College of West Anglia all within half a mile.

"King's Lynn is a great site with landscape grounds and plenty of parking. In addition to a Food To Go offering from SPAR and Subway, the store also boasts Costa Coffee, an off-licence and plenty of services, including PayPoint, a free-to-use

cash machine and National Lottery."

The store celebrated its opening on 18th July by inviting members of the local community to a fun day. The SPAR organised free food giveaways and laid on entertainment including a balloon artist and face painting.

King's Lynn is one of the first of Blakemore Retail's many new stores that will be launching with a Subway franchise. As part of its 2020 Vision, Blakemore Retail has outlined plans for 100 new Subways to be implemented across the stores estate over the course of the next two years.



Holmewood
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
Opened: November 2013
Average weekly sales: £25,000



Walton
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
Opened: November 2013
Average weekly sales: £22,000



Ashgate
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
Opened: November 2013
Average weekly sales: £26,000



Maltby
Maltby, South Yorkshire
Opened: January 2014
Average weekly sales: £22,800



Holywell
Holywell, Flintshire
Opened: February 2014
Average weekly sales: £13,000



Broseley
Broseley, Shropshire
Opened: May 2014
Average weekly sales: £25,000



New E-learning Programme

In April the Guild Academy launched a brand new e-learning programme across Blakemore Retail to replace some of its paper-based period training.

The e-learning programme covers modules ranging from compliance training to SPARKing Service and provides tools to help staff deliver unbeatable customer service.

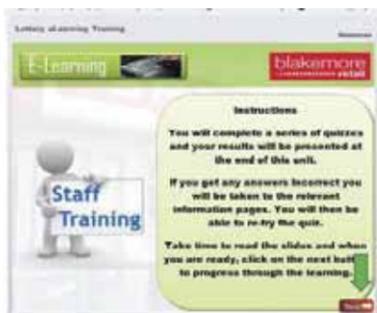
Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt said: "The e-learning material is the first of its type in A.F. Blakemore and gives us a credible online training solution for our stores."

Engaging and interactive, the e-learning training programme features professionally produced video clips to demonstrate best practice and good customer care.

Each e-learning module tests learners' knowledge through a variety of exercises and should take between five and fifteen minutes to complete, depending on how many exercises the learner gets right.

Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt added: "I'd like to say a very big thank you and well done to Blakemore Retail trainers Dave Hackney and Paula Parsons, who have worked extremely hard to produce this e-learning material."

All of the new e-learning modules are accessible via SharePoint.



New Competent Persons Fuel Course

Thanks to the expertise of Area Manager David Garside, Blakemore Retail has been able to start delivering a Competent Persons fuel qualification in-house.

David has over 20 years' experience in multi-site forecourt operations and, working in conjunction with the Training department, has delivered the qualification to more than 70 Blakemore Retail colleagues.

With new fuel sites on the horizon, this qualification is a great addition to Blakemore Retail's training offer.



The successful delegates who participated in the Competent Persons fuel course at Crewe

Sleaford Sales Assistants Meet Lorraine

Two Blakemore Retail sales assistants from Sleaford got to meet Lorraine Kelly after winning a SPAR UK competition for staff and retailers.

Competition winner Hayley Taylor (right) and colleague Paige Harris (left) were given an exclusive tour of ITV's studios and offered the chance to watch the Lorraine show live.



Pedal Power Raises £8,000 for ChildLine

For the fourth consecutive year Blakemore Retail area managers John Kelly and John Dyson got on their bikes to raise funds for ChildLine.



Olympic track cyclist Sir Chris Hoy MBE congratulates John Kelly (left) and John Dyson (right) on their fundraising achievements



The two Johns at the finish line at Lands End

distance by 100 miles. This cycle ride was our most challenging yet.

"We were both looking forward to it and at the same time really dreading it. There is no doubt that 400 miles is a long way, and the last two days were certainly the toughest part of the journey.

"The whole thing was worthwhile though, knowing that we were raising money for such a good cause."

The pair cycled over 400 miles in just four days, raising £8,000 for the ChildLine Schools Service.

The gruelling 400-mile ride saw the two Johns start in Anglesey, North Wales, and finish at Lands End in Cornwall, visiting Llangollen, Shrewsbury, Gloucester, Bristol, Tavistock and Bodmin along the way.

Since 2011 the duo have pedalled a total of 1,000 miles each, raising almost £28,000 for ChildLine, and have dedicated many evenings, weekends and days off to prepare for each challenge.

All money raised from this challenge will support the ChildLine Schools Service, which has been set up to give primary school children the awareness they need to recognise abuse and seek help sooner.

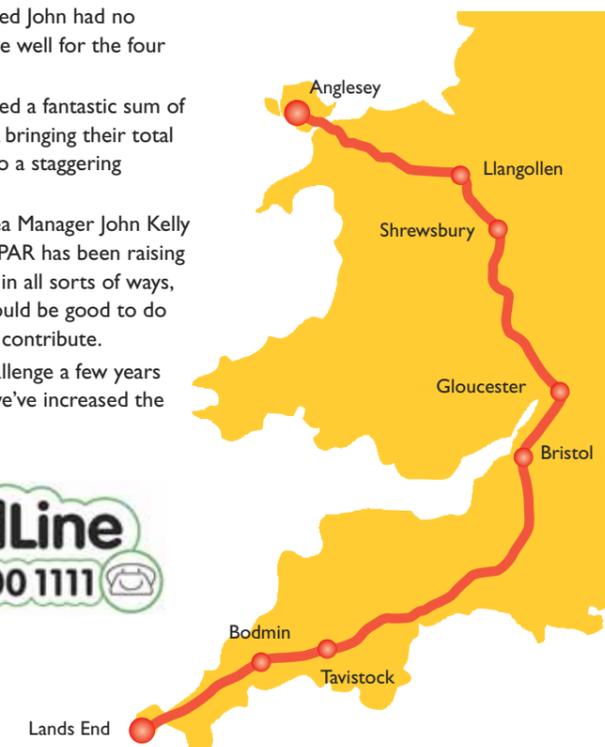
In recognition of their achievement, Olympic track cyclist Sir Chris Hoy MBE congratulated the pair on stage at the Blakemore Retail Managers Conference. Blakemore Retail Regional Manager Owen Davies commented: "Once again I am immensely proud of my two Johns' achievement. The challenge of 400 miles was a tough one, with the terrain in Cornwall being particularly harsh.

"Also, with John Dyson having his heart and pacemaker issues earlier in the year, we weren't sure if that would add to the task, but as it happened John had no health issues and rode well for the four days.

"Again they have raised a fantastic sum of £8,000 for ChildLine, bringing their total over the four years to a staggering £28,000 – amazing!"

Blakemore Retail Area Manager John Kelly added: "Since 2006, SPAR has been raising money for ChildLine in all sorts of ways, and we thought it would be good to do something unique to contribute.

"We did our first challenge a few years ago and every year we've increased the



ChildLine Fundraising

Blakemore Retail celebrated its best year yet for ChildLine fundraising in 2013/14.

Thanks to the efforts of employees, stores across the estate raised an extraordinary **£303,212** for the children's charity over the course of Blakemore Retail's last fundraising year. 2013/14's total surpassed the previous year's £244,366 by an impressive £58,846.

Here is a snapshot of some of the fundraising that took place across the estate:



Aberystwyth staff raised an incredible £5,681 by cycling 3,545 miles on an exercise bike. Members of the store team took it in turns to cycle throughout the day and night for seven days non-stop.



Barton duo Daniel and Nathan Barker completed a 312-mile cycle ride over three days, visiting every store in Area Manager Carolyne Barker's region. They raised more than £1,000.



Bassaleg Road raised £907 at its store re-launch fun day.



Bromsgrove raised £240 by holding a Back to School event.



Crosspool's Helen Westward did a parachute jump and raised £571.



Cardigan raised £77 by baking and raffling off cakes over the Christmas week, led by Store Supervisor Menna Rotie.



Kidderminster raised £104 by holding a Green Day in the store.



Much Wenlock fundraised for ChildLine by holding an in-store book and DVD sale.



Porthcawl raised £168 by holding an Easter raffle, tombola and cake sale.



Ludlow held a fundraising day to coincide with the launch of its new Subway, raising just over £500 with an in-store bike ride, raffle and tombola.



Hasland raised £124 by organising an in-store cake sale.



Rhos held a colouring competition and raffle.



Tenbury Wells raised £665 with an in-store bikeathon.



Valley Road Post Office's Craig Vincent raised £485 for ChildLine by running a half marathon. An additional £160 from the race day went to a local care home.



Tim Farmer and Lee Royles from **Broomhill** and Ben Percy from **Penistone** raised £440 by completing a 21-mile sponsored walk from Penistone to Broomhill store, via Stannington and Crosspool.



Trinity Road raised £570 with a cake sale and customer competitions.



Tickhill raised £154 by holding a scarecrow competition.



Warndon raised £700 by completing a 10-mile sponsored walk from Malvern to Worcester.



Jo Duffy from **Droitwich**, Area Manager Donna Cooper, Steve Flemming from **Bromsgrove** and Emma Costello from **Droitwich** took part in a climb up Mount Snowdon with other volunteers from across Blakemore Retail that raised £2,810.



Winthorpe Avenue raised a whopping £1,810 by holding a Gala Night in November.



Wollaston raised over £748 by organising a fundraising bike ride.



Worthing raised £128 by holding an in-store coffee morning and homemade cake sale.



Community Volunteering

Community volunteering has hit record-breaking figures since the last Blakemore Retail magazine was published.

Projects undertaken have ranged from the traditional painting and gardening to reading volunteering, study tours and healthy eating activities.

As part of the company's Community Engagement Programme, employees undertook 44 individual community projects and donated more than 1,400 hours to worthwhile causes during the 2013/14 financial year.

If you would like to take part in a volunteering activity, please contact Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell on 0121 568 2910 or email lbell@afblakemore.co.uk to request a copy of the Community Engagement Information Pack.

Below is a snapshot of some of the projects recently completed:



Bargoed sent six volunteers to help out at their local food bank, and strengthened their contribution by donating goods from the store.



Three volunteers from **Broomhill** donated funds and practical help to construct an outdoor climbing wall for the children of St Marie's Primary School.



Elton staff held an in-store coffee morning for senior citizens from their local area and donated hampers for them to raffle off to raise funds.



Six volunteers from **Bassaleg Road** volunteered a day of their time to help improve the garden at Florence Hospice.



Ten Blakemore Retail head office volunteers collaborated with six Blakemore Logistics volunteers to create a large outdoor space for Cheslyn Hay Primary School.



Volunteers from **Elton** spent a day giving the outdoor area of their local primary school a new lease of life, constructing fencing and planters.



Area Manager Donna Cooper and **Warndon** Store Manager Mark Bostock carried out practice interviews with students from St Francis of Assisi School in Walsall.



Six volunteers from **Elstead** treated a Royal British Legion community centre to a renovation, receiving a helping hand from their fresh food coach and area manager.



Holton le Clay donated a Christmas tree to Holton le Clay Infant School and volunteered to support the school's Christmas event.



Loughor continued their support of Casllwydyr Primary School by helping out with their Christmas Present Appeal and donating and wrapping presents.



Stannington store members joined forces with Action for Stannington volunteers for the second year running to support a clean up of their local area.



Four volunteers from **Thorngumbald** spent a day gardening at Thorngumbald Primary School and even had help from some of the pupils.



Six volunteers from **Radcliffe** painted the outside of a cabin for Radcliffe Primary School.



Trowbrige Primary School's outdoor play area was improved by three volunteers from **Trowbridge** who painted some educational boards.



Upton teamed up with Upton Community Centre and organised their Annual Luncheon.



Nine volunteers from **Pelsall** and **Sheffield** collaborated to create a pond and outdoor space for St Francis School.



Volunteers from **Upton** worked together with Upton Council and local community members to plant trees in the town.



Two volunteers from **Upton** donated Easter eggs and organised an Easter egg hunt for disabled children from the Buzz Group.



Upton held their second study tour with Acresfield Primary School. This time the children learnt all about healthy eating.



A team of volunteers from **Winthorpe Avenue** painted the hall of Winthorpe Youth and Residents Association.



Whitestone opened their doors to children from their local primary school and gave them an insight into SPAR.

Employee Volunteers Join Forces to Create Outdoor Classroom

Twenty-nine volunteers from Blakemore Retail created an outdoor classroom for pupils at St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Cefn Glas, South Wales.

The team, consisting of volunteers from head office, Bridgend, Lakeside, Cefn Glas, Ewenny, Brackla and New Road, spent a day in June transforming a large field at the rear of the school into an educational outdoor classroom.

Led by Operations Support Assistant Hayley Parsons, volunteers created an allotment and raised bedding boxes, constructed an insect hotel and seating area, tidied up existing trees and installed compost bins.

Blakemore Retail then ran an in-store colouring competition with St Mary's, with the winning pupils being awarded vouchers to spend in any of the Bridgend stores.

Hayley commented: "The project was a great opportunity for our head office employees to collaborate with our stores

to make a positive contribution in the community.

"The team worked exceptionally well together and I'm looking forward to working with St Mary's Catholic Primary School in the near future."



Wyberton Promotes Healthy Eating to Local Schoolchildren

Wyberton ran a fantastic community event in May to promote healthy eating to local schoolchildren.

The SPAR invited 30 children from Wyberton Primary School into the store for a one-hour talk on making healthy food choices. The pupils were presented with free samples of fruits, vegetables and healthy dips, all stocked in the store.

The children were also each given a goody bag to take home with them, which contained an apple, banana, orange, bottle of water and a small pot of sultanas.

Store Manager Karen Stubbs said: "We always try to support the local primary school and are constantly looking for ways in which we can interact with them."

"This activity has helped to improve links with the school and also the children and their parents. We received good comments from the customers, who were interested in what we were doing too."

"I really enjoyed doing this project with the children. They all seemed excited and enthusiastic, and they loved trying the different types of fruit and dips."

To make sure that the SPAR visit was not forgotten, the store even presented the pupils' teacher with grow-your-own pots of strawberries, peppers and tomatoes to grow back at school.



Employees Volunteer for ChildLine Schools Service

So far 27 Blakemore Retail employees have registered their interest in volunteering for the NSPCC's ChildLine Schools Service.

The ChildLine Schools Service has been set up to give primary school children the awareness they need to recognise abuse and seek help sooner. ChildLine is able to deliver the service thanks to its trained volunteers who visit primary schools to deliver assemblies and workshops.

All Blakemore Retail employees are eligible to volunteer for the ChildLine Schools Service. One employee who has successfully been trained to deliver it is Fresh Food Coach Mandy Gasson.



Mandy Gasson

Here's what Mandy had to say about her experience:

"I have had a very rewarding experience with the ChildLine Schools Service programme so far. From my first interview to delivering my first assembly, the warmth and support and obvious gratitude has been amazing.

The Schools Service is very different from what I expected. The training prepares you for any situation that you may find uncomfortable, but so far the response from the children has been superb.

I have attended 10 schools and delivered either 30-45 minute assemblies or hour-long workshops. There are scripts to help you prepare, but the materials are very user-friendly and fun to deliver. I would urge others to get involved.

I plan to continue with this work for as long as I am able to, because it has brought a different perspective and set of skills to my current role and my life. I am very thankful for the opportunity and I know that ChildLine are too."



Get Involved

For more information on how you can get involved, please contact Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell on 0121 568 2910 or email lbell@afblakemore.co.uk.

£8,453 Raised for Retail Trust

Employees across Blakemore Retail raised a fantastic £8,453 for the Retail Trust during the 2013/14 financial year.



Chapel St Leonards raised £300 by dressing up for Heroes vs Villains Week

Stores carried out a number of fundraising activities over the last 12 months, including Heroes vs Villains Week in November, where staff were encouraged to dress up in aid of the cause.

The Retail Trust is a charity set up especially to look after the needs of people working in retail. The organisation provides a wide range of services including debt advice, counselling, hardship grants, career development and retirement housing.

The top four stores for Retail Trust fundraising in 2013/14 were:

- Chapel St Leonards - £321
- Upton - £250
- New Waltham - £215
- Bradley Cross Roads - £206



Blakemore Retail Supports Yet More Local Communities

Blakemore Retail employees made a record-breaking 1,746 charitable donations to local good causes via the Blakemore Foundation in the 2013/14 financial year.

The company's community fund, the Blakemore Foundation, has been an integral part of Blakemore Retail's community engagement programme since 2010, and has since donated more than £400,000 to good causes supported by the division.

Today, 62% of all Blakemore Foundation donations awarded across the A.F. Blakemore group go to causes supported by Blakemore Retail.

All Blakemore Retail employees, customers and members of the local community are eligible to apply for a donation from the Blakemore Foundation. Three types of donation are available:

Standard Donations: These are awarded to local good causes, charities and projects located within the company's trading area, up to the value of £200.

Match Fund Donations: The fundraising efforts of all employees can be matched by the Blakemore Foundation up to the value of £200. The Blakemore Foundation will no longer be able to match fund employee fundraising for ChildLine or the Retail Trust.

In Kind Donations: These are awarded to support local events in the form of goods e.g. food, drink or equipment for use as raffle prizes or refreshments.

In addition to providing support via its donation scheme, the Blakemore Foundation also plays an integral role in the company's community volunteering programme. A donation up to the value of £250 is available for each community project and can be utilised for materials such as study aids, paint and plants.

To find out more about the Blakemore Foundation or to apply for a donation, please contact Community Affairs Officer Kate Senter using the contact details adjacent:

Blakemore Foundation
Unit 401
Access 10 Business Park
Bentley Road South
Darlaston
WS10 8LQ

Tel: 0121 568 2910
Email: ksenter@afblakemore.com

Take a look at just some of the great causes supported by Blakemore Retail staff over the course of this financial year:



Reepham donated £100 towards a building project at Reepham Methodist Church.



Crewe donated boxes of bananas to boost Shavington High School's Healthy Start campaign.



Rhos donated funding and goods to Rhos Rugby Club.



Llanharry's Rachel Cooper donated £261 with the help of match funding to Cancer Research UK after taking part in Race for Life.



Upton raised £400 including match funding for the All About Erin cause, which raises money for Alder Hey Hospital.



Wyberton raised £850 including match funding for the St John Comfy Fund, which supports care home residents.



Lampeter made a £100 donation towards a lifesaving defibrillator for their high street store.



Penyffordd made a £30 in-kind donation towards a raffle in aid of Penyffordd & Penymynydd Panto Society.



Wrexham made a donation of Quality Street chocolates to Springfield Care Home.



Louth donated £400 including match funding to St Andrew's Hospice by setting up a charity Christmas grotto and fundraising.



Rhuddlan Post Office made a £100 donation towards Rhuddlan Environment Group.



Broomhill donated £100 to Middlewood Rovers Junior Football Club.



Chirk donated raffle prize goods to the League of Friends, which raises funds for medical equipment at Oswestry's RJA Orthopaedic Hospital.



Staplehurst's Daniel Roberts raised £652 including a match fund donation for the Aspinall Foundation after taking on the Three Peaks Challenge.



Bethesda donated £30 worth of goods to Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen.



Loughor donated £50 worth of goods to a local 'Cawl a Chan' community event.



Bridgend Town Centre's Cerian Watson raised more than £1,000 for Kidney Research by performing a 12,000 ft skydive.

Laura Horsefield Wins Regional Community Award

Laura Horsefield from Upton has been crowned Employee Volunteer of the Year at Business in the Community's regional awards.

Assistant Manager Laura picked up the title of Employee Volunteer of the Year at Business in the Community's North West Awards for Excellence 2014.

Laura attended a prestigious gala dinner at Aintree Racecourse in June in recognition of her outstanding commitment to the community of Upton over the last 12 months.

Throughout the year Laura has carried out a wide range of activities to support members of her local village, including primary school study tours, regeneration projects and fundraising.

Area Manager Gareth James said: "Laura gives everyone she meets the biggest warm-hearted welcome. Laura is relentless and tireless in her pursuit of giving to various charities and causes, always full of fun and good ideas when it comes to spreading thoughtfulness."

"Laura is loved by our customers who shop at Upton, and it is evident that she makes a difference in people's lives through her work in the store and within the local community."



Laura Horsefield picks up the title of Employee Volunteer of the Year



Upton store's study tour for Acresfield Primary School



Alders Hey Hospital fundraising



Donation to Macmillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning



Donation to Upton Village Hall Luncheon



Local tree planting



A.F. Blakemore Community Awards

Laura Horsefield from Upton has also been recognised for her outstanding contribution to the community in A.F. Blakemore's internal Community Awards, along with Carol Riley from Elton.

Both employees stood out from the crowd with their unrelenting commitment to fundraising and volunteering, each winning a trophy and £250 cheque for a good cause of their choice.

Team Leader of the Year: Laura Horsefield, Upton



Assistant Manager Laura Horsefield always goes the extra mile to support her local community. Her enthusiasm has encouraged other staff at her store to take part in community activity and has helped to grow their confidence.

Laura helped to host nine community projects in 2013/14 and donated 33 hours to volunteering, assisting Chester Council, Orchard Manor Care Home and Upton High School to name but a few good causes.

Laura has hosted a series of highly successful study tours with local schools too, including Acresfield Primary. The store's partnership has since blossomed, with them donating £728 worth of goods to the school, children and parents. Laura's creativity helped the store to create themed charity hampers, study tour props and children's goodie bags.

Laura has also supported the rest of the Upton team with their fundraising for ChildLine and other good causes. The store has given 75 donations this year to various local good causes via the Blakemore Foundation.

The judges commented:

"Laura from Upton is a true community champion, not just for her store but for the whole of A.F. Blakemore. We were impressed with the variety of projects she had run and how she had listened to what her colleagues and community wanted. Laura thought outside of the box and organised projects that hadn't been completed within SPAR before."

Volunteer of the Year: Carol Riley, Elton



Sales Assistant Carol Riley has enriched the lives of many residents within her local community with her vision to make a difference. Her sheer dedication, enthusiasm and creativity have enabled her to bring her vision to life.

Carol has become well known to Elton as a port of call for many local community groups, care homes and schools in times of need.

In addition to big volunteering projects, Carol has been keen to organise and promote a wide range of smaller fundraising activities within her store, such as raffles and sweepstakes in support of ChildLine.

Carol has also registered to volunteer for the ChildLine Schools Service and hopes to be trained to speak to pupils in local schools about abuse and child protection.

The judges commented:

"We were impressed to see how well Carol spotted the needs of her local community, especially when she recognised that the elderly were in need of support and so arranged an in-store coffee morning."

Call for Entries 2015

Does your community work deserve to be celebrated? For your chance to take home a trophy and a £250 cheque for charity, simply contact Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell on 0121 568 2910 or email lbell@afblakemore.co.uk.

Blakemore Retail Awards 2013

Blakemore Retail's 2013 awards acknowledged individuals and stores that demonstrated excellence throughout the year.

Sales Assistant of the Year

The Sales Assistant of the Year awards went to employees who showed outstanding commitment to customer service and their community. Staff were nominated for the awards by their area manager, and then each finalist attended an interview with a member of the senior team.

Sales Assistant of the Year



Winner
Trish Worster – Winthorpe Avenue

Runners up
Charlotte Haynes – Aberystwyth
Laura Horsefield – Upton

Finalists
Callum Chue – Wylde Green
Alana Sloan – Thurcroft
Karen Withell – Thorngumbald

Food To Go Sales Assistant of the Year



Winner
Scott Malarkey – Newark

Runners up
Jade Parkes – Broomhill
Gail Spriggs – Trowbridge

Finalists
Wendy Mably – Cefn Glas
Patricia Parry – Walsall Manor

Post Office Assistant of the Year



Winner
Bernese Warren – Dolgellau

Runners up
Susan Bainbridge – Wrexham
Mandy Medforth – Quay Road

Store of the Year

Stores across the estate competed for one of four Store of the Year awards in Blakemore Retail's Operation Excellence initiative.

Fresh stores were audited across the categories of produce, Food To Go, chilled, and bread and cakes for their compliance and standards, whilst convenience stores were audited across chilled, soft drinks, crisps and snacks, confectionery, news, and beers, wines and spirits.

The 12 stores with the highest audit scores received a visit from Blakemore Retail directors, who then selected three Fresh Stores of the Year and one Convenience Store of the Year.

All store manager finalists received £100 worth of Love2Shop vouchers and £30 worth of in-store vouchers for each member of staff (£20 for part-time staff).



Winner
Great Darkgate Street (Rob Howard)



Winner
Pelsall (Helen Carless)



Winner
Redditch Road (Fran Campbell)



Winner
Warndon (Mark Bostock)

Finalists - Brumby Corner, Great Wyrley, Humberston, Pontycmmer, St Fagans, Trethomas, Walsall and Wyberton



Field Staff Awards

Area Manager of the Year



Winner
David Evenden

The Tim Lyon Commemorative Award for Outstanding Contribution



Winner
Bev Jones

Post Office of the Year



Winner
Melton Mowbray (Craig Vincent)

Finalists
Tracey Brierley – Rhosddu Road
Marie Buckley – Bradley Cross Roads
Dave Hawley – Wells Green
Karen King – Upfields
Stef Lamb – Crowland

Award Winners Enjoy Trip of a Lifetime

All of Blakemore Retail's Store of the Year and field staff winners were rewarded for their contribution to the business with the trip of a lifetime to the SPAR Convention 2014 in Singapore.

The winners enjoyed a five-day stay at a beachfront hotel in Singapore with SPAR retailers from across A.F. Blakemore and the other UK Guilds. All Convention attendees had the opportunity to attend a series of conference events hosted by senior SPAR UK leaders that focused on SPAR UK's national strategy.

SPAR Convention delegates could also take advantage of a range of social activities including day trips, city tours, shopping, dragon-boat racing, a gala dinner and Roaring Twenties-themed evening dinner.



In the Spotlight



Andrew Goulding-
Area Manager
South West Region

What does your job involve?

Achieving at least budget net profit from 16 stores through encouraging, cajoling and inspiring the optimum from the store managers in an efficient, time-saving and rewarding way

What is your idea of a perfect day?

Skiing with nephews

Where is your favourite place?

The Alps

If you won a lot of money, what would you do with it?

Open my own recycling plant

Which three people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Enoch Powell, Franklin Roosevelt and George III

What is your favourite book?

Wilbur Smith's Warlock

Who is your favourite star of film or TV?

Gregory Peck in To Kill a Mockingbird

What is your favourite song?

Roy Orbison's Blue Bayou or T. Rex's Dandy in the Underworld

Who makes you laugh?

Morecambe & Wise, Tommy Cooper, Danny Kaye and Laurel & Hardy

If you could be born in any year, which one would you choose?

1885 – I would then grow up and see some huge technological advances: aeroplanes, telephones, penicillin etc.

What is the best thing you have ever achieved?

Scuba diving qualification

Which superpower would you like to have and why?

Teleportation – to move around the world quickly as there is so much to see and so little time to do it all in – it would avoid wasting time sat on aeroplanes!

What is your most vivid childhood memory?

Family holidays in France

What is your biggest regret to date?

I've no regrets – I've lived my life to the full so far and will continue to do so

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A vet

What three words best describe you?

Conscientious, helpful and respectful

What three words best describe how you would like to be?

Conscientious, helpful and respectful



Craig Vincent-
Post Office Manager
Valley Road Post Office

What does your job involve?

Leading and motivating a team with the aim of successfully running a Post Office

What is your idea of a perfect day?

Relaxing at home

Where is your favourite place?

Palma Nova

If you won a lot of money, what would you do with it?

Buy a new property

Which three people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Jo Brand, Frank Skinner and Dynamo

What is your favourite book?

The Frank Skinner Autobiography

Who is your favourite star of film or TV?

Rowan Atkinson

What is your favourite song?

On a Night Like This by Kylie Minogue

Who makes you laugh?

Tim Vine, Peter Kay, Jo Brand and Frank Skinner

If you could be born in any year, which one would you choose?

1974

What is the best thing you have ever achieved?

Post Office Manager of the Year 2013

Which superpower would you like to have and why?

To fly – no more traffic jams

What is your most vivid childhood memory?

The 1987 Freight Rover Trophy Final at Wembley Stadium. Winners – Mansfield Town Football Club!

What is your biggest regret to date?

I wish I had worked harder at school

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A footballer

What three words best describe you?

Friendly, reliable and trustworthy

What three words best describe how you would like to be?

Make people laugh!



John Brooks-
Regional Manager
East Region

What does your job involve?

Working with a team of area managers and their store managers, helping them to achieve the best customer service, drive sales at each site and achieve set budgets. I'm lucky that I work with a very good team

What is your idea of a perfect day?

At work: very hot sunshine, all stores fully stocked with ice cream, pop, beers and tills ringing, and the provisional stock results all coming in as a surplus!!! At home: my family around me all healthy and happy

Where is your favourite place?

Really anywhere my wife Linda is – we have been together for over 40 years and she is my rock

If you won a lot of money, what would you do with it?

I would divide by five – one share for each of my kids, Amy and David; one share for Linda and myself; one share to look after the extended family and the final share to be given to charity as thanks for the win. Personally I would be straight down to the Jaguar dealers for an XKR Convertible in Seafrost!

Which three people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Arthur Scargill, Maggie Thatcher – there would be fireworks for sure – and Pope John Paul to bring some calm.

What is your favourite book?

Lee Child's Jack Reacher novels or Stig Larsson's The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo trilogy, and Alex Ferguson's autobiography

Who is your favourite star of film or TV?

John Wayne – for his walk, his talk and always being the good guy

What is your favourite song?

Motown and Northern Soul were my era so anything by The Four Tops or The Temptations, and of course The Beatles. Currently it's You're Still Beautiful to Me by Bryan Adams

Who makes you laugh?

Mrs Brown's Boys, Lee Evans and Chris Bacon, but not sure in which order

If you could be born in any year, which one would you choose?

Quite satisfied with 1951 thank you, or I would not have had the life I have had

What is the best thing you have ever achieved?

Getting Linda to believe I was the man for her, and then being the father of two great kids. They have given me the stability to do any of the good things I have done. The bad things, I guess, are all my own work

Which superpower would you like to have and why?

To turn back time, to correct some of my mistakes and to be able to see some of the friends and family I have lost

What is your most vivid childhood memory?

A couple really stand out. Having to get a tin bath out for us to have our Sunday and Wednesday bath nights. Yes I lived in those days! Playing in the Scout Football Cup Final and getting a tanned backside by a local policeman for scrumping apples

What is your biggest regret to date?

Falling out with friends I shouldn't have

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a vet but wasn't brainy enough I'm afraid

What three words best describe you?

Kind, considerate and supportive (some would say forgetful)

What three words best describe how you would like to be?

Motivating, inspiring and demanding



Paul Wiltshire-
Area Manager
East Region

What does your job involve?

I am responsible for 14 stores in Norfolk and Suffolk, supporting, coaching and developing my area's team of fantastic people to deliver great stores, excellent service and exceed bottom line profit

What is your idea of a perfect day?

A full English breakfast, a lunchtime pint, watching a football match and having a meal at a nice restaurant in the evening

Where is your favourite place?

New York City

If you won a lot of money, what would you do with it?

Not sure I'd have much of a say in it, my wife would have a list drawn up in no time!

Which three people would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Lady Gaga, Graham Norton and David Beckham

What is your favourite book?

I'm not much of a reader and have a stack of half-read ones I've taken on holidays. They tend to be autobiographies of sports personalities

Who is your favourite star of film or TV?

Clint Eastwood

What is your favourite song?

Daydream Believer by The Monkees

Who makes you laugh?

John Bishop

If you could be born in any year, which one would you choose?

2014 – I could learn from past experience and make life even better than it has been already

What is the best thing you have ever achieved?

My four children being happy, healthy and successful at what they do – I like to think I have played a small part in this

Which superpower would you like to have and why?

Being able to see into the future to make the world a better and safer place

What is your most vivid childhood memory?

Family holidays in my grandparents' caravan in Weymouth

What is your biggest regret to date?

Not meeting my wife earlier

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A train driver

What three words best describe you?

Loyal, reliable and honest

What three words best describe how you would like to be?

Fitter, taller and richer



Your Customer Care Awards

Do you have a member of staff in your team who deserves more than a thank you?

Why not nominate them for Your Customer Care Award? Just tell us why you think they deserve it. Staff can be nominated for an award by a customer or colleague. A monthly

winner will receive £50 worth of high street vouchers and 12-monthly winners will win 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes of £500, £250 and £100 vouchers.

Congratulations to the Customer Care award winners from the last four quarters:

- Kayleigh Welsh – Battlefield
- Nathan Nott – Greatstone
- Bernese, Anne, Debbie and Suzanne – Dolgellau Post Office
- Will Taylor – Elstead
- Maz Snood – Taylors Avenue
- James Charlesworth – Crewe
- The team at Barton
- Narrina Jones – Baglan
- The team at Gwersyllt
- The team at Bulkington
- The team at Bassaleg Road
- The team at Dolgellau Post Office



The winners at Bassaleg Road



Kayleigh Welsh – Battlefield



Nathan Nott – Greatstone



Nina Jones – Baglan

Nominating someone is easy:

Email brtrainingsupport@afblakemore.co.uk

Visit: www.afblakemore-retail/customer-care-award

Post your nomination to: **Blakemore Retail Training Support, Longacres Industrial Estate, Rose Hill, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 2JP**

Barton's Linda Parrish Wins National Award



Sales Assistant Linda Parrish from Barton has won a national award for her commitment to great customer service.



Linda was crowned Sales Assistant of the Year in the multiple symbol sector of Convenience Store magazine's Sales Assistant of the Year Awards.

Convenience Store editor David Rees said: "Linda wowed the judges with her tremendous commitment to providing top notch service and her exceptional customer knowledge."

Linda won £500 in prize money and attended a special ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel in London in November.

Celebrating Long Service

Over the course of the last year, many of our colleagues have celebrated long service milestones, from three to forty-five years. As well as a cash sum, each member of staff to reach a long service milestone has received a certificate and badge. Thank you to all of them for their continued service.

3 Years



Adam Price - Llangollen



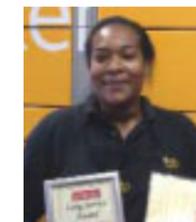
Allison Tofton - Kirkgate



Anita Vohora - Daventry Road



Alex Gregson - Brunswick Road



Bizandra Isaacs - Bannerbrook



Claire Speller - Cefn Fforest



Craig Vincent - Valley Road Post Office



Craig Finlay - Chapel St Leonards



Dan Barker - Barton



Daniel Brooks - Bannerbrook



Elliott Evans - Treherbert



Gemma Benson - Leegomery



Hannah Prokopluk - Nuthall Road Post Office



Hilary Edwards - Wrexham



Jack Morris - Gwersyllt



Jackie Hibbert - Brumby Corner



Jennie Baxter - Kirkgate



Julie Eyre - Abbey Lane Post Office



Lindsay Younger - Buckley



Lynn McSherry - Humberston



Manu Jacob - Westbridge



Marc Ellis-Cooper - Chapel St Leonards



Matt Davies - Ludlow



Pat March - Whitestone



Peter Bebb - Llanishen Fach



Rachael Chilcott - Ferndale



Rebecca Hedges - Burgh Road Post Office



Richard Parry - Gwersyllt



Sam Wakefield - Crewe



Sian Greenwood - Brunswick Road

Long Service

Long Service

Celebrating Long Service

3 Years continued



Steph Jones - Machynlleth



Steph Wakeman - Much Wenlock



Tanya Rogers - Llangollen



Tim Wilson - Burbage



Tom Parker - Backwell



Tracy Davies - Ton Pentre

5 Years continued



Marcus Burnley-Lowe - Battlefield



Mark Cooper - Monkmoor



Matt Patterson - Redditch Road



Muriel Hastings - Tregaron



Nicky Whittall - Chirk



Ruth Froggatt - Intake Post Office

5 Years



Vicky Sandalls - Aberystwyth



Yvonne Little - Humberston



Alex Bacon - Maltby



Andrea Flint - Creswell Post Office



Anita Kennedy - Cotteridge Post Office



Ben James - Llanishen Fach



Samual Thwaytes - Skegness



Sarah Grimshaw - Much Wenlock



Shane Dugard - Store Development



Sharon Collins - Llangollen



Shirley Davies - Elton



Sian Bartholomey - Beddau

10 Years



Bridie Rutledge - Fosse Road



Carol Jenson - Yarborough Road



Caroline Salmon - Stonydelph Post Office



Chris Kirby - Barton



Damian Doubler - Llanishen Fach



Dan Sant - Baschurch



Sue Hobson - Buckley



Susan Grimshaw - Much Wenlock



Tom O'Malley - Forsbrook



Wendy Ewan - Whitestone



Alex Slater - Tenbury Wells



Alison Thorpe - Crowland



Dave Hackney - Retail Trainer



Edwina Evans - Rhos



Emma Phillips - Llanishen Fach



Hannah Salem - Tetney



James Charlesworth - Crewe



Jason Jones - Clifton Green



Alwena Jones - Llanberis



Amy Wharton - Wylde Green



Angela Jones - Much Wenlock



Angela Smith - Lawnswood



Anna Molyneaux - Rhos



Arun Karunasan - Queensway



Jean Jones - Buckley



Judy Rossiter - Warndon



Karen Day - Humberston



Karen Myhill - Newbold



Laura Williams - Gwersyllt



Lynette Smith - Much Wenlock



Beverly Jones - Rhos



Brendan Collum - Kings Langley



Cindy Waumsley - Tetney



Caroline D'Altri - Coleham



Caroline Rickett - Long Sutton



Cassandra Windsor - Chirk

Celebrating Long Service

10 Years continued



Catrin Hughes - Amlwch



Christine Langford - Brewrod



Christine Payne - St Helens



Dale Williams - Stoneydelph



Davina Kelly (on right) - Merthyr Tydfil



Debbie Arrowsmith - Brecon Road



Deborah Lalor - Elton



Denise Bloomer - Wordsley Green



Donna Hughes - Llanberis



Gemma Burgess - Coseley



Emma Rickhuss - Bentley



Ernie Masefield - Bannerbrook



Gemma Broderick - Bala



Glenda Andrews - Barmouth



Glenys Davies - Newport



Helena Culleton - Tonyrefail



Helen Evans - Welshpool



Iona Thomas - Llanberis



Jackie Thursfield - Bentley



James Priestley - Monkmoor



Jane Morris - Cefn Forest



Jean Beech - Welshpool



Jeanette Walker - South Woodham Ferrers



Jenny Winch - Maidstone



Jess Parry - Caergwle



Jody Anderson - Albrighton



Julie Whyte - Bradley Cross Roads



Karen Scriverns - Upton



Karen Wentworth - Lapwood



Laura Kerr - Great Wyrley

10 Years continued



Lee Hole - Store Development



Lisa Madden - Bury St Edmunds



Lynn Cox - Lawnswood



Lynn Pritchard - Rhuddlan



Lynne Scarboro - Wyberton



Mark Wilkinson - Area Manager



Maureen Stanley - Bentley



Michaela Williams - Machynlleth



Michelle Dean - Wrexham



Michelle Vernon - Warndon



Mohammed Bashir - Brindley Place



Nerys Griffiths - Benlech



Nick Robinson - Welshpool



Nicola Baron - Terminus Road



Rachael Law - Brindley Place



Rhian Pritchard - Llanberis



Rosie Pimperton - Heighington



Roy Latham - Bayston Hill



Said Basmer - Eastbourne



Sally Poole - Llanmartin



Sara Rickhuss - Walsall Manor Hospital



Sarah Roberts - Bala



Sian Gallivan - Rummy



Stephanie Wragg - Humberston



Sue Jones - Llanidloes



Terri Foster - Heighington



Val Jones - Bodelwyddan



Wayne Andrews - Barmouth



Yvonne Leech - Brecon Road



Yvonne Turner - Grove Road

Long Service

Long Service

Celebrating Long Service

15 Years



Alison Faunt - Wyberton



Alison Gould - Frinton



Alison Brooks - Walton



Barbara Bolton - Penlan



Barbara Kelly - Kenfig Hill



Carol Cook - Baglan



Carolyn Cooke - Intake Post Office



Chris Lewis - Store Development



Claire Henning - Coedpoeth



Dawn Stokes - Cotteridge



Emma Jones - Penrhyn



Gill Harries - Mount Crescent



Gillian Cooper - Brewrod



Gillian Pooley - Rhydyfelin



Hazel Cox - West Mersea



Hazel Dearn - Brewrod



Helen Cole - Hykeham Road



Hilary Northall - Lawnswood



Janet Thynne - Lawnswood



Jayne Pitt - Albrington



Jennifer Clarke - Holton le Clay



Jenny Phillips - Leominster



Judy Saywell - Shawbirch



Julie Brough - Bocking Lane



Julie Crane - Trethomas



Karen Sargent - Ross-on-Wye



Kathreen Butterfield - Biggleswade



Kathryn Mate - Abbey Lane



Katrina Legg - Cefn Fforest



Kay Bamford - Fresh Food Coach

15 Years continued



Linda Train - Quay Road



Maria Gregory - Rhydyfelin



Menai Roberts - Valley



Nicki King - Prestatyn



Phillip Potter - Felixstowe



Richard Cooper - Eccleshall Road



Ruth Mutton - Area Manager



Sarah Colbrook - Humberston



Sarah Deakin - Operations Support & Marketing Manager



Sean Parker - Oulton Broad



Sharon MacDonald - Batchley



Sheila Walton - Coseley



Sheila Weston - Thurcroft



Steve McMahon - Newbold



Sue Jackson - Melton Mowbray



Susan Taylor - Warndon



Tracey Davies - Rhydyfelin



Vicky Price - Treveithin

20 Years



Amanda Day - Brumby Corner



Andrew Goulding - Area Manager



Anne Fogg - Brumby Corner



Christine Day - Wells



Dawn Bowen - Loughor



Debbie Hayward - Kings Norton



Denise Webb - Chirk



Gail Day - Wingerworth



Gareth Hodges - New Inn



Heather Williams - Sutton-on-Sea



Jackie Gillard - Tonyrefail



Jane Wade - Treorchy

Long Service

Long Service

Celebrating Long Service

20 Years continued



Julie Barnes - Fairwater



Karen Crutchley - Post Office Area Manager



Kath Phillips - Newport



Lesley Townsend - Chipping Sodbury



Linda Dix - Aberavon



Lynda Davies - Clydach



Mandy Moore - Merthyr Tydfil



Margaret Lucien - Wordsley



Mark Podmore - Regional Manager



Maureen Owens - Treorchy



Michelle Davies - Wombourne



Neil Maiden - Pelsall



Samantha Bowen-Wilkie - Morriston



Shirley Richards - Bethesda



Sue Shorrock - Mynydd Isa



Susan Davies - Clydach



Tracy Gillman - Merthyr Tydfil



Valerie Jones - Caernarfon

25 Years



Alex Moore - Ecclesall Road



Annette Harper - Trethomas



Carole Gilbertson - Radcliffe



Debbie Eyre - Accounts Supervisor



Enid Morris - Dolgellau



Gail Rees - Newton



Gareth James - Area Manager



Gloria Marshall - Caerleon Road



Gwen Jones - Penrhyn



Jane Palfi - Kinver



Janet Dawes - Caerleon Road



Jo Brown - Creswell

25 Years continued



Julie Watkins - Wordsley Green



Kate Deakin - Payroll Manager



Linda Hemming - Warndon



Muriel Chalder - Keelby



Rosanna Stewart - Port Talbot



Sally Croydon - Lawnswood

30 Years



Bev Bloomer - Lapwood



Catherine Devlin - Coseley



Dave Kyme - Store Development



Gaynor Williams - Aberavon



Kathleen Westwood - Gornal Wood



Mandy Evans - Ellesmere



Menai Davies - Amlwch



Roger Harker - Drummond Road



Susan Williams - Lawnswood



Tim Johnson - Russells Hall



Carole Williams - Dolgellau



Claudette Rowbottom - Operation Support

35 Years



Dave Powell - Tenbury Wells



Helen Carless - Pelsall



Janet Jones - Bradley Cross Roads



Julie Summerell - Welland Road



Nigel Bostock - Area Manager



Sheila Roberts - Valley

40 Years



John Dyson - Area Manager



Paul Crimmins - Llandaff



Susan MacLennan - Aberavon

45 Years



Dorwen Davies - Ferndale



Mary Humphreys - Amlwch



Steve Bruce - Louth

Attendance Awards

Attendance Awards

Blakemore Retail holds attendance draws quarterly to recognise employees who achieve 100% attendance. The following staff received cash prizes dependent on how many months of continual attendance they achieved and whether they are full or part-time employees.

October 2013 Draw

 12 months £500 Cheryl Davenport - Stannington	 12 months £500 Michael Doran - Intake	 12 months £500 Helen Mills - Llanidloes	 12 months £500 Lesley Metcalfe - Newbold	 12 months £500 Jane Morgan - Kidwelly	 12 months £250 Kandasamy Senthil-Nathan - New Romney
 12 months £250 Debra Chambers - Maerdy	 12 months £250 Valarie Rees - Caerwrlle	 12 months £250 Louise Brace - Coseley	 6 months £250 Catherine Jones - Bodelwyddan	 6 months £250 Emma Stanley - Coseley	 6 months £250 Ian Fletcher - Rhuddlan
 6 months £250 Clive Tonkins - Tregaron	 6 months £250 Jackie Goldring - Prestatyn	 6 months £250 Joanne Saunders - Maidstone	 6 months £125 Joanne Martin - Caerleon Road	 6 months £125 Robert Cox - Cae Glas Road	
 12 months £250 Jayne Nicholson - Pot House Lane	 6 months £125 Lisa Kaminski-James - Patchway Post Office	 6 months £125 Shirley Wood - Drummond Road			

January 2014 Draw

 12 months £500 Deborah Lomas - Great Wyrley	 12 months £500 Karen Guryn - Forsbrook	 12 months £500 Laura Lucas - Shawbirc	 12 months £250 Kath Phillips - Newport	 12 months £250 Nia Hughes - Coedpoeth	 12 months £250 Alison Sheet - Chepstow
 12 months £250 Shibli Begum - Rhiwbina	 6 months £250 Muriel Hastings - Tregaron	 6 months £250 Paul Brooks - Holton Le Clay	 6 months £250 Thomas Wilson - Newtown	 6 months £250 Brian Owen - Clydach	 6 months £125 Robert Roberts - Caerwrlle

Attendance Awards

January 2014 Draw continued

 6 months £125 Emily Borsberry-Yemm - Ross-on-Wye	 12 months £500 Catherine Kelwick - Creswell	 12 months £500 Tracy Blunt - Upper Parliament Street	 12 months £500 Rajakumar Sooriyakumar - Queensway
	 12 months £250 Jane Hempenstall - Birmingham Airport	 6 months £250 Matthew Haywood - Birmingham University	 6 months £250 Charlotte Knowlden - Hoo
	 6 months £125 Jeanette Quarless - Radcliffe		

April 2014 Draw

 12 months £500 Jason Chapman-Young - South Woodham Ferrers	 12 months £500 Sadie Davies - Penarth	 12 months £500 Paula Grimshaw - Port Talbot	 12 months £250 Marilyn Ludlow - Treorchy	 12 months £250 Emma Davies - Dolgellau	 12 months £250 Irene Jones - Mynydd Isa
 6 months £125 Denise Bloomer - Wordsley	 6 months £125 Angela Milton - Biggleswade	 6 months £250 Gareth James - Area Manager	 6 months £250 Gwyneth Jennings - Porthmadog	 6 months £250 Menai Davies - Almchw	 6 months £250 Dawn Evans - Risca Park
 6 months £250 Linda Gwyther - Penlan	 6 months £125 Gerald Hartey-Brown - Ewenny Road	 6 months £125 Abigail Jones - Barmouth			
 12 months £500 Mary Compton - Glascote Heath	 12 months £500 Sam Tomlinson - Area Manager	 12 months £500 Caroline Goodbarn - Greatstone			
 12 months £500 Clifford Stephen - Birmingham University	 6 months £125 Charlotte Phillips - Wylde Green Post Office				

Celebrations

Retirements



Anita Bate retired from Tonyrefail last August after 10 years' service.



Dot Lewis retired from Hatherley in May after 13 years' service.



Mary Pugh retired from Lye in October after 16 years' service.



Brian Sansam retired from Wyberton in February after 12 years' service.



Retail Trainer **Trish Gregory** retired in August after 24 years' service.



Sherry-Anne Barratt retired from Hatherley in November after 15 years' service.



Christine Hall retired from Cowbridge in March after 17 years' service.



Hillary John retired from Rhydfelin last August after 23 years' service.



Sue Fall retired from Lawnswood in May after 25 years' service.



Dorothy Williams retired from Baglan last August after 18 years' service.



Jean Lewis retired from Cowbridge in November after 27 years' service.



Sue Nason retired from Docking in November after 7 years' service.

If you've got a photo you'd like to submit to *It's Your News* please email it to radams@afblakemore.com.

Here are a few we've received since the last magazine:



Brian Mickelson retired in November after 51 years' service as a manager at Tonyrefail and general assistant at Treherbert. He started when he was 15!



Gill Rutland retired from Albrighton last August after 46 years' service.



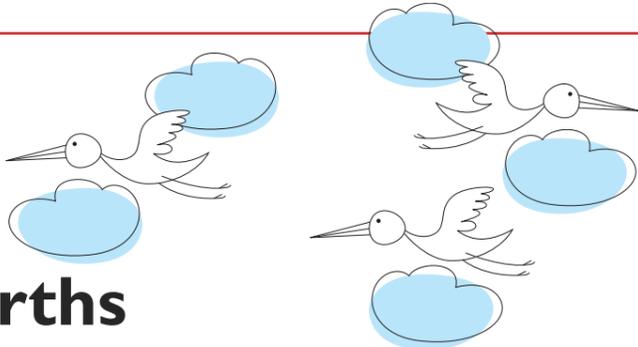
Fresh Food Coach **Steve Sheppard** retired in December after 12 years' service.



Sue Gardiner retired from Scartho Post Office last August after 13 years' service.



Patricia Harker retired from Winthorpe Avenue in March after 33 years' service.



Births



Congratulations to Training Manager Dave Hammond, whose wife Sarah gave birth to Eva Fleur Hammond on 8th November, weighing 6lb 10oz.



Deeane O'Brein from Tickhill Post Office welcomed daughter Olivia Jessica into the world on 4th March, weighing 7lb 8oz.



Congratulations to Paul Long from IT Support, whose wife Nicola gave birth to son Charlie on 16th November 2013.



Charlotte Sandcraft from Watton gave birth to a 6lb 1oz baby boy in March. The store clubbed together in secret and presented Charlotte with a basket full of baby gifts.

Birthdays



Training & Development Manager Kerry Hunt celebrated her 50th birthday in March.



Area managers John Kelly and Donna Cooper celebrated their birthdays in March.

Staff Lottery Winners

September 2013 Draw



Adrienne Hattingh - Beaumaris



Robert Hancox - Elton



Christine Palmer - Warndon



Pauline Campbell - Cotteridge

£500 Winner Daniel Angelides - Bentley

Owen Davies - Regional Manager £100 Winner

£100 Winner Karen Parry - Gwersyllt

Matthew Kent - New Waltham £100 Winner

£100 Winner Mandy Charles - Newark

Kerry Chamberlain - Bentley £50 Winner

£50 Winner Emma Stuart - Radcliffe

Timothy Powell - Ludlow £50 Winner

£50 Winner Mary Pugh - Lye

December 2013 Draw



Debbie Lester - Rowley Regis



Karen Guryn - Forsbrook



Sharon Gates (left) Elizabeth Richards (right) - Aberavon



Mark Taylor - Wollaston

£100 Winner Alan Beavis - Trinity Road

Debbie Kershaw - New Waltham £100 Winner

£100 Winner Lawrence Corrieri - Colwyn Bay

Dawn Philips - Cardigan £100 Winner

£50 Winner Zoe Ince - Crowland

Julie-Ann Weale - Builth Wells £50 Winner

£50 Winner Sarah Deakin - Marketing Manager

Alan Beavis - Trinity Road £50 Winner

March 2014 Draw



Belinda Lewis - Much Wenlock



Chris Bacon - Store Operations Director



Neil Norton - Wordsley

£1000 Winner Sandra Jones - Bodelwyddan

Mandy Williams - Stonydelph £250 Winner

£100 Winner June Gibb - Coedpoeth

Kathryn Thomas - Ton Pentre £100 Winner

£100 Winner Mark Sullivan - Aberystwyth

Sian Roberts - Porthmadog £100 Winner

£100 Winner Sarah Patricia - Whitestone

Tammy Bodenham - Ludlow £50 Winner

£50 Winner Nick Palmer - Area Manager

Valerie Jones - Bodelwyddan £50 Winner

Staff Football Tournament Raises £1,000 for ChildLine

Employees from across Blakemore Retail's store estate and head office took part in a charity football competition in July to raise money for ChildLine.

The five-a-side tournament, organised by Blakemore Retail's Loss Prevention Manager Mark Stevenson and Operations Support & Marketing Manger Sarah Deakin, raised a terrific £1,000 for the good cause.

Sixteen teams competed for the winners' shield at the competition, which took place in Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

The tournament was won by a team from head office made up of staff from Blakemore Design & Shopfitting and Property, appropriately named 'Bayern Neverlusen'. The runners up were Walsall Manor Hospital's store team, 'The Manor', who lost out in the final.

Sarah Deakin commented: "The event was a great cross-company team building exercise. It was really fun to be involved, and raising £1,000 for the NSPCC was fantastic."



The winning team: Bayern Neverlusen
Featuring: Nick Chambers, Daniel Tipton, Andy Broome, Lawrence Brown, Ben Hallam and Kev Melia



Runners up: The Manor
Featuring: Harvey Uppal, Steve Clifford (Birmingham Guild), Mike Ashford (Cotteridge), Nathan Fryzer, Ryan Patel, Steve Baker, Daniel Corbett and Daniel Angelides

Competition Corner

Your Chance to WIN £50 Worth of Vouchers!

Guess Who?

In the last edition of Competition Corner we asked you to guess which Blakemore Retail employee this young lad grew up to be.

Unfortunately no one guessed correctly, so this time we're giving away a clue.

Now fully grown this employee has a passion for motorbikes.



All correct entries will be entered into a draw, and the winner will receive £50 worth of gift vouchers for a store of their choice.

Please submit your entry to Operations Support and Marketing Manager Sarah Deakin via email or post. Make sure you include the following details:

Your name: _____
 Your guess: _____
 Your store or department: _____
 Telephone number: _____
 Send your entries to Sarah Deakin, Blakemore Retail,
 Longacres Industrial Estate, Rose Hill, Willenhall WV13 2JP
 sdeakin@afblakemore.com



Blakemore Retail is supporting the ChildLine SCHOOLS SERVICE

We raised £303,212 in 2013/14, enabling the ChildLine Schools Service to visit 379 primary schools and speak to 27,289 children.

ChildLine NEEDS volunteers to deliver assemblies and workshops in primary schools in your area.

For more information on how Blakemore Retail employees can volunteer for the ChildLine Schools Service, please contact Community Affairs Officer Liz Bell on 0121 568 2910 or email lbell@afblakemore.co.uk

