

**DEAL OF THE
YEAR 2015**
Smith Cooper scoop
SME Deal of the Year
Award

**MEET OUR
NEWEST PARTNER**
Darren Hodson appointed
to lead our Corporate
Finance offering in
Birmingham

DEALS
A collection of our latest
transactions



WELCOME TO ISSUE 21

WELCOME

“In his introduction to our last issue, John was optimistic for another good year in 2015, with the volume of deals continuing to rise. His optimism appears very well placed!

Concerns about the outcome of the General Election might have slowed things a tad but our economy continues on its steady incline, unemployment is falling nicely and inflation is still almost non-existent (thanks to the lowest oil prices for decades). These things do matter when people go into the polling booth – “It’s the economy, stupid” (a phrase coined by James Carville, in Bill Clinton’s successful 1992 presidential campaign).

Whatever your politics, the “markets” liked a Conservative majority on the grounds that it combines business-friendly government with consistency. So, we continue on the road to full recovery, surely?!

But is our economy strong enough to drive through a predictable thrashing in the Ashes (you will get a good price on an England victory!), a potential slowdown in China in 2016 and increasing uncertainty over our position in Europe? If only I knew the answer to that....”



Chris Taylor,
Corporate Finance Partner

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SMITH COOPER SCOOPS SME DEAL OF THE YEAR 2015

We are pleased to announce that the management buy-out of SRM Industries was awarded SME Deal of the Year at the recent 2015 Insider East Midlands Deal Makers Awards.

Smith Cooper were also shortlisted in 2 other categories at the Insider Deal Maker Awards.

SRM is a leading manufacturer of precision rubber mouldings based in Hatton, Derbyshire.

The deal, which saw founders Mike and Yvonne Spare handing over the day to day control of the business to the management team, was advised

on by five Derby based professional service firms including Smith Cooper Corporate Finance, Ellis-Fermor & Negus, Nelsons Solicitors, HSBC and Gateley.

Smith Cooper Corporate Finance initiated, structured and deal-managed the transaction.

On receiving the accolade, Smith Cooper Corporate Finance Partner, John Farnsworth commented: "I was utterly delighted to accept the award on behalf of my colleagues at Smith Cooper as well as those at Ellis-Fermor & Negus, Nelsons Solicitors, HSBC and Gateley - all

of whom played a pivotal role in the transaction. The Insider Award is deserved recognition of a great team effort."

John added "the SRM deal emerged from a jointly hosted event with a close partner; we intend to continue with joint initiatives to showcase to potential clients the excellent professional service firms here in the East Midlands.

Following on from 2014, during which our team completed 24 deals, we have other exciting transactions in process and in the pipeline, so the coming year looks very promising."



John Farnsworth collecting Insider SME Deal of the Year 2015 Award

WELCOME TO DARREN HODSON

We are delighted to announce the continued expansion of our Corporate Finance team with the latest appointment of a Corporate Finance Partner, Darren Hodson.

Darren is a prominent and highly respected figure in the Birmingham business and Corporate Finance market and joins us from a "Big 4" firm to head up our West Midlands offering.

Darren commented: "Birmingham is currently experiencing somewhat of a renaissance with talent migrating from London to the region, with more entrepreneurs basing themselves here and significant capital investment being deployed in the city. Smith Cooper's new Birmingham Corporate Finance offering is tangible evidence that the region's M&A market is improving. Over the coming years I expect the region's deal activity to continue to increase and more expansion capital to be raised."



Darren Hodson,
Corporate Finance Partner

ASPIN GROUP INVESTMENT BY LDC



Leading private equity provider LDC has acquired a 50% stake in high-growth UK Aspin Group plc, the parties have announced.

Established in 2000 and headquartered in Hemel Hempstead, Aspin is the UK market leader in the design and construction of piled foundations for the rail sector, primarily used for supporting overhead line equipment (OLE) and signalling structures. The business has over 200 employees across its 6 key offices and a strong track record of innovation providing clients with an end-to-end solution encompassing design and consulting, ground investigation, project management and construction.

The deal was transacted by LDC's Nottingham team, led by Investment Director, John Green with support from Andy Grove. They will both join the board with immediate effect. Keith Ludeman has also joined the business as Non-Executive Chairman. Keith brings a wealth of experience in the rail and wider transport and infrastructure sectors.

The deal was supported by a number of Midlands based advisors including Smith Cooper who project managed and negotiated the deal with LDC and provided specialist tax advice to the management, and law firm Geldards who acted as lead legal advisors to the owners.

Alongside consistent organic growth, the business has made two strategic acquisitions in the last two years, both of which Smith Cooper have advised on. Sheet piling company, McGrattan, was acquired in 2013, followed by Rogers Structural Investigations in 2014, bringing on-site infrastructure inspection and testing services for the rail and highways markets to Aspin's portfolio.

David Nelson, Business Advisory Partner at Smith Cooper commented: "The management team at Aspin have continued to lead the company through multiple phases of organic and acquisitive growth. With the rail industry continuing to face considerable changes and clear ambition and growth plans evident in

both companies, it was immediately clear they were a perfect fit. As advisors, we are delighted to have worked alongside Aspin on yet another exciting transaction".

Barry McMahon, co-founder of Aspin Group, said: "LDC's investment demonstrates their belief in our business model and provides us with a strong platform to maximise our growth ambitions.

The rail industry continues to face considerable change and this presents us with a number of exciting growth opportunities. Going forward, we intend to increase the pace of organic growth and build further upon our existing network of operations and services, whilst also actively pursuing viable acquisition opportunities as part of an ongoing 'buy and build' strategy."

T4 DESIGN MBO

A Nottinghamshire specialist glass processing firm is targeting further growth after completing an MBO.

T4 Designs which is based in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire was established in 1998 by Directors Paul Gibson, Steve Jones and Kenny Oldham and now employs over 50 people. Directors Paul and Kenny have completed a management buy-out of the business which provides an exit for Steve Jones.

T4 Design works closely with architects, designers, shop-fitters, furniture manufacturers, metalworkers, interior

specialists, sign manufacturers and other glazing companies, to offer industry-leading quality and service.

Paul Gibson commented: “Having established and worked in the business for 17 years, I’m delighted to be taking over alongside Kenny. Together, we plan to develop the company further by continuing to invest in the latest technology and manufacturing techniques and further enhancing our efficient delivery service and top-level support.”

David Nelson, Business Advisory Partner at Smith Cooper advised on the

transaction and deal structure, and held negotiations with the exiting party.

David commented: “We are proud to have been able to provide Paul and Kenny with the support they needed to take over what they have built up to be a well-respected and hugely successful business. They are so passionate about the business they helped establish and are focused on the future development and growth of the company; we look forward to supporting their future plans for growth.”



The T4 Design fleet and HQ

MORGAN TUCKER ACQUIRES BES

Leading consulting engineering firm Morgan Tucker has acquired mechanical and electrical firm BES Consulting Engineers as part of their ambitious growth strategy.

The acquisition is the first the firm has made since the Foresight Nottingham Fund invested a seven figure sum to support their growth plans to expand across the UK.

The deal means Morgan Tucker can add mechanical and electrical engineering services to its existing multi-disciplined consultancy, enabling them to provide clients with a broader depth of national and international experience.

“Our strategy has always been to create more regional offices throughout

the country to enable us to service more clients more thoroughly,” said Matthew Tucker, managing director at Morgan Tucker. “This acquisition will be mutually beneficial for both sets of clients.”

The BES Consulting Engineers name will remain for the medium term and will operate as the mechanical and electrical Building Services Division under the umbrella of the Morgan Tucker Group. The two BES offices at Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham and Egham, Surrey, which house their staff, will remain.

The deal was advised by James Bagley and Richard Stanley of Smith Cooper, Austin Moore of Austin Moore Law and Bill Eastwood of Eastwood Anglo.



The Morgan Tucker Management Team

MBO AT LEADING FLEET MAINTENANCE FIRM

A leading Midlands based independent commercial vehicle repairer is set for an exciting new chapter in its development after being bought out by its management team.

Transcare 28 Limited, a Road Transport Engineering business, which operates from Alfreton and Ilkeston, has been acquired from its founder and Managing Director Paul Appleby by Darren Parkin, who has been with the Company since its inception and who

was previously a director and minority shareholder.

The MBO was advised on by Partners Natasha Smith and David Nelson of Smith Cooper and Derby law firm Flint Bishop.

David Nelson, Business Advisory Partner at Smith Cooper provided advice on the acquisition, its structure and dealt with the raising of funds from NatWest Bank Plc's Structured Finance Team.

David commented: "We are delighted to have assisted Darren on the successful management buy-out of Transcare. Alongside Paul Appleby, Darren has been integral in the development and success of Transcare 28 Limited, and it is fantastic to see him now take over the reins fully from Paul and drive the next phase of growth and development in the business."



RED INDUSTRIES COMPLETE MBO

Waste management company Red Industries has completed a successful management buyout backed by Allied Irish Bank.

The Burslem business, established in 2005, specialises in the storage and treatment of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.

Smith Cooper in Nottingham provided financial due diligence services to the bank.

Gerry McPake, Allied Irish Bank (GB)'s team leader in Nottingham, said: "Our focus is on providing funding and banking facilities to the owner managed business sector and we were delighted to have the opportunity to work with a business like Red.

Our team is committed to being a valued partner to Red for many years to come."

CONTACT US

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