

# POPPIES<sup>®</sup> POST

CLEANING SERVICE

ISSUE 1

A bright  
future ahead

More growth on the cards

Stepping out  
for charity

Doing our bit for good causes

Celebration time!

Marking marvellous milestones



# Chris looks to a bright Poppies future

**Chris Wootton is a man on a mission. The managing director and owner of Poppies UK has big plans for the business he took control of in April last year.**

In the 18 months since he took over the reins he and his business team have been hard at work formulating plans to take the UK's oldest domestic cleaning franchise to a whole new level.

That has meant a focus on the brand, developing a strong marketing plan and honing the franchise offer.

Now, with much of that planning done, the next task is to start to use those tools to grow Poppies across the country, attracting like-minded people to the business and the fantastic opportunities it offers.

Chris has been with Poppies for more than two decades, successfully running and developing its West Lancashire, Southport and Formby business in the North West of England. Poppies is in his business DNA.

And with his deep knowledge and understanding of Poppies, its heritage and what it stands for, he jumped at the chance to take over the whole business.

He says: "Poppies is a brilliant company, with brilliant people delivering amazing service.

"That's why it's such a pleasure to be in charge as we look to spread the Poppies' name far and wide.

"Since 1980, home-owners across the UK have been able to rely on Poppies for regular, professional and properly insured domestic cleaning services.

"Every Poppies outlet is owned and operated by a local person committed to provide a cleaning service to suit their customers. As part of Poppies they receive a strong support package to help their business grow.

"We also recruit our own staff and employ them directly, training them to the same high standards. People are at the heart of Poppies as a business and we are proud of them and their commitment."

So, what of the future? Chris says: "We've been doing a lot of business planning and marketing strategy work in the past few months.

"We've also worked hard on starting conversations both online and here, in this new Poppies Post. Good communication is vitally important when it comes to developing the business.

"All this work is about to pay real dividends. We've got ambitious plans to grow our outlets, to welcome more people to the Poppies family.

"Our business gives lifestyle benefits to franchisees, staff and clients. It's a winning formula, so watch this space!"

## Contents

- 3** Doing our bit for charity  
Member of the Poppies team have been helping to raise funds in their local areas
- 4** Poppies Profile:  
Emma Ryan from Poppies Stockport
- 6** Our 40th Anniversary Celebrations
- 7** The Changing Face of Franchising
- 8** Top tips for your home

## Welcome to YOUR Poppies Post

**Hello and a very warm welcome to the very first issue of your Poppies Post.**

In these pages we aim to share all the good news around the business and shine a light on what makes Poppies so special.

Poppies is all about people and this is your publication as well.

We want to hear from all members of the Poppies team and our customers. Share your good news with us and join us in celebrating the growing Poppies family.

You can get in touch with editor Ged Henderson by emailing [ged@hendersonnewsandmeida.com](mailto:ged@hendersonnewsandmeida.com). We look forward to hearing from you!



71 Burscough Street,  
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2EL  
01297 560460  
[www.poppies.co.uk](http://www.poppies.co.uk)

# A big leap of faith!

**Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it's a super Poppie!**

**Heroic Carol Macgowan took the plunge and jumped out of a plane to raise £430 for a local charity in Exeter.**

Carol, who works for Poppies in the city, undertook the charity parachute jump on behalf of Hospiscare Exeter.

If you live in Exeter, Mid or East Devon, Hospiscare is your local adult hospice

charity. Should you or a loved one need care for any type of terminal illness, its professional team of doctors and nurses are here to help.

Carol made her jump in horrible conditions and everyone at Poppies is proud of her efforts. She says: "A big thank you to everyone who sponsored me, including my wonderful clients."



# Richard steps out for charity

**Richard Pearson, who runs the successful Wirral Poppies franchise, pulled on his hiking boots and went through the pain barrier to become part of a team that raised more than £80,000 for mental health charity MIND.**

**He took part in a 43-mile hike on the Isle of Arran which started on June 1 this year. Richard drove up to Scotland the day before and when he arrived the walkers were split into three groups to complete the hike.**

The day was sunny and the circular walk of 23 miles took 12 hours to complete. Richard struggled with his feet as by his own admission "I didn't prepare and train well enough for the hike."

Thankfully all 63 made it back to base camp before preparing for the following days 20 mile second leg of the trek.

*"We raised as a group over £80,000 for the charity and that is a massive help to their funds"*

Unfortunately the weather turned and Richard says: "It was lashing it down with rain coming in horizontally and the rain soaked through my waterproofs as well as soaking the bandages I had applied to my legs and feet after day one.

"I swallowed a few painkillers and kept going. My feet were badly bruised

and the skin started to peel off them leaving them incredibly painful."

His recovery took nearly four weeks but as Richard points out: "We raised as a group over £80,000 for the charity and that is a massive help to their funds."

The MIND Charity is very close to his heart. He says: "I know about the struggles and challenges involved in helping to deal with mental health issues. I was told of the feeling of isolation and being alone as well as being trapped under a big black cloud."

And Richard's money-raising efforts are not over yet. He says: "I keep in touch with many of my fellow hikers and we are planning a camping break in the autumn or the spring, but it won't involve parking the car and walking 43 miles to pitch the tent!"

"I intend doing more charity initiatives going forward and the next one I would like to do is to help raise money for Prostate Cancer. I have seen the work Jeff Stelling does on Sky Sports for the charity and it's in the planning stages for me."



## POPPIES PROFILE:

# EMMA RYAN Poppies of Stockport

A great time was had by all when the team at Poppies of Stockport got together to celebrate and toast eight years of success.

The business was started from scratch by Emma Ryan, who initially ran it from her back bedroom.

Its growth has been tremendous. From having no staff or clients, today it operates from a shop in the centre of the town, has an 18-strong team and is looking to recruit more.

Its customer base also continues to grow with a strong mix of residential and commercial clients.

Here franchise holder Emma shares her Poppies journey so far:

"I worked in insurance for 20 years before taking the plunge. I started as a filing clerk in 1992 and worked my way up over the years doing various roles covering motor, home and personal insurance.

"I did my masters in CIPD and my final position in the company was as a retail sales development consultant working with corporate partners across the country looking at their business and helping them to improve.



"I worked extremely long hours and travelled extensively. After putting in for redundancy in 2008-9 I decided to go travelling and toured the world for a year before coming home to Stockport.

"On my return I knew I needed to do something for myself and needed a better work-life balance - I wasn't getting any younger!

"Chris Wootton was a friend of many years and on my working travels I would often pop in to his office in Ormskirk for a brew and a quick chat - this was how I was introduced to Poppies.

"I love the fact that we make a difference to people's lives. Cleaning may only seem like a small thing to some people but it really can make a difference to somebody's life.

"Staff really enjoy their roles and get immense satisfaction from the pleasure their efforts can make to a customer's day.

"For me it's about seeing this pleasure from both staff and customer's - I love it at Christmas, when we have our annual employee of the year and Christmas 'do'.

"I just look forward to reading all of the entries from the customers that the staff have helped over the year.

"I think the team here understand that I know how hard they work and I try my best to be to make Poppies of Stockport the best place to work.

"Hopefully in the next five years I will still have a great team and a great work-life balance.

"Don't get me wrong, it's not all a bed of roses and on some days it can be quite stressful, but even then I wouldn't swap it for the long hours and M6 car park that I used to frequent!"



# The countdown begins

Next year is a very special one for everyone associated with our organisation – it's the 40th anniversary of the creation of the business that became Poppies.

Work has already started to ensure that we mark the milestone in style with a number of celebrations in the pipeline.

So watch this space! We'll be revealing more details of what we've got planned later in the year.

And we're also open to suggestions from our staff and customers on how we can make it a year to remember.

In the meantime here are some fascinating facts about our first 40 years:

- Poppies founder, Sue Rorstad, started the business that became Poppies on April Fools' Day in 1980
- She began in her back bedroom in a semi-detached house in Chester-le-Street – a small mining village in County Durham
- As a female northern Entrepreneur Sue became a local celebrity and was one of a handful of business people invited to meet Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street. That meeting made national headlines
- After four years of successful trading Sue sold her first franchise in 1984. The owner of that business is still our franchisee
- Sue, who sadly passed away in 2015, received an MBE for services to domiciliary care
- Over the past 40 years, Poppies has created hundreds of permanent, part-time and flexible jobs across the UK

## Why I love Poppies

John Clapham has been using the services of Poppies some three decades – letting us take the strain at home and at work.

He's our Sheffield operation's longest-running client and can't speak highly enough of Nigel Bayliss and his team in the South Yorkshire city.

As well as providing quality domestic cleaning for John and his wife Carol, Poppies also provided a service for his father Stan when he was widowed.

And Poppies also delivers a cleaning service for John's business LabLogic, which is also based in Sheffield and makes instruments that measure radiation.

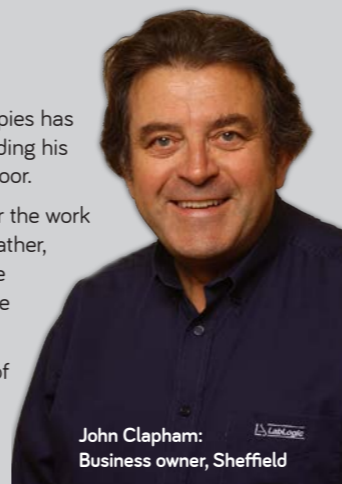
John says: "I find Nigel very flexible about things, he's very helpful and I'd really recommend him and his team.

"Having the managed structure Poppies offers takes away the stress and strain that can go with employing someone directly. It makes it easier to talk about and raise any problems or issues there may be."

John's relationship with Poppies has spanned three homes, including his present address in Lodge Moor.

He is particularly grateful for the work Poppies carried out for his father, who was widowed at the age of 82. He passed away at the age of 102 five years' ago.

John says: "We've got a lot of connections. Jane, who was my dad's cleaner, now comes and cleans for us."



John Clapham: Business owner, Sheffield

## Proud to be Poppies

Since 1980 home owners across the UK have been able to rely on Poppies for regular, professional and properly insured domestic cleaning services.

Poppies recruit, train and employ all staff directly, so we take responsibility for meeting the employment and Health and Safety legislation intended to protect both customers and our team.

All staff are trained to the same high standards and our QC supervisors check that cleaning is thorough and organise changes or amendments as necessary.

Every Poppies outlet is owned and operated by a local person committed to provide a cleaning service to suit you.

Every service will do those jobs that make a real difference to your quality of life.

We know both clients and our staff prefer to see the same familiar faces so we organise our regular services to achieve this wherever possible.

So whether you are looking for a cleaning

service in Exeter or Newcastle you can be assured of the same high level of service from Poppies.

And if you are thinking of going into business for yourself and are seriously considering a franchise, why not choose one that has stood the test of time?

Our oldest franchised business is more than 30 years old and most have chosen to renew their original 10 year agreement at least once, if not twice.

# The changing face of franchising

New research on UK franchising has revealed a business sector operating at record heights, with much of the recent growth driven by female entrepreneurs and the under-30s.

There are now nearly 50,000 franchise businesses collectively contributing over £17bn and 710,000 jobs to the country's economy, according to data from the British Franchise Association (BFA) and NatWest.

In the last two years, more than one-quarter of franchisees starting their business were aged 30 or under at launch, and 37 per cent of all newer franchisees are women.

Poppies is proud to be a founding member of bfa and to be at the forefront of the franchising sector.

As bfa chief executive Pip Wilkins says: "Thanks to franchising, more people are starting their own business and more jobs are being created.

"These figures show that whatever your background, with the right attitude and ambition you can thrive.

"The rate of female entrepreneurship is well above the national SME average, testament to the franchise community's drive to empower women into business.

"We've come a long way since 2005, when more than 80 per cent of newcomers were male.

"And the sharp increase in under-30s starting their own business is thanks to the franchise model bridging the gap between experience and ambition.

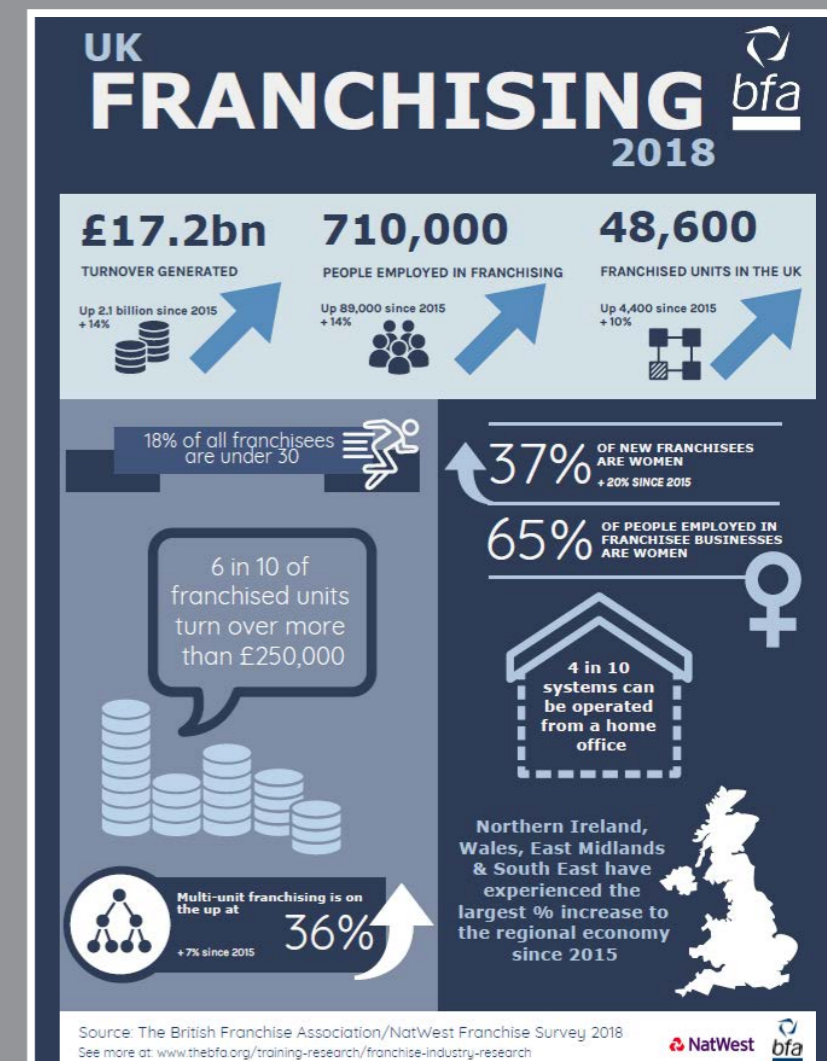
"I'm delighted to see so many younger people realising they have a choice between going it alone or being employed. With so many younger people now entering the sector, the future is in good hands."

Regional economies have also benefitted from the expanding sector, with economic growth since 2015 of seven per cent in the North East (to £800m); 18 per cent in Wales (£500m); 11 per cent in Yorkshire (£1bn) and 14 per cent in the East Midlands (£1.2bn).

The data also revealed the continuation of a long-term trend: around 90 per cent of franchisees – who own and operate their business using the brand, systems and support of a larger company – have reported profitability annually for over 20 years running.

The biggest growth areas for franchising remain personal services (such as cleaning, tutoring and domestic pet care) and hotel and catering.

To find out more about Poppies as a franchise opportunity please contact 01297 560460 or visit [www.poppies.co.uk](http://www.poppies.co.uk)



# Coming soon

Watch out for our new website. We've been working hard on refreshing it and making it even more useful and easy to navigate.

The new-look online guide to everything Poppies will be going live before the end of the year.

And it's all part of our increasing focus on marketing our marvellous organisation, its industry-leading services and the opportunities it offers people looking to own their own businesses.

We're telling our story and we want as many people as possible to hear it!



And our thanks go out to Alex Paling and his team at leading Manchester-headquartered agency Embryo Digital for their fantastic work in making our vision a reality and for taking our online and social media offering to a whole new level.

## Top tips for your home

Every Poppies team member has their own set of tried and tested tricks, but here are a few home cleaning secrets we're willing to share.

### Patience is a virtue

Most people underestimate the amount of time it takes for cleaning products to really get to work, especially when it comes to limescale removers and disinfectant.

Rather than spraying and wiping immediately, our cleaners know that they'll get the best results when they leave the product to sit for a while before scrubbing it away.

If you're looking to replicate this yourself, 30 seconds is usually long enough to get a really deep clean on your surfaces.

### Perfect Products

TV ads will tell you different, but professional cleaners will rarely use all-in-one or multi-purpose products.

That's because different materials require different treatment to get the best results, so a quick wipe over



everything with the same spray just won't cut it.

**If you don't want to keep a cupboard full of sprays for every possible occasion, here are some of the essentials:**

- A good wood polish is incredibly important, as many catch-all cleaners can damage wooden furniture and floors

- When it comes to mirrors and windows, soap and water is often just as effective as glass spray. Which cloth you use, however, is vital. After spraying and wiping down, be sure to buff the glass with a dry, fluffy duster for that perfect shine. Better still, use a special glass microfibre cloth
- Only a product with slight acidity will be strong enough to get stubborn limescale stains off baths, sinks and taps
- Not technically a household cleaning tool, don't underestimate the humble lint roller. Traditionally used for clothes, it can be used on all manner of fabrics and upholstery – curtains are a great one! It's perfect for picking up stubborn pet hair from your sofas, and even for grabbing those last few strands that stick to the carpet, even after you have hoovered