

# whitco NEWS

## IT'S MUM'S FAVOURITE

THE UK's continuing love affair with gin



## OUTSTANDING

Whitco scoops two national awards from trade association...



## YOU CAN'T BEAT IT

Snap up a great deal on our 20-litre mixer



## HEALTHY EATING

Japan leads the way in raising life expectancy through school meals.

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# WHAT'S INSIDE THIS MONTH...



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See our great offer on 20-litre mixers - page 6

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## The more things change...

Well, where did that month go? You could have blinked and missed it, if the last few weeks for you were as hectic as mine,



We've been busy, as you'll see from this month's issue of whitco news. We've put together some great deals on top quality equipment - HotBags and a superb Whitco brand 20-litre mixer that offers top features at a price that's hard to beat.

Away from the office, I have been out and about meeting the good folks at the RNLI and the Sea Cadets, making good on our promise to support these institutions as part of the Jeff's Way foundation - see page 7 for more details.

And then there was a very welcome double honour from ceda, the catering equipment distributors' association. You can read more on page eight.

I have a feeling that things are only going to get busier. Stay in touch...

**Vita Whitaker**

## News in Brief from Whitco...

### New programme of support for catering students through Jeff's Way



Jeff's Way, the foundation set up in honour of Whitco founder Jeff Whitaker is to support the development of young catering talent through a programme of sponsorships. The move comes after recent financial support for two other key causes: the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Sea Cadets. See page 7 of this edition or the Whitco website for more news on these initiatives.

A full announcement will be made next month. Early news is that Jeff's Way will work with Northampton College through a donation this year of £3,000 for the current academic year. The money will be split three ways:

- An award for the Student of the Year. This will be made in the form of a placement at a major Michelin-starred restaurant. This will provide a unique experience and a tremendous boost to the winner's CV.
- Support and mentoring for a vulnerable student. The award winner will benefit from a tailored package of resources and experiences designed to help them achieve their full potential.

- A calendar of events, visits and speakers to inspire groups of students.

Whitco's Vita Whitaker sees the latest step in the deployment of the money raised through Jeff's Way as the beginning of a journey. She said: "We see our recent announcement of support for our three good causes as the start of a journey of support that will continue into the future.

"Jeff was an inspirational boss and recognised the importance that education, security and opportunity played in his personal and professional development. He was very much a self-made man and it is wonderful to be able to use the foundation to lay similar pathways to success for others."

### The pies the limit for our new development kitchen

The unmistakable and irresistible aroma of hot pies baking in an oven marked the opening of our development kitchen at Whitco's headquarters recently.

New event caterers Nick and Caroline Benson were the first new business to use Whitco's demonstration kitchen as part of the help that Jeff's Way will provide. As our picture show the pies looked (almost) too good to eat. We're



happy to say that

The culinary entrepreneurs also used Whitco's hot delivery bags to ensure the pies were hot when they arrived at the venue.

Hot pies, happy diners and a happy Nick and Caroline too. Said Caroline: "Thanks, the kitchen was great!"

To find out more about using our development kitchen call Whitco on 01832 735007.

### New members of Northamptonshire Chamber

Eagle-eyed visitors to our website may have noticed a small change to the pages – our membership badge for the Northamptonshire



Chamber. The Chamber's members account for about one-third of the county's workforce.

Its aims are to develop a respected influential business community and to share knowledge advice and opportunities. Whitco's approach to work and the way that we do business is broadly similar and so there is a natural fit.

We're proud to be members of the Chamber and look forward to supporting its aims and ambitions.

## News in Brief from Whitco...

### Whitco sponsors Restaurant of the Year

**SPONSOR**



**RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR**

We are pleased to announce that we will again be sponsoring the Northamptonshire Food & Drink Awards. The Awards are a highlight of the industry's year and recognise the skill and dedication of all who work in the business of producing food and drink and feeding and watering a discerning customer base throughout the county.

Whitco commercial director Vita Whitaker said: "We are delighted to be once again sponsoring the award for restaurant of the year. Northamptonshire is a centre of excellence for food and drink with a growing national reputation."

### Pay rise reminders

Just a quick reminder that the national living wage rose this month.

The national living wage is the statutory national minimum wage for those aged 25 and over. It increased by 4.9% from 1 April 2019, from £7.83 to £8.21.

The Low Pay Commission (LPC), which recommended



the increase, estimated that the increase will benefit around 2.4 million workers. Subject to sustained economic growth, the government's aim is for the national living wage to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020.

Announcing the increase in the Budget in October, the chancellor Philip Hammond said: "From April [the National Living Wage] will rise again, handing a full-time worker a £690 annual pay increase."

The Treasury says the annual earnings of a full-time minimum wage worker will have increased by over £2,750 since the introduction of the NLW in April 2016.

#### Other rises

The government accepted all of the LPC's recommendations for the other national minimum wage to apply from 1 April 2019:

- increasing the rate for 21- to 24-year-olds by 4.3% from £7.38 to £7.70 per hour;
- increasing the rate for 18- to 20-year-olds by 4.2% from £5.90 to £6.15 per hour;
- increasing the rate for 16- to 17-year-olds by 3.6% from £4.20 to £4.35 per hour;
- increasing the rate for apprentices by 5.4% from £3.70 to £3.90 per hour; and
- increasing the accommodation offset by 7.9% from £7.00 to £7.55.

### Fight the fatberg



Businesses in the food and drinks industry are being reminded of the problems caused by disposing of unwanted oils and fats down a sink and into the public sewerage system.

Fats, oil and grease can coagulate around wet wipes (even the so-called flushable ones) to create massive, dense, blockages that can impede and eventually close off sewerage tunnels. The most recent example was in the seaside town of Sidmouth in Devon.

It took teams of workmen, wearing breathing apparatus and using pickaxes and high-pressure jets, two months to clear out the accumulation. It was eventually found to have stretched 210 feet – more than the length of six double-decker buses. A congealed fatberg has roughly the consistency of concrete.

Sidmouth's fatberg pales in comparison to the infamous Whitechapel Fatberg which was discovered in 2017 and weighed in at a staggering 140 tonnes of congealed matter, below London's East End.

Commercial grease traps are an effective way of stopping the spread and growth of fatbergs. Call Whitco on 01832 735007 to find out more.

## From mother's ruin to Mother's Day

Saying it with flowers (whatever 'it' was) was always a popular way of telling someone that they meant something special. But times change and Mother's Day 2019 may go down as the time when many people chose to say it with gin instead.

Gin sales boomed in the run-up to Mother's Day. And the fancier the brew, the more attractive to the buyer. A spirit infused with cardamom, rose water and a range of multi-faceted and hand-picked botanicals is always going to have the edge over a bottle of plain old Gordons.

Gin has shaken off its old "mother's ruin" reputation, thanks to the upsurge in craft gins (the UK now has roughly 315 distilleries – up by 50 per cent in the last three years). In 2018, gin distilleries were opening at the rate of one a week according to HMRC, who (obviously) take a keen interest in this sort of thing.

It was Sipsmiths who kicked off the revolution when it opened its craft gin distillery in London. At that time the UK was getting through gin to the value of about £125 million a year – sales were down slightly from 2008. Since then it's been a steady climb and UK gin is now a market sector with sales of £461 million. Any gastropub worth its salt will have a list of favourite tipples with a wide range of botanicals for the discerning drinker. And it's the craft gins that are driving the growth.



Of course gin, despite its increased popularity, is still a small player compared to Scotch in the UK market. Whisky sales in the UK rose £100 million to £3.9 billion in the last 12 months. Scotch sales outstrip gin by about eight-and-a-half to one.

### What is gin?

The term 'gin' covers many different types of drink – and is legally defined in various ways in different countries. The only generally agreed ingredient is juniper – that's because gin is a shortemmed form of the old English word genever which derives from juniperus – the botanical name for juniper.

Gin helped to build the British Empire. In the colonies, gin was used to disguise the bitter flavour of quinine – an antidote to malaria. Quinine was dissolved in carbonated water to produce tonic or Indian tonic water to give it its original name. And the G&T was born.



Culinary icon and Fat Lady Clarissa Dickson Wright became an alcoholic – but it was copious amounts of tonic water that she drank with her gin that damaged her health. The quinine in it damaged her adrenal gland, which is why she struggled to lose weight.

She was referred to the National Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London where her condition was investigated. She confessed to drinking two pints of quinine-based tonic a day for several years.

"Why" asked her doctor "would you drink that much tonic every day?"

"To go with the two pints of gin," was her simple reply.



Hogarth's Gin Lane (1751) - "Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for tuppence."

# News in Brief from Whitco...

## Farewell to Denise and Mike - two Whitco stalwarts

The Whitco family has said farewell and thanks to two long standing employees who have retired from the business this month.



Denise Halson pictured above with Vita Whitaker and Tony Butler was our Financial Director and an employee for 19 years. Her skills and contributions to the business extended way beyond accounts.

During her time at Whitco, she even took over the service desk for a while so that she could help develop the systems that we have in place today. Denise will be able to spend more time with her grandchildren and her elderly mother and we hope to engage her help on a freelance basis when tackling new initiatives or refining existing ones.

We are very sad to see our Sales manager Mike Weatherley, pictured above right, go. However, we were proud that he ended his longstanding career



in the industry with us. Over the last five years we have often wished he had joined us earlier. High respect was paid to Mike's product knowledge at his presentation and his ability to ensure customer satisfaction throughout all his work.



**Whitco are growing... and we're looking for the right people**

- **Part Time Credit Controller**
  - Responsible for all aspects post invoice and day-to-day management of our sales ledger.
- **Catering Equipment Engineer**
  - Fully qualified Gas/Electrically Qualified



**Find out more...**

Please send CV and covering letter to Mrs Vita Whitaker, Whitco Catering & Bakery Equipment Ltd, Cottingham Way, Thrapston. Northants NN14 4PL.

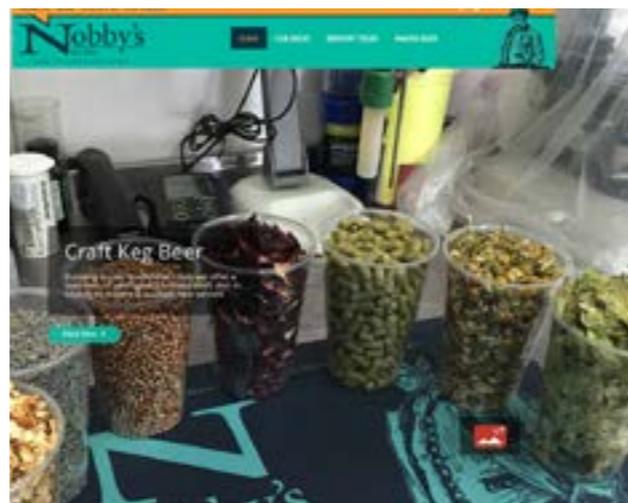
# UK beer boom hits a 45-year high as taxman takes a fat share

## Beer boom

Last year, sales of beer in the UK rose by the largest amount in 45 years. Sales data from the British Beer and Pub association says that while on-trade sales rose only marginally off-sales trade increased by 4.7 per cent.

The price of a pint has risen steadily since the year 2000. Then, the average cost of a pint of lager was just £2 – compared with £3.58 in 2017, the latest year for which statistics are available. The average price for a pint of ale has risen over the same period from £2.10 to £3.05.

The association says that ever increasing duty and taxes have driven much of the increase.



## Nobby's - Thrapston brewery

The increase in UK beer sales is good news for our very near (and dear) neighbour Nobby's – Thrapston's own craft brewery which has been turning out fine ales since 2004.

The upturn in sales is noticeably down to an increased demand for quality ales. Nobby's offers a wide range of hand-crafted brews, and you can check out their range at [www.nobbysbrewery.co.uk](http://www.nobbysbrewery.co.uk).

## New look Fox Inn

More local Whitco news. A quick mention and a welcome to the team at the Fox Inn, Thrapston's new look sports bar.

Just a stone's throw from Whitco's offices (if you were very good at throwing stones), the pub is building a great reputation for good beer, food, friendly service and live music. Here's to many happy hours.

## First ever UK beer was brewed just off the A14

A team working on widening the A14 have found evidence of what archaeologists believe to be the first beer brewed in the UK. Experts working on the road improvements between Cambridge and Huntingdon said tiny fragments of charred residue from the brewing process were found in excavated earth. They believe the brew could date back as far as 400BC - the earliest evidence yet discovered.

"It's a well-known fact that ancient populations used the beer-making process to purify water and create a safe source of hydration," said Dr Steve Sherlock, of Highways England.



Beer Street - another of Hogarth's warnings on the use of alcohol.

## Great price and spec for our Whitco 20-litre mixer



Our Whitco 20-litre mixer is a brilliant piece of kit. It's big enough for almost all needs, it's easy to handle, and comes at a price that's hard to beat. What's more, it's compatible with the accessories that fit the market-leading machine.

We have only a limited availability – so whip one up and whisk it away while you can.

The Whitco 20-litre mixer is probably the most versatile mixer on the market. With its 20-litre capacity and three-speed gearbox, it's large enough to cope with most requirements. However, it is still compact enough to fit into the smallest of spaces. An extra accessory

to the mixer is the Whitco stainless steel mobile mixer stand with two lockable castors. This means it can be wheeled in and out of spaces whilst in and out of operation, freeing up valuable workspace.

The mixer competes with the internationally recognised market leader of 20 litre mixers, in both looks, durability, quality of manufacture and consistent mixing results, it is also totally compatible with their accessories, yes – they fit the Whitco 20L Mixer!

Lastly, the Whitco 20 Litre mixer beats the competitor price, making it a sound commercial decision.

And how's this for a price that's hard to beat? The package includes the mixer, 20-litre bowl, beater, hook and whisk, stainless stand, 12 months parts and labour warranty, and delivery to the UK mainland for £2,800 + VAT.

Finance and leasing are available, details upon request. Call Whitco Sales Office :00 44 1832 735007, email [sales@whitcoltd.com](mailto:sales@whitcoltd.com), to whip one up and whisk it away!

### Deals on takeaway delivery Hotbags

We're doing great deals too on our range of Hotbags. These are the high-tech solution for temperature-controlled hot food delivery.

Hotbags come in a range of sizes and can be plugged straight into your delivery vehicles 12-volt power supply. See our website for more details.



### Allergen labelling changes planned

The government has launched a consultation process to look into radical changes to ingredient labelling on food prepared in shops. This includes a proposal that would make it compulsory for business that prepared and sold food on the same premises to list all ingredients.

The move follows the death of teenager Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who died in 2016 after eating a baguette bought at Pret A Manger that contained sesame, to which she was allergic. Currently, businesses are not required to list allergens on foods that is prepared and sold on the same premises where they are sold. Companies must tell customers about allergy risks either in written format or verbally. The consultation proposes amendments to regulations for food that is pre-packed for direct sale to the consumer on the same premises from which it is sold.

The changes may well represent an issue for firms, large and small in the preparation and sale of food. Call us on 01832 735007 for advice on food allergens and free fact sheets.

## Jeff's Way donates £3,000 to lifeboat fund and Sea Cadet

The Hessle Branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 50th anniversary Fund Our Fuel campaign has just received a £3,000 donation from 'Jeff's Way.'



This is a foundation set up in memory of Jeff Whitaker, left, founder of Whitco. Jeff sadly passed away from Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in January 2018.

The foundation, established by Jeff's wife Vita, is supporting causes close to her late husband's heart. Jeff's Way looks:

- To nurture young talent looking for opportunities in further education and careers in the catering industry,
- To support youngsters involved in the Sea Cadets,
- To support MND charities.

The Fund Our Fuel Campaign is supporting the Humber Lifeboat at Spurn Point. Vita and her daughter Lucia have just paid a special visit to the station to meet the crew and present them with a cheque for the campaign.

Said Vita: "Jeff had a lifelong passion for the sea and a great supporter of the RNLI. I was both honoured and delighted to be able to support the RNLI's Fund Our fuel campaign. The RNLI does an amazing job and it was a privilege to meet the crew, to see how they work, and to make a positive contribution to their



Vita and daughter Luciana present a cheque to Humber Lifeboat crew members and Station Manager Mark Branton

efforts. The RNLI's work is the embodiment, the pillar, of the security element of the Jeff's Way foundation.

"Jeff began his career in catering by training in Hull,

and the Yorkshire coast in particular was a very special place for him. Going forward, we will continue to support the great work of the RNLI, MND charities, the Sea Cadets and the educational development of young people in catering."

## Peterborough Sea Cadets donation

Whitco director Vita Whitaker took time out to make a charity donation. This was the first meeting with one of three beneficiaries of Jeff's Way ([jeffsway.org](http://jeffsway.org)).

Jeff's Way has been a huge success. In our first year, we raised £15,000. Our thanks to everyone involved in the effort to raise funds and accept donations—especially to ceda ([www.ceda.co.uk](http://www.ceda.co.uk)) and our great team here at Whitco. Jeff joined Peterborough Sea Cadets at the age of 10, in 1960. He was a cadet at Customs House which is the second oldest building in the city.

Jeff's Way has donated £3,000 to the cadets. This will go into the organisation's bursary funds to help with the costs of training and development for some youngsters who may not otherwise be able to attend trips and other events. A part of our donation will also go towards renaming the shield that is presented each December to the best performing cadet.

From this year, the shield will be known as the Jeff Whitaker Prize. Says Vita: "The Sea Cadets played a big part in shaping Jeff's future and I am so honoured to present this donation.

"It is a necessity to help the young on their journey and in opening up new opportunities for them. Every little bit makes a huge difference. I praise all the volunteers at the Peterborough Sea Cadets that give up their time each week to do this. 'Shoulders back, stand up straight, shine those boots.' "

## Double honours from ceda national awards

This year's annual ceda awards was a cause for double celebration for the team here at Whitco.

### Outstanding customer service

Our work for Oxfordshire County Council, stepping in to pick up the pieces after the collapse of Carillion, won the national award for outstanding customer service. There was a second success when Whitco's founder and former boss Jeff Whitaker was recognised with the first ever Legacy award presented by ceda.

The Whitco team stepped in at short notice when the

Carillion a giant construction, services and facilities management company went bust owing £1.8 billion. Like many other councils, Oxfordshire County Council outsourced services to Carillion and when the crash came it was left with little information, no handover and unfinished construction projects at school catering facilities in the county.

Thanks to a great team effort, contracts were completed, and the county's schoolchildren and school staff were kept well fed. You can read the full story of our work for Oxfordshire County Council, at the Whitco website ([whitcoltd.com/oxfordcc](http://whitcoltd.com/oxfordcc)).

Tony Butler, Whitco's MD, said: "The collapse of Carillion was the second biggest bankruptcy in British history. The human cost was equally serious, and we were proud and pleased to go the extra mile and to work with a valuable customer to minimise the impact as much as possible.

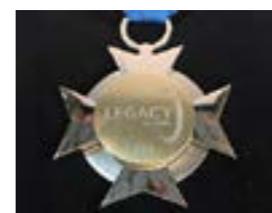
"The ceda award recognised the work done by the Whitco team in partnership with staff at the council, and the benefits of their projects to repair the damage caused by the financial problems at Carillion.



### Legacy Award for Jeff

Whitco founder Jeff Whitaker was posthumously honoured with ceda's first ever Legacy Honour. This is the association's highest possible accolade. It is presented by ceda to an individual involved and associated with the commercial Foodservice and Hospitality Design, Equipment and Service Industry.

Jeff died in 2018 and left behind a huge reputation in our industry. The award's citation says that it: "is



made to outstanding individuals who have; played a role in creating a tangible legacy that has made a considerable positive difference, enriched lives, served with dedication, passion and

commitment and have cast an indelible history within our and their industry."

Jeff's wife Vita Whitaker accepted the award, pictured below, from ceda's Jack Sharkey at the awards dinner, which was held at Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire.

Said Vita: "Jeff He brought people together and helped build relationships throughout the industry. So many private and public owned businesses and individuals have been successful as a direct result of his involvement. I am delighted to have accepted the award on his behalf."

## Healthy national diet starts in school say the Japanese

It was Winston Churchill who noted that for any community there is no better investment than putting milk into babies. Good habits and particularly good eating habits start young. Well-fed (not overly-fed) children learn better, perform well academically and are better-behaved. The quality of school lunches has a profound effect on the performance of future generations.

That's why our recent work with Oxfordshire County Council gave us such a lift. We had stepped in after the business services giant Carillion had collapsed and worked with the council's team to get school kitchens and catering facilities back up and working. You can read the full story here...

Not every country feeds its school children in the same way. The American system favours large cafeteria style operations, delivered by the big three food management companies: Aramark, Compass Group and Sodexo. And while the quality of American school meals has improved in recent years there is still a heavy reliance on an abundance of factory-farmed animal products and heavily processed foods, like corn dogs, tater tots, and cheese pizza. Half of all vegetables consumed in US schools are French fries.

Milk in school has been federally subsidised since 1940 and even though most schools now ban sodas and other sugary beverages, chocolate milk still gets a pass. A single serving of chocolate milk contains about five teaspoons of sugar.

It doesn't need to be like this. The Japanese school meal system provides a model of a different kind and it's called Kyushoku. Japanese school meals combine



flavour with fresh ingredients and contain levels of iron, calcium and fibre stipulated by a government-run programme for children attending kindergarten through to the end of junior high school.

The system produces food that is less turkey twizzler and more baked cod, miso and bok choy.

### Life expectancy rises

The kyushoku system was introduced in the 1950s to ensure that children did not have to experience the dietary privations of the immediate post-war years. The programme is credited with contributing to Japan's impressive life expectancy, and child and adult obesity levels that are among the lowest in the world. Japan now has more than 70,000 people who have celebrated their one-hundredth birthday – the 48th annual increase in a row.

Japanese school food is an inclusive experience. The children and the teachers eat together in their classrooms. Portions are intentionally small – but suitable. A total calorie count below 700 kcals is

typical and enough to sustain a child. There's a strong emphasis on variety and seasonality – with a different menu every day of the month. School lunch centres send out meals to kindergarten, primary and junior high schools every day.

Local farmers sell straight to the school meals system which ensures freshness and cuts costs.

Most of the meals are inspired by Japanese cuisine, with the occasional inclusion of Chinese, Korean and European dishes. Parents pay ¥250 (£1.70) a meal, about half of what they cost to make, with the local government contributing the rest.

### Removing choice is key

In a recent report in The Guardian Dr Atsushi Miyawaki, a health policy specialist at Tokyo University's graduate school of medicine, says removing choice from the menu and banning packed lunches are the "most remarkable" features of the programme.

"It offers a uniform menu to all children in each school five days a week, unlike the cafeteria-style school lunches often found in the US and UK," Miyawaki says. "That means the children have no choice regarding menu items, or whether to eat school lunch or bring it from home.

"That helps avoid an imbalance in nutritional intakes. And the lack of choice can help hide differences in the children's economic background that may be evident in packed lunches."