

## FIRST PLYMOUTH AND NOW POOLE

It has been an exciting year for Hills – the promised expansion into Plymouth has taken place and based upon our successful cooperation with Borough of Poole we have now opened an office in Poole. “With four offices in the South West we can now ensure that we can give a quality service to all our clients from local bases. As so much of our business is based on repeat work from existing clients this is very important” says Peter Churchill. Whilst our staff are now spread across the area we give them opportunities to meet up in Exeter for CPD seminars, health and safety training and our Annual Cricket Day which this year turned into a wonderful family get-together with the children having as much fun as the adults.

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### LEN GOES REGIONAL

Our congratulations to Len Carr who became a Regional Director of Hills at the beginning of this year. Len joined Hills in 1988 and has day-to-day responsibility for the Torquay office.

### NEW RECRUIT FOR EXETER



Not only was Nick Cox born and bred in Exeter but he went to school in Exeter, he went to university in Exeter and now he is living and working in Exeter. Not knowing what career he wanted to follow he took a Business Management degree but with a father who is a quantity surveyor it is not surprising that half way through the course he decided to follow in his father's footsteps.

Nick deferred his place at the College of Estate Management in Reading for a year and after a stop-gap job with a firm of internal auditors he joined Hills at the beginning of August this year. Hills will be sponsoring his training for professional qualifications on the College's Graduate Development course which is mainly by distance learning. Meantime he is gaining a wealth of experience in the office and out on site.

Nick realises that he will have to be motivated and disciplined to combine work and study but he is no stranger to strenuous activity. Besides playing hockey for Exeter Hornets and five a side football on Sundays he also takes part annually in a 36 mile Triathlon. This involves a 12 mile run, a 4½ mile kayaking course and a 20 mile mountain bike trail.

## SUCCESS AT OUR FIRST ATTEMPT!

As the Tall Ships moved out of Torbay on their way to Santander, floating through the mist in full sail like boats in a fairytale, nearly 50 smaller racing yachts moved out of Brixham Harbour towards the start line of the Michelmores' 15th Challenge Cup. The weather forecast of blustery force 5/6 winds coming in from the South East was proving correct and as the mist cleared it turned into the perfect day for some exciting sailing.

Skipped by Phil Rumbelow, the Hills' yacht Xcellent 6 was an X-99 crewed by its co-owners, Sean Semmens and Kate Pollard with Nick Wellspring on the bow. Guests, Derek and Vanessa Barton of South Devon Land and Mary Rogers, soon found that they were going to be working hard and getting very wet.

The course took Xcellent from Brixham past the Mewstone at Dartmouth and on around the Homestone, back to Brixham and then out around the Orestone at the north of Torbay and back to Brixham – about four hours sailing. With the spinnaker up the top speed achieved during the course was 11.2 knots

As we passed the finish line and sailed slowly into Brixham, breaking open bottles of beer and sandwiches



In Brixham Harbour before the Race.  
 Standing: Derek Barton and Mary Rogers.  
 Sitting: Phil Rumbelow and Vanessa Barton

as we went, we were quietly confident that we would be in the first four yachts in Class 1. However it was not until the prize giving at Brixham Yacht Club in the evening that the full details of our success became clear. We had not only won our class but also won the Michelmores Challenge Cup as the outright winner – not bad on our first attempt!



## ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

After working for three firms of contractors as a surveyor Jon Widgery joined Hills four years ago and feels that his previous experience helps him to understand both sides of the story.

Jon's main projects at the moment are the Exeter VA schools where Hills are acting as employer's agent and quantity surveyor (more about this later). In addition he is acting as quantity surveyor on Building 19, the Officers' Mess at Wyvern Barracks and the new sports hall at Torquay Community College, as well as employer's agent for 15 new dwellings for Signpost Housing Association on the Brixham Garage site.

Jon who is married to Angela lives in Crediton and has a 19 year old daughter studying for a degree in fashion design in London and a 17 year old son who is in the second year of "A" levels. He enjoys tennis, mountain biking and swimming and does a bit of DIY – but nothing too strenuous.

## TORQUAY MOVE

Hills' Torquay office has moved down the hill towards the town centre, to 1 Palk Street. Len is now looking for more staff to assist with the expanding workload.

Earlier this year, Hills were appointed to provide project management, quantity surveying and planning supervisor services as one of two teams to carry out all Torbay Council's work. As Torbay is an LEA this involves mainly school projects but they are also working on the refurbishment of the Palace Theatre in Paignton and are looking at projects for Torbay Development Agency.

# TEN YEARS AT COLLEGE

Looking back over the ten years we have worked at Bridgwater College gives a clear picture of how facilities for further education in this country have advanced and improved with a wider variety of courses being offered in up-to-date buildings. Bridgwater College have invested over the whole period but during the last four years around £10 million has been spent with the largest project due to commence on site this October. The College has excellent reports from Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate who have commented on its "outstanding accommodation and equipment".



Hills' first project with the College was the Derek Gibson Building back in 1995 with projects following on including refurbishment of existing buildings and the construction of the Early Years Centre, the Heavy Goods Vehicle building and a Performing Arts Centre. 2004 saw the construction of St Mark's Centre, a new classroom block mainly for students following Childhood Studies and Health and Social Care courses. It is built beside a large pond fed by culverts from the Somerset Levels, with the end of the building cantilevered over the water. The pond was drained during the building works to provide access to the site.

Investing in the future training and learning needs of the construction industry is an important aspect of the College's work and the new Construction Centre was opened in 2004. A practical modern building clad in curved steel sheeting, it provides specialist classrooms and workshops that support the College's extensive construction curriculum.

Block C, the most recent project, represents a large investment of £5.8 million for the College. It will provide the main teaching space for the college including facilities for students studying sports and health and beauty and is due to complete in February 2007.

In September last year Bridgwater and Cannington Colleges merged. As a result Cannington has attracted a significant support package from the Learning and Skills Council for investment in refurbishment and new buildings. The team of Hills and David Kent Architects will also be working at Cannington and they have commenced the design of a new Centre for Small Animals and are looking at various options for Jeane's Hall, a 1960's accommodation block and Cannington Court, a listed building.

"We have built a good working relationship with Hills over the years" says Nick Skyrme, Head of Management Services at the College. "They have always supported the whole College business and look after our interests, whether it is health and safety or contractual."

## Wedding in the rain but honeymoon in the sun



Unfortunately it did rain on the Saturday that Lucy chose for her marriage to Steve Palmer at the Haldon Belvedere, a Grade II\* listed folly just up the road from Hills' Exeter office. However it cleared up during the reception and they had wall to wall sunshine on a remote island in the Maldives for their honeymoon.

Lucy joined Hills in January 2004. She is now covering for sickleave as PA to Peter and Phil. Keen to "give anything a go" Lucy is enjoying the extra responsibility. In her former job she coordinated engineers for a local telecommunications company so quantity surveyors and project managers are easy to manage.



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**E**au1, Eau2 and potentially Eau3 – Yes, luxury waterside apartments! Three phases of a project at Sutton Harbour in Plymouth for Westbury Homes. Eau1 was handed over in April, Eau2 is on site and Eau3 is planned to commence next year. Hills are managing all three projects which total about £30 million under design and build contracts.

Also in Plymouth, but still at the master planning stage, Hills are working with Westbury on the Plymstock Quarry site. This project will provide 1500 new homes near the centre of Plymouth and after redesign is due to go back to planning early next year.

Further north in Taunton, Westbury are carrying out a very different project. This is the conversion of King's College to luxury apartments – a challenging, listed building project with the involvement of English Heritage, the local conservation officer and the order of nuns who maintain the graveyard in the middle of the site! On this project Hills have a full-time involvement. They carried out the cost planning and are now managing the sub-contractors as well as all the financial aspects of the project.

## VA Schools in Exeter

**T**he first three schools commenced on site at the beginning of August after nearly two years of preparation work. Hills have been working with the Exeter Diocese (Anglian) and the Plymouth Diocese (Roman Catholic) on a combined project to build four new voluntary assisted schools in Exeter.

In 2003 Devon County Council, the LEA, on the instruction of the Diocese, made a bid for the rebuilding of the VA schools on the back of the Exeter reorganisation that was already taking place. Devon Property Practice asked Hills to prepare the submission based on designs and initial costings from Lacey Hickie Caley and four of Devon's framework contractors. The DfES VA sector agreed to give 100% funding to the schemes and money was allocated to carry out the initial design and feasibility options.

Hills assisted the client team to interview and select design teams for the schools which resulted in two architects, Grainge Architects and Kendall Kingscott Partnership, being awarded two schools each, with Airey & Coles and Buro Happold completing the team. The reason for using a small team of designers was the importance of reducing costs by standardising the design as much as possible although this has not been as easy as first envisaged because of the special requirements of schools in conservation areas. The drive towards using natural ventilation has played an important part in the design of all the schools.

It was decided to select a contractor on a two-stage tender basis and when Cowlin Construction were chosen Hills worked closely with them and the team to bring the contracts within the ceiling price available for the work. The team were encouraged when the sub-contract tenders showed the benefits of standardisation and quantity buying.

The schools are programmed to open in time for the new term in September 2006. With the Exeter Archaeology Unit keeping a watching brief over the sites the first excitement has been the find of the remains of part of one of the Cathedral cloisters at the site of St Sidwell's School. The Archaeology Unit will retain some of the larger stones and the school may use smaller stones for either display or as teaching aids.

## WHEN IS A BANK NOT A BANK?

When it is a development partner (or more correctly providing funding for a developer). Hills have been working for Close Bros, through Close Property Finance Ltd, since 1999 and currently have 22 live projects for them. These vary from one house valued at £50,000 for a private individual to a £2.5 million project for a property developer.

In most cases our work for Close Bros involves looking at cost appraisals to advise on the deliverability of a project, managing the draw down of funds during construction and monitoring progress with planning consents and building regulations approvals, etc. Projects are spread across the West Country and provide a wide variety of schemes.

## THIS MAN COULD HELP YOUR BUSINESS

Hills are delighted that Glyn Matthews has joined them to enhance the practice's ability to assist clients with their contractual problems. Glyn is not only very well qualified but has a wealth of practical experience that enables him to understand all aspects of the construction industry, whether he is working for a project client, contractor, sub-contractor or their lawyers. With some thirty year's experience in quantity surveying and contract administration, working for government departments, as a partner in a practice of chartered quantity surveyors and more recently as Dispute Manager for MouchelParkman Ltd, Glyn has gained a wide understanding of how the industry ticks.

He is a Chartered Arbitrator, expert witness, mediator and an approved and experienced Adjudicator, named in several major building contracts. Glyn is currently the Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Western Counties Branch.

Glyn lives in Somerset and spends much of his spare time looking after a large garden and surrounding fields. He keeps fit by walking the dog each day and relaxes by listening to classical music and jazz and enjoys theatre visits.

Glyn can be contacted on 01392 218010 or [glyn.matthews@wthills.com](mailto:glyn.matthews@wthills.com)

## JCT 2005

The Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) has completely revised its suite of contracts to be known as JCT 2005. New forms have been introduced and existing ones substantially amended and the whole suite has been reworded and updated. In addition JCT have joined forces with Sweet & Maxwell Ltd, a leading legal publisher, to publish all JCT's building contracts and documentation ([www.jctcontracts.com](http://www.jctcontracts.com)). The redesigned, rebranded and colour-coded contracts can be bought as individual print contracts or provided on CD with regular online updates for subscribers. Not sure how the new contracts will effect you? Geoff Hanna will be happy to give you advice.

Contact him on: 01392 218010 or [geoff.hanna@wthills.com](mailto:geoff.hanna@wthills.com)



# FAMILY DAY IN THE SUN

Hills' Annual Cricket Day was held this year at the Teign Valley Community Hall on a gloriously sunny day in August bringing together staff from all over the South West, partners, children and also former Managing Director, Peter Rumbelow and his wife Kay. Not only did the adults play cricket in an idyllic setting but the children had a bouncy castle, use of the BMX track and the tennis courts and Lesley Churchill worked very hard to provide games for them all. They played rounders, covered themselves with water from burst balloons and ate vast amounts of food.

The cricket was won by Tom Dodge's Team with 93 runs against Gary Pope's team who were 77 all out. The highest scorer, Peter Churchill with 23 runs, retired exhausted (although he claims he was hurt). The bottle of bubbly was presented to the winning team by Mary Rogers, Hills' Marketing consultant, and was rapidly disposed of by the two team captains in the time honoured fashion. The day was completed with a fantastic buffet and a fair amount of beer.



NEWS SOUTH WEST

AUTUMN 2005

## AHOY THERE PLYMOUTH!

Hills' new Plymouth office is up and running and shipshape and the work they are carrying out confirms the importance of having a base there to support our clients in the South of Devon and Cornwall.

A longstanding client, Devon Fire and Rescue Service, is using Hills on a contract to build a new fire station in Plymouth. The Fire Service is operating from temporary premises in Sutton Harbour whilst the old station is demolished and a new one built.

Earlier this year Hills were appointed to Sovereign Housing Association's consultancy framework and are now acting as employer's agent on a number of schemes in the Plymouth area and South Devon. We are also working for Signpost Housing Association on two schemes in Cornwall.

## MOVING EASTWARDS

As Hills workload for Poole Borough Council began to grow it was decided to open an office in Poole, man it with two full-time staff and target further work. Geoff Hanna, who has day-to-day responsibility for the office, is already looking for another member of staff.

Hills have acted as project managers, quantity surveyors and planning supervisors for four projects in Poole comprising three special schools and the extension of a further school to double its size. They are also helping the Borough of Poole to review how it procures its capital projects and how they should manage that delivery in the future.

Geoff Hanna's involvement with the new VA schools in Exeter for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth has now been extended to involve him with their work in Poole. On the back of "Building Schools for the Future" the diocese is looking at improving the current provision at three of their schools. A bid for funding has been made with the results expected in mid-October and in the meantime Hills are putting together consultant teams who will be ready to prepare option appraisals if the bid is successful.



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