

## Jackie takes over PR role

New Regional PR and Communications Manager Jackie Spicer-Bert is getting out and about around the Midlands. She has already tramped to the source of the River Severn with Upper Severn Area Manager John Kalicki and will be visiting other areas to meet as many people as possible in the coming weeks.

Jackie joins the Agency from Birmingham City Council, where she worked for six years in various public relations roles, most recently on

internal and external communications, including the *Birmingham Voice* newspaper. She was responsible for press and public relations at Warwickshire Police and began her career as a journalist. Jackie intends to work with the Regional Management Team to raise the Agency's profile in the Midlands.



## Champion players hit a high note

Three brass players from Upper Severn area have been celebrating their band's success in winning the Midland Region Fourth Section Championship. Sarah Gaskill, who plays euphonium, Paul Sharp (B flat bass) and Dirk Comerford (baritone) are all members of Porthywaen Silver Band, which is based at Oswestry, Shropshire.

They are looking forward to playing in the National Brass Band Finals to be held in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, in September. "It's like the football league system," said Sarah. "If we win there, we'll be promoted into the third section."

Sarah, an Assistant Hydrometric Officer, has been practising with the band every Monday evening for 10 years, along with her two brothers, and her father is the band chairman.



On secondment as an Assistant Hydrologist at Sapphire East, she still makes the trip to Oswestry each week. Paul's wife, Sue, is the band secretary and two of his sons are in the band. An Assistant Pollution Control Officer at Hafren House, he suggested Dirk become a member when they met during a work-shadowing exercise last April. Dirk has kept up rehearsals despite the arrival of a baby son last December.

The band's repertoire of light classical and popular numbers must be well rehearsed before the start of a summer season of park concerts and performances at open days and other weekend events. Anyone interested in hearing them play or in booking them for an event, should contact Sarah at Sapphire East on 3042.

### CHARITY SWIM

Nick Barron, Assistant Water Resources Officer in Upper Severn area, came first in the pool when he swam in the BT Swimathon event.



With a time of 1 hour 34 minutes, he was placed 107th out of 13,000 individual entries in the 20-29 age group, raising over £200 for the Prince's Trust and other charities. This is the second time Nick has entered the event; last year his time was four minutes quicker. His training schedule suffered this year because his wife, Joanne, was expecting their first child, Abigail, born on 27 April.

## Canny pupils receive award

A special Environment Agency award went to a Derbyshire school for a project demonstrating commitment to sustainable development.

Rother Junior School, Chesterfield, won the prize for their scheme to recycle aluminium cans. Over 8,000 cans were collected in a few weeks, with one pupil collecting 15 kilos of cans herself.

Andy Wood, Customer Services Manager in Lower Trent area, went along to the school to present to the pupils book tokens worth £100 and a Dartington glass paperweight recording their success.

He said: "The children have taken the recycling message home to their parents, and a local can collection scheme is now operating."

The award was one of a number of Greenwatch Awards organised each year by Derbyshire County Council.

## Home help

Chef Ian Perry, who has been running the Sapphire East restaurant for the past six months, has left to become a house-husband. He will be looking after three-month-old Robert, with the help of Rebecca, a very capable two-year-old.

Ian said: "It's not sensible for me to work full-time just to pay the costs of child-minding. My wife, Sue, can earn more as a postal officer than I do as a chef, so we decided that I should stay at home with the children."

Ian is already skilled at changing nappies and ironing, and says he will enjoy spending more time with his children as they are growing up. He intends to look for evening work in one of the new pub restaurants which have opened in Wolverhampton, where he lives.



**Grassroots is the newsletter for employees of the Midlands Region of the Environment Agency. Contact the PR office on 3063 with your news and ideas for articles.**