

38 years in the business — and counting!

A very happy 60th birthday to our longest serving employee, Graham Dimente (pronounced 'dee-mont'), who has been with the Lanes Group since...well, since before it was the Lanes Group!

Graham joined Active Hygiene Services (formerly Sharl Services) at the age of 22 and was a shareholder in the business when Allan Earnshaw bought half the company in 1991. That was a year before Allan took over Lanes for Drains.

When the other original Active shareholders sold out or retired, Graham stayed on with Allan. He recalls fondly: "One day, I said to him, 'Do you realise that we've never had a shareholders' meeting?' Allan just said 'Go on then, what do you want to talk about?'" Graham laughs: "Allan was such a character, and it was like that in the old days — everything

was sorted out with a nod and a handshake! In fact when I agreed to sell my holding to Allan, he paid me a third of the value, saying he was a bit short of cash. Then, tragically, he died just 3 months later. "We were all so shocked that money was the last thing on my mind, but out of the blue, Wayne Earnshaw (Allan's son, now joint MD of the Lanes Group) came to me because he had found a blank stub in the cheque book. When I told him what had happened, he sorted it straight away — just as Allan would have done."

Graham may have celebrated his 60th and notched up 38 years in the business, but far from being put out to grass, he continues to take an 'active' role and we're more than happy that he still plays



caption Graham Dimente

such a big part in the operation. "Technically, I'm a surveyor," he says. "But in reality, I've been known to don my overalls and clear out gutters. Sometimes, like during the recent floods, it has to be every man to the pumps — literally!" And that's the way Graham plans to continue — for years to come, we hope!

Roadshow report



Both our Active divisions were on duty at the recent Lanes Group roadshows, and voted them a resounding success.

Steve Donohue, manager of Active Pest Control, says: "We made some great contacts and have followed several up which sound very promising. Some of the clients at the event obviously hadn't realised that we were part of the Lanes Group — especially down in the South. But now that we're establishing Active in other Lanes' depots, that should start to change.

"The thing is that often we have similar target markets to Lanes, so it was an excellent opportunity to let people know what we can do.

"Pest control isn't something we could really set up as a demonstration, but Active Hygiene was able to show off its superb chewing gum and graffiti removal system which impressed the watching audience," adds Steve. Ian Thompson, manager of Active Hygiene, agrees: "It was definitely worthwhile. And we'll certainly be making sure we attend any further Lanes' events!"

Active Pest Control

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ReActive

Lanes is Actively expanding

Given that Active Hygiene Services and Active Pest Control are part of the Lanes Group plc, it's no surprise to find that expansion is on the cards for both. The company does, after all, have a reputation for investment in its infrastructure, as well as its technology.



Active Hygiene's Ian Thompson (left) shows off the new van livery celebrating the partnership with LAS to Tim Walker & Darren Cooper

Active Hygiene is now operating from the South and Scotland, having teamed up with the newest Lanes' company, Lanes Assistance Services (see photo), and with our Scottish division, Castlebrae Drainage Services.

"We are getting more and more requests for Active's specialist skills in other regions, because our clients — many of whom are national organisations — know that we deliver the goods and the service, and we deliver professionally and cost-effectively," explains manager Ian Thompson. "Using Lanes' existing network of depots to establish more regional teams is an obvious move and this is just the beginning," he adds.

Meanwhile in Scotland, Castlebrae Active Pest Control has pulled off a major coup in winning a contract with Glasgow City council, currently the largest council in Europe. In fact the work is coming thick and fast, according to Castlebrae director

Tommy Easton: "We've introduced several specialist teams already, and the work is growing daily." **Watch this space for more Active developments.**

Active Pest Control business wins

Client: Rotherham Borough Council
Contract details: rats, mice and insect prevention at 18 schools in the Rotherham area
Contract Value £1090 per quarter
Other: all emergency call outs for rodents / insects at the 18 schools with a value of £400/month

Client: Reliance Integrated
Contract details (1): Bird work — pigeon proofing and clearing at (BT) Monterey B67, Suffolk
Value: £1160
Contract details (2): Prevention of rats, mice, crawling insects and cockroaches
Value: £1950 per quarter

Client: Carrillion
Contract details (1): Bird work — pigeon proofing, cleaning and treating at Barclays, Coventry
Value: £1348
Contract details (2): Prevention of rats and mice at 18 Environment Agency sites
Value: £1035 per quarter
Contract details (3): Prevention of rats and mice at various Barclays sites
Value: £2270 per quarter

Client: Longcross Group Limited (Construction Division) Surrey
Contract details: Bird work — remove and replace netting and spikes at Sainsbury store, Edgeware
Value: £5501

Fire, Fire!

After fire damaged Cannon Hygiene's premises at St Helen's, Active Hygiene responded with a super quick, emergency clean up to get the depot operational again.

Matthew Bottrell of Active explains: "Obviously we knew that time was critical because the office was so badly damaged that the staff had to move into temporary accommodation. We moved in straightaway, using our specialist skills and equipment to clean smoke and fire damage, prepare the surfaces for redecoration with special Zinsser paint and sanitise the building to get rid of any residual odours.

Cannon Hygiene's depot manager, Jonathan Burgoyne, was more than happy with Active's service: "We cover a sizeable geographical area, taking in North Cheshire, Liverpool and Merseyside and North Wales, so were keen to get back to full speed. The Active team pulled out all the stops for us, using their experience, specialist techniques and a concentrated team effort to get us back on track as quickly as possible," he said, adding "I'd definitely recommend Active to anyone in a similarly unfortunate situation. Top marks!"

Water, water everywhere



The underground car park right next to the River Don in Sheffield



Double trouble

The Unicorn Inn at Ludlow flooded — twice in one month! Fortunately, owner Enterprise Inns called and our clean up team responded straightaway.

“A bridge collapsed and the river flooded the ground floor and cellar of the pub, which was under 4 feet of water,” explains Active’s Ian Thompson.

“To minimise the effects of damp, mould and mildew and to get the business up and running again, in less than two weeks we had stripped out everything — contents, skirting boards, plaster, door frames and furniture — ready for the builders to renovate. We also sanitised the property to eradicate pathogens and bacteria from river sediment which is a serious health threat. Then disaster struck and the pub flooded again but because there was nothing left in the pub, Active was able to sanitise and dry out within a week.

Ian says it was a job well done: “Residents in the area had been told that it might be up to 6 months before they could move back in to their properties, so we think

The deluge, which badly hit so many regions this summer, caused a ‘flood’ of clean ups for Active Hygiene. Of course, extraordinary cleaning is what we do best, but we didn’t expect to have to start at home — our own Lanes Group depot in South Yorkshire called for help after the workshop was flooded. And they weren’t the only ones.

The call volume was so high the phone system was practically at meltdown, says manager Ian Thompson: “Leave was cancelled and it was all hands on deck!”

“At one point we took 17 emergency calls from key accounts SGP, Unique Pub Company and Enterprise Inns for everything from sewage coming into a shop to sanitising cellars after the flood waters had subsided.



Ludlow: the collapsed bridge and flooding river caused devastation at the Unicorn Inn — twice over



that stripping out, sanitising and drying out 2 floods in under a month is pretty impressive!”

Active turned out to emergencies at Debenham, a garden centre, underground car park, student flats and an electrical retailer — all in Sheffield; the Royal Mail in Hull, Carphone Warehouse in Chesterfield and Dorothy Perkin in Rotherham — amongst others.

Ian explains: “We had a team of 10 working round the clock to turn round a 4-week job in under a week at the underground car park. That was 9” deep in river silt and sludge — and we even threw some fish back into the River Don!”

Patrick cleans up the streets

We know Active’s business development manager Patrick O’Connor is a keen grimebuster, but he’s proved to be a ‘crimebuster’ too.

Patrick found himself involved in a violent car jacking when, without thinking of his own safety, he leapt to defend an innocent man.

“Another car was coming straight towards me at full pelt, then it hit a car and stopped,” recalls Patrick. “Two men jumped out, smashed the window of the car in front and attacked the driver. Before I knew what was happening, I was out of my car and grabbing them.

“One had a knife. Whilst I grappled one guy, the other ran off, jumped into a car and tried to run over me. then rammed into a group of motorcyclists, knocked two off and reversed over one three times before making off at speed.”

Fortunately a nearby armed police unit caught the perpetrators, who are now facing serious criminal charges.

Despite his ordeal and being praised by the police for his bravery, an unassuming Patrick went home for a cup of tea and was in work by lunchtime!

We’ve got rhythm



Patrick (far left) lines up with the Lionhearts

When Active’s business development manager Patrick O’Connor visited Acomb House in Manchester, he came away with more than just a cleaning contract — he got a booking to play at the residents’ barbeque too!

When he’s not ‘actively’ working, Patrick (who confesses to being a workaholic) plays guitar, washboard and sings harmonies in a bluegrass band known as The Lionhearts.

Patrick explains how the booking came about: “Acomb House, part of Raglan Housing Association, gets people ready

to go back into the community and there are around 30 residents at any one time.

“We’d been asked to quote for a kitchen clean and whilst we were there, we got chatting about music — my main hobby. They were such lovely people at Acomb that by the time I left, I’d agreed that the band would play at the next social event!

“It was a fantastic night. We were supposed to play for half an hour, but we went on till nearly midnight! We were very happy to do it — I think it’s really important to be able give something back to society — especially those in a less fortunate situation.”

And Patrick must have made a great impression: not only has Raglan asked the band back for a return gig, they’ve asked Active to quote for a national cleaning contract too!

Active cleaning: it’s extraordinary!



Active specialises in cleaning up biological hazards

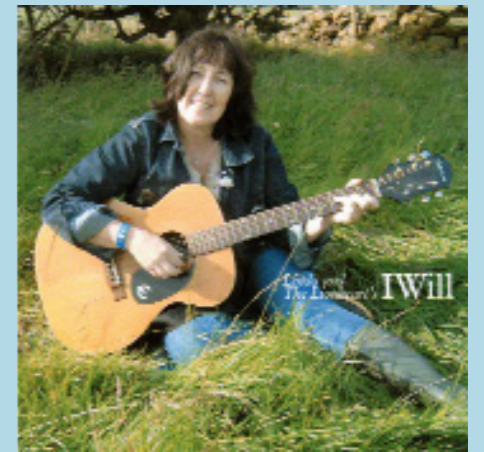
You’ll realise by now that the sort of cleaning Active handles is not your aver-

age, run of the mill mop and bucket stuff. But you may not realise just how extraordinary some of the work is.

Frankly it’s the kind of stuff that might make mere mortals squirm. Picking up and disposing of hypodermic needles left behind by drug addicts, for instance. Or tackling the sort of properties you see in ‘Life of Grime’ on TV — often where someone has died and the body lain undiscovered for some time. Or maybe they’ll be called in to clean up after a messy suicide. All this is referred to as ‘biological hazards’, a less gruesome way of describing spilt bodily fluids.

Yes, it’s sensitive stuff, but for the fearless and brave souls in Active’s super cleaning teams, it’s all in a day’s work!

Lionhearted Patrick does it for charity



Active’s Patrick O’Connor (see story left) and the rest of the Lionhearts have hit the right note for charity too, raising more than £20,000 for St Ann’s Hospice in Manchester through sales of their CD.

Says Patrick: “The husband of our lead singer, Linda, had cancer and was cared for at St Ann’s. Everyone in the band agreed to sign away all royalties and give all their time for free to record a CD, so that’s what we did.

“We’ve had really fantastic support everywhere we’ve promoted it — from radio stations too — so it’s been an even bigger success than we hoped.”

Patrick joined the band in September 2006. “I was very honoured when I was asked to join such a great band of professional musicians, having always seen myself as an enthusiastic amateur. I feel very lucky, and I’m extra proud to have been in a position to take part in such a worthy fund raising project.”

The CD, “I Will”, costs £10 and is available from Patrick on 07711 833144.