



## Cutlery Giant cuts new turf with loan

*Cutting edge of success: (Left to right) Paul Stephenson, Bank of Scotland; Kevin Steven, SYIF; Derek Saveall, HSBC; Mary Broadhead, SYIF; Patrick Thornhill, Managing Director of Richardson Sheffield; Tom Lehane, Finance Director Richardson Sheffield, and Stephen Ingram, Ingram Forrest.*

*One of Sheffield's longest-established cutlery firms has relocated to new premises courtesy of a South Yorkshire Investment Fund loan.*

Prestigious cutlery and knife specialist, Richardson Sheffield, has moved from its original site in the city centre to a site in Handsworth following a successful management buy-in (MBI).

The company secured a £400,000 capital and development loan from SYIF to fund the relocation and a £50,000 small business fund loan to help with future expansion of the business.

Tom Lehane, Finance Director at Richardson Sheffield, said: "When we completed the management buy-in back in 2005, we knew that our existing premises had already been sold and that re-location was going to be part of the deal for us.

"The funding package from SYIF has not only secured the future of our workforce, but has also opened up possibilities for growth of the company, which is our long-term goal.

"Richardson Sheffield has a long and esteemed history, which we aim to build upon. Our relocation has made the company much more efficient through a more compact and streamlined production layout and it has placed us in a great location to access major distribution routes, being only five-minutes away from the M1 motorway.

"We fully intend to capitalise on these new efficiencies and on our heritage to firmly establish Richardson Sheffield as the city's premier knife and cutlery manufacturer."

Richardson Sheffield was established in 1839 and now employs 67 staff. The move to Handsworth removes the difficulties posed by restricted access at the company's original Russell Street city-centre site.

Richardson Sheffield was introduced to SYIF by Ingram Forrest Corporate Finance, following which lead advisor for the deal Stephen Ingram was appointed mentor as part of SYIF's mentorbank facility.

Lead banker for Richardson Sheffield for the MBI is Derek Saveall of HSBC, while Paul Stevenson at Bank of Scotland Corporate funded the property acquisition with SYIF.

Mary Broadhead, Investment Director at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "We were keen to support what is a long established, well-known Sheffield company that is managed by a strong, committed management team. The facilities acquired with the assistance of SYIF will support the growth plans being pursued by the management team."

## Businesses to 'reap' benefits from pilot fund

*Innovative and technologically minded businesses are set to reap the benefits of a new £4.6 million fund piloted in South Yorkshire.*

The Seedcorn Fund, set to be launched shortly, aims to invest into early stage technology and knowledge-based businesses over the next two years.

Filling a significant gap in the financing market, the Seedcorn Fund will benefit ventures which may be seen as too high risk by mainstream investors.

The fund provides two key areas of investment. The first is the Proof of Concept with up to £75,000 available to start-up businesses which have a technically proven product but need to fix their position in the market.

The second part of the fund is called Commercialisation – which will place follow-on investment in tranches of up to a total of £500,000. This will be invested into businesses which are likely to have made some progress in their market but need further investment to become established and move into profit.

Jonathan Dixon, Deputy Chief Executive of SYIF said: "The Seedcorn Fund will help us to fill the gap that we have for investment in innovative, early stage businesses and for ventures that are often seen as too risky by mainstream finance providers. For South Yorkshire, it will help to attract and retain the kind of businesses that will shape our economy for many years to come."

For more information contact Jonathan on 01709 386392 or email [jonathand@syif.com](mailto:jonathand@syif.com). Alternatively, for an application form, email [application@syif.com](mailto:application@syif.com)

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If you have a business in South Yorkshire then the Fund wants to hear from you. Call **01709 386 377** or log on to: **[www.syif.com](http://www.syif.com)**

To subscribe to an electronic version of this newsletter visit [www.syif.com/subscribe](http://www.syif.com/subscribe)

## Welcome...



...to the fourteenth edition of Profile!

The start of the year has been another busy period for South Yorkshire Investment Fund's investment managers – both on the Small Business Fund and Capital and Development Funds. You can read about some of the latest SYIF investments in this newsletter.

You will also find that some of the articles in this edition cover companies who have returned to us for further loans. SYIF is only too happy to help companies as they grow and need further financial assistance. If your company is requiring further funding, please give one of our investment managers a ring.

SYIF can also give assistance to the county's businesses when they want to purchase property. You can read how we helped a handful of companies with this on this page. Conditions do apply to the loans but full details can be obtained from us.

South Yorkshire Investment Fund can provide loan and equity linked investments, ranging from £15k to £2.5m, specifically to help small and medium businesses meet the gaps in funding they need for growth and development. If your company is requiring financial assistance, give us a ring on 01709 386377 or email us at [info@syif.com](mailto:info@syif.com) and we can explain how we can help you.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest issue of Profile!

Tony Goulbourn  
Chief Executive  
South Yorkshire Investment Fund Ltd

# School Business Setting Trends Online

*A Sheffield company has expanded its business into the online market with an acquisition of a website provider.*

School Trends provides school uniforms for primary and secondary schools across the country. The company, based at Westfield Business Area, began more than 15 years ago and employs more than 130 staff, supplying printed t-shirts and sweatshirts to schools.

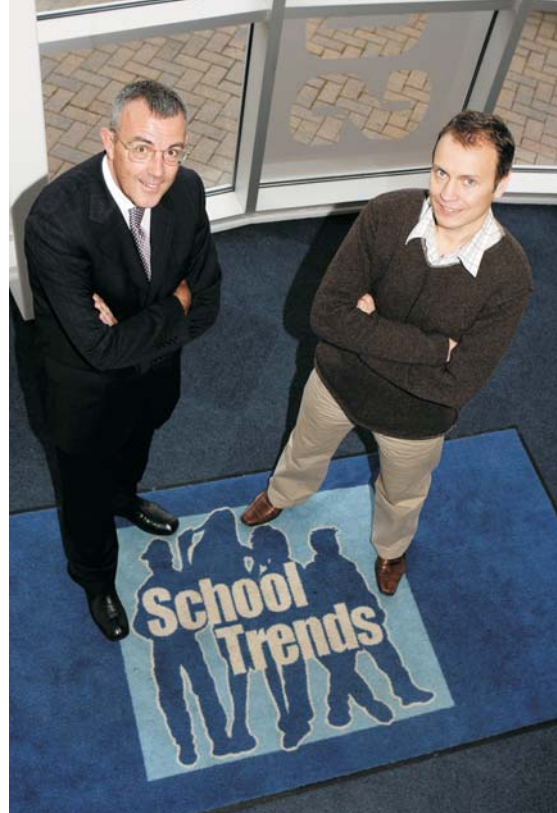
School Trends quickly began to enjoy a rapid growth and having become market leader were looking for other market growth opportunities.

To continue the progression of the business, School Trends completed a £1.5m purchase of Birmingham based Blue Spheres Limited, with assistance of a £100,000 loan from South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

The acquisition allows School Trends to sell the Blue Spheres product in developing websites to its current customer base of more than 6,000 schools.

Schools Trend's turnover is now expected to rise by another £1.9m by the end of 2007.

Kelwin Heighton, Finance Director at Schools Trends, said: "We feel the company can benefit by adding this new division. School Trends will now be able to offer new products and services to the education sector."



Pictured is (left) Tony Goulbourn, of SYIF, and Peter Beeby, of SchoolTrends.

"We will be able to utilise the expertise of Blue Spheres to provide modern websites for both Primary and Secondary schools. It will also enable an opportunity to expand our initiative to sell uniforms online."

Schools Trends offers two website products for primary and secondary schools.

Create (Primary) is a simple, easy to manage and template driven website, while Create (Secondary) provides a more complex website. Both are designed with a telephone and email support, software repairs and on-going site maintenance.

Kelwin added: "Most schools developed a website in the first wave of the internet revolution. However, a number of them are now disappointed with the functionality of their sites. We provide a software which is easy to use and meets the needs of the individual school."

Tony Goulbourn, Chief Executive for South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "Schools Trends has established itself as a key player in the school uniform market. This acquisition provides them with the potential to increase business in a new sector."

## SYIF provides property purchasing power

*South Yorkshire Investment Fund can provide a range of property purchasing assistance to the region's businesses.*

In addition to providing help with working capital requirements, MBO funding and other solutions to business funding gaps, SYIF can provide vital funding assistance for property purchase.

This can range from contingency funding to cover additional costs incurred when moving into either rented or purchased premises or working in conjunction with existing lenders to provide funding for property purchase.

Previous businesses which have benefited from SYIF's property funding include Sheffield company Dale Office Interiors which secured an £80,000 loan to cover additional costs during a company expansion programme.

The funding package assisted Dale Office Interiors with its working capital requirements during a period of expansion which involved the purchase of their factory out of a lease agreement and the refurbishment of showroom space.

Rotherham company, Labfacility Ltd, used a £125,000 SYIF

property loan to cover a funding gap which facilitated the company's move to new premises in Dinnington.

Specialising in the manufacture of temperature sensors, thermocouple connectors and precision electronic thermometers, Labfacility had most of the funding in place for the move, which was completed by SYIF.

The funding came as part of a £445,000 package which consisted of £365,000 purchase price of the property plus £80,000 moving expenses.

In Doncaster, Northern Precision Ltd, which specialises in sheet metal fastenings, benefited from SYIF's property funding with a £100,000 loan to refurbish new premises in Armthorpe.

The funding package enabled Northern Precision to create workable space in a leasehold property, partitioning part of the space into offices and purchasing racking and storage solutions.

The businesses secured the funding packages because



Clive Downward (left), of SYIF, is pictured with Martin Riddett, of Labfacility.

they were able to demonstrate that they could service their existing loans plus the new loans taken on in relation to property acquisition.

Clive Downward, Investment Director of SYIF's small business fund, added: "We were only too happy to help these businesses – and we want to help even more companies across South Yorkshire."

Conditions do apply to the loans and full details can be obtained by ringing South Yorkshire Investment Fund on 01709 386377 or by emailing [info@syif.com](mailto:info@syif.com)

# Companies boost for latest investments

Two Sheffield-based companies have received assistance with a second round of funding from South Yorkshire Investment Fund.

SYIF has invested £75,000 into Televideo Ltd, while Interior Surfaces Ltd receives £20,000, with both using the money to develop their business.

Televideo is one of the UK's largest and longest established independent outside broadcast companies which has been involved with Sky Sports, BBC, ITV, Eurosport and covered events such as British Superbikes and Premier League Football.

Paul Scivill, Managing Director of Televideo on Furnival Road, said: "The investment has gone towards the purchase of a High Definition surround sound outside broadcast unit.

"The new truck continues our expansion and improvement plans. The high definition unit is the only one in the north of England and is at the cutting edge of technology. It will allow us to grow with high definition rather than catch-up with it."

Interior Surfaces Ltd, based off Penistone Road, produce a range of work surfaces and washroom systems for commercial and domestic customers, including schools, hospitals, supermarkets, retail chains and the general public.

The business has gone from strength to strength over the last few months and is expected to see turnover rise by 60 per cent in 2007.

Zoe Dickinson, Interior Surfaces Sales Manager, said: "The capital invested from South Yorkshire Investment Fund and the projects we have been working on have



Paul Scivill (left), of Televideo, is pictured with Jane Siddle, of SYIF.

helped the company's development and expansion in a huge way.

"We have taken on three new staff and are looking at possibly nine more joining during the next two years."

Interior Surfaces has launched a new brand identity following additional support from Business Link South Yorkshire and the Design Council.

Zoe added: "The new face of the company has been devised to reflect the high profile customers we have started to work with."

Jane Siddle, Investment Manager at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "Both these companies have enjoyed success in their relevant industries and have used each investment wisely to benefit their business.

"We hope this latest round will aid their development even further and I will be keeping a close eye on their progress."



## New appointment

South Yorkshire Investment Fund has appointed Chris Fitzsimmons as an investment manager dealing with equity investments.

Chris (41) pictured, is a specialist in technology investment having originally been one of the founders of far blue; an early stage technology fund backed by UK and US investors that focused on the European market.

As well as looking after equity investments he will be working with the soon to be launched Seedcorn Fund – that will invest in early stage technology and knowledge-based businesses in South Yorkshire.

Chris' last role was as a director at Tower Gate Capital Ltd, based in London, where he managed a portfolio of private and public investments across the UK, US, Canada and Spain - focusing mostly on the technology, media and telecoms sectors.

Chris said: "I'm really looking forward to my new role at South Yorkshire Investment Fund where I should be well placed to apply my experience in developing and growing businesses across the region."

# Hi-tech company protects its future with further funding

A Sheffield based hi-technology security group has received further funding from South Yorkshire Investment Fund to expand into new markets.

Dinnington company Connexion2 has received a further £65,000 equity from the investment specialist to launch a new marketing strategy for its tele-communications based SoloProtect personnel security system.

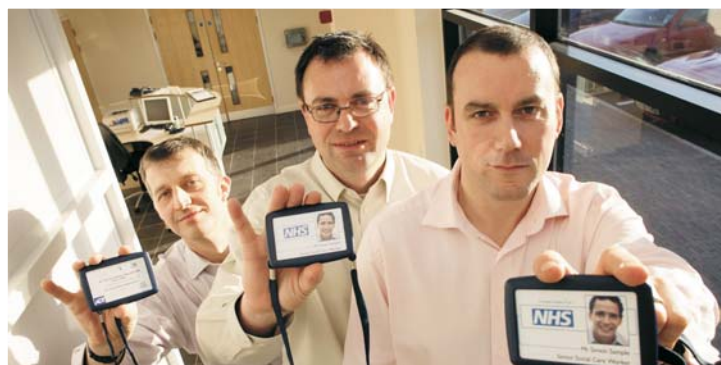
Connexion2 initially received £200,000 of funding from SYIF to develop the award winning Identicom security device, which forms the basis of SoloProtect, and uses mobile communications technology to enable threatened or vulnerable lone-working staff to raise an alarm discreetly.

Craig Swallow, Managing Director of Connexion2, said: "SoloProtect is an all-inclusive, fully managed service comprising an Identicom, round the clock manned-monitoring, mobile network connection, airtime, user training and our Totalcare support package to the client.

"The service is specifically aimed at meeting the needs of companies and organisations in managing the security of lone working staff. It has been developed to provide both the business and staff with a simple to use, affordable, fully managed solution which can alert the emergency services to incidents where necessary and in a timely manner.

"The SYIF investment will facilitate a direct marketing drive for the SoloProtect service, whereas Identicom is distributed through our channel partners. The need for direct marketing in the case of SoloProtect, is that we are providing an entire business solution and service package, rather than a single product."

Disguised as a standard identity card worn by employees, Identicom - as part of the SoloProtect service - can audio-record threatening incidents as well as raise an initial alarm and will suit public and private sector companies ranging from transport providers to local government.



From the left is Nigel Owens, of SYIF; Steve Maynard and Craig Swallow, both of Connexion2.

Nigel Owens, Investment Manager at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "The SoloProtect service joins clever technology and brilliant design with the services that lone workers need to feel secure. We are delighted to make a further investment in Connexion2 to help its development."

Gareth Hughes has been a Non Executive Director at Connexion2 since its foundation and agreed to represent the Fund's interests under the Money with Management scheme during the first round of funding.

Gareth said: "Connexion2 has a strong and experienced management team. As a Non Executive Director, I am able to contribute particularly on the development of strategy and raising of appropriate finance.

"SYIF has been joined in this round by substantial private equity investment and the company is now well funded as it moves into an expansive stage of its development."

SYIF can provide loan and equity linked investments, ranging from £15k to £2.5m, specifically to help small and medium businesses meet the gaps in funding they need for growth and development.

To find out more about the SoloProtect service, visit the dedicated website at: [www.soloprotect.com](http://www.soloprotect.com).

# Bank of Scotland: An intermediaries view

South Yorkshire Investment Fund works closely with a number of banks – one of them is the Bank of Scotland (BoS).

Here Steve Dale, Associate Director at the BoS Doncaster Corporate Centre, Ian MacDonald, Director of Corporate Banking at BoS Sheffield, and Paul Stevenson, also a Director at BoS Corporate Sheffield, explain how they work with SYIF.



Pictured from the left is Bank of Scotland's Ian MacDonald; Steve Dale and Paul Stevenson.

Over the years, the Bank of Scotland has made investments into a wide variety of businesses, from small technology companies to the largest public organisations. The experience of the BoS team is put to good use when helping companies throughout the UK to achieve their business goals.

The BoS corporate banking team work regularly with SYIF and find the organisation provides a useful source of finance for them to assist in helping to meet their clients' needs. The team have been working in partnership with SYIF on a number of deals over the past four or five years and find its experience invaluable.

The team finds SYIF a strong ally in the financial marketplace, demonstrating an appetite to assist in viable business projects where supplementary funding is required. This supplementary funding is often essential for some of their clients and enables them to take their companies to the next level.

The BoS team find the SYIF decision making process streamlined and is pleased with the way the SYIF team ensures that clients are advised at suitable stages as to the robustness of their application.

Steve Dale has recently worked with SYIF on a deal with Barnsley-based Cudworth Concrete Products. SYIF had previously provided funds via a short-term loan facility when the business was originally purchased around four years ago. When the client requested funds for additional working capital and capital expenditure needs, Steve looked to SYIF to assist with an element of the overall package. BoS and SYIF successfully worked in partnership to fulfil the funding requirement of the business.

Meanwhile, Ian has been working with SYIF on around six clients. He finds the way some companies have a mentor or non executive director – which SYIF

can also help to finance – really useful. Mentors and non executive directors tend to fill any skill gaps in company management teams.

Paul Stevenson, who joined the BoS team recently, worked extensively with SYIF in his previous role and will do so again in his new position. He has recently worked with Richardson Sheffield Limited where SYIF provided £450,000 to part-fund its relocation, which included the purchase of a new property. He's also worked on several other recent joint funding initiatives with SYIF.

Paul said: "SYIF is invaluable in filling a niche in the market for gap funding propositions up to £2.5 million, either in buy-outs, buy-ins or development opportunities. This is not an area where there are a large number of 'players' and therefore a good relationship with SYIF is critical to our own success."

## Printing Company Gets Hi-tech Efficiency

A Doncaster printing specialist has invested in the latest hi-tech computer-to-plate printing system courtesy of a South Yorkshire Investment Fund loan.



Pictured from the left is Karl Hodson, SYIF; Richard Lukey of BLSY and Giles Hunter of Idigicon.

Apple Tree Design and Print, part of the Idigicon Ltd group, has used the £100,000 loan to increase its paper-based print production efficiency, making significant environmental savings into the bargain.

The Computer-to-plate (CTP) system removes an entire film-based part of the printing process, resulting in an estimated 20 per cent production increase over the first 12-months and reducing chemical useage to almost zero.

Apple Tree's installation of the CTP process makes them one of the first companies in the Yorkshire region to provide the hi-tech solution, which enables computer held graphic artwork to be thermally imaged directly onto a metal printing plate, keeping the entire process under one roof.

Giles Hunter, Managing Director of Idigicon Ltd, said: "Our new CTP process is all about speed, efficiency and environmental consciousness. Historically, we spent a lot of time involved in the pre-print process and manufactured a vast number of printing plates,

which was heavily chemically dependent and time consuming.

"With CTP, we still manufacture the plates, but we have removed the film-based part of that process. Not all companies would find this a cost effective move. Also, with the plate being thermally imaged, we have stopped using developing chemicals.

"With the scale of our production, we could easily justify the cost of the new machinery and hopefully, the new efficiency will enable us to bring in more work.

"The loan from SYIF has basically given us the kick-start that we needed to take the company to the next level. We are still getting to know the new machinery, but it is clear that we now have far greater flexibility than before and it is our intention to exploit the opportunity we now have to further grow the business."

Apple Tree Design and Print was established in 1986 to serve the Idigicon parent company and has grown

to provide a full commercial printing service with the capacity to produce anything from business cards to brochures, lithographically and digitally.

Idigicon Ltd manages intellectual property and digital rights across the globe and has vast experience and knowledge in all software industry sectors.

Karl Hodson, Investment Manager at South Yorkshire Investment Fund, said: "Idigicon is now in a position to capitalise on its new production process and the efficiency that they can demonstrate will undoubtedly allow for an increased client base and higher returns.

"The company could clearly demonstrate to us that they were in a position to move the subsidiary company forward through investment. SYIF is always on the look out for such dynamic and progressive companies to help."

Richard Lukey of Business Link South Yorkshire introduced Idigicon to the services of South Yorkshire Investment Fund.