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Striking a chord

The editorial in our last issue must have struck a chord, for the Association for Geographic Information and the Royal Geographical Society have joined forces to fund and share the services of a senior Public Affairs Manager! This will be good news for those who feel the social, economic and political value of geographic information needs a greater voice as Brexit negotiations get underway. It may also prove important in maintaining the UK's commitment to Open Data, for it would no longer be bound by the PSI Directive which underpins the EU's regulatory framework for the re-use of public sector information.

And while the British government puts its house in order following a destabilising General Election, its negotiators face opening shots from the European Commission which has demanded the right to cancel EU space programme contracts without penalty if a supplier is no longer based in a Member State. The move could scupper the UK's chance of securing £400 million-worth of contracts to complete the Galileo constellation of navigation satellites. And, as Thomas Cheney notes in this issue, the nation could find itself frozen-out of other space programmes in which it has a major stake.

But it's not all uncertainty. One government department to have seized the initiative in harnessing the ever-increasing sophistication of satellite remote sensing is the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Its Chief Scientific Adviser, Ian Boyd, reports in this issue on how Defra's Earth Observations Centre of Excellence not only helps us understand how our actions affect the environment but is also key to delivering better services.

Better customer service has also been a driving requirement of Ofwat, the water industry regulator. In this issue, Bob Chell recounts how one water company has responded to the call by leveraging smarter spatial data ... and saved a fortune in the process.

Last, but by no means least, our next issue will be flying the flag for those innovative British companies that will be exhibiting at this year's INTERGEO Expo in Berlin. In the meantime, take a peek at <https://youtu.be/gxfobnw3tBE> to find out what the INTERGEO organisers made of the recent GEO Business Show in London, Britain's biggest geo industry gathering.
1. <http://www.geoconnexion.com/news/rgs-and-agi-appoint-senior-public-affairs-manager/>



3D Repo Joins UK Government's G-Cloud Digital Marketplace

3D Repo has been successful in its application to the government's cloud procurement service G-Cloud. Designed to help public sector organisations source cloud based solutions and services, G-Cloud provides agreement with suppliers, such as 3D Repo, that mean government buyers don't need to run full tender processes when securing cloud solutions. 3D Repo was successful in its application to the latest iteration of the online service, G-Cloud 9, which features enhanced search capabilities to help users find and shortlist suppliers with relevant services. 3D Repo, a spinout from University College London, is a multi-award winning company offering a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform for BIM in the cloud and has collaborated on a number of large scale projects. www.3drepo.org

Road Safety is as Important as Track Safety

The guidelines for using a mobile phone whilst driving has changed. Penalty points and fines doubled, newly qualified drivers will lose their licence and in some cases so could drivers who have held their licence a lot longer. When it comes to speed and drivers, you will always have good, bad and dangerous drivers. The one thing they all have in common is their awareness of the dangers of speeding, however drivers still regularly break the speed limit. With the new guidelines now in effect, the harsher speeding fines will hopefully make drivers think twice before they break the speed limit. www.severnpartnership.com

COPTRZ Release First UK Drone Market Intelligence Report

COPTRZ has released the UK's first drone market intelligence report, 'Eyes on the Sky', with results gathered from a database of over 45,000 commercial drone users and enthusiasts, the majority of whom are expecting significant business growth, thanks to the adoption of UAV technology. The report finds that photographers are the earliest adopters of drone technology but 38% of people believed that the Surveying sector stands to benefit the most from using UAVs in a commercial capacity. Emergency Services were also highlighted as a sector, which stands to be revolutionised by the application of drones, where the technology can be used for search and rescue missions and crime scene investigations. see.coptrz.com



Gatwick installs 2000 indoor navigation beacons

Around 2000 beacons have been installed across Gatwick Airport's two terminals providing an indoor navigation system that is much more reliable than GPS and that enables augmented reality wayfinding for passengers – a world first for an airport. The lack of satellite signals makes road-based navigation systems unreliable indoors, so Gatwick has deployed a beacon based positioning system to enable reliable 'blue dot' on indoor maps, which in time can be used within a range of mobile airport, airline or third party apps. The beacon system also enables an augmented reality wayfinding tool - so passengers can be shown directions in the camera view of their mobile device - making it easier for passengers to locate check in areas, departure gates, baggage belts etc. www.gatwickairport.com



Bluesky National Tree Map Helps UK Authority Plan Ground Maintenance

Daventry District Council is using a detailed 3D map of trees from Bluesky to prepare for a new grounds maintenance contract. The National Tree Map data, which identifies the location, height and canopy cover of more than 280 million trees nationwide, is being used within Daventry Council's GIS, enabling officers to identify all trees that fall within areas that will be the subject of a new grounds maintenance contract. Used alongside Public Sector Mapping Agreement datasets and other map layers, including the Council's land and property datasets, planning constraints and highways information, the Bluesky tree data is displayed on the Council's GIS - MapInfo and QGIS. www.bluesky-world.com

3G Vehicle Camera Footage Protects Ravenscroft Motors From False Insurance Claim

Ravenscroft Motors used Intelligent Telematics' IT1000 3G vehicle camera to successfully defend against a false insurance claim, saving at least £6,000 in repair costs. The driver of a motorhome claimed that one of the company's Renault Midlum car transporters had jumped a red light causing a crash at the A331 Interchange near Frimley, Surrey. However, video evidence taken from the camera, fitted inside the vehicle's cab, conclusively shows that the motorhome was in fact responsible for the collision. Martin Brimson, Transport Manager at Ravenscroft Motors explains, "Without Intelligent Telematics' 3G cameras we would have had no way of disputing the claim and been left significantly out of pocket as a result, despite our driver having done nothing wrong." www.intelligent-telematics.co.uk



Maxoptra Route Planning delivers outstanding Q1 results

Maxoptra has reported unprecedented sales in the first quarter of 2017. New additions to the Maxoptra cloud based user community in the UK have seen a focus on the food and furniture sectors. The results follow recent expansion announcements with investment in a new sales and marketing operation. "The first quarter of 2017 has been amazing!" commented Maxoptra Business Development Director Stuart Brunger. "We have seen more than 30 new organisations sign up to the service, which equates to a 15 per cent growth. We have secured some significant overseas contracts and strengthened our position in the UK. I think one of the reasons behind Maxoptra's success is that we deliver what we say we will, which helps our users do the same." www.maxoptra.com

HR Wallingford celebrates 70 years making waves



HR Wallingford is celebrating 70 years of working with water. Founded in March 1947 in Teddington, as the Hydraulics Research Organisation, the company moved to Wallingford in 1951, to take advantage of Howbery Park's 70 acre site and riverside location. Its large-scale tests and experiments needed lots of space and a plentiful supply of water, all of which Howbery Park could offer, including a historic Manor House which could be adapted for office use. Dr Bruce Tomlinson, HR Wallingford's Chief Executive, says: "Our water-related research and consultancy is as relevant today as it was 70 years ago. Since then, Howbery Park has also grown, developing into a successful business park with a strong commitment to sustainability." www.hrwallingford.com

Risk Insight improves precision underwriting for RSA and its brokers

Europa Technologies has customised its precision risk assessment platform, Risk Insight, to create a broker-friendly tool for RSA called GeoRisk Broker. This tool will deliver improved risk scoring and lead to more accurate underwriting for broker driven business. RSA had already selected Europa Technologies to provide Ordnance Survey data and a number of complementary hosted services. GeoRisk Broker is now being rolled out to RSA's brokers and has had a very positive reception. It is expected that the application will evolve to meet the growing needs of the organisation. Finlay Smith, RSA's UK & International Chief Underwriting Officer, commented, "GeoRisk Broker will ultimately help to improve the profitability of our business." www.europa.uk.com