

# MEN Manchester Evening News

Manchester Evening News **SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WEEK - BUSINESS WITH A CONSCIENCE: PAGES 6&7**

# Business

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## The cream of the crop for 2010

- John Humphrys hands out M.E.N awards
- Glittering ceremony at Manchester's Hilton

JAMES FERGUSON

COMPANIES involved in sectors from retailing to engineering are celebrating their success at the 2010 Manchester Evening News Business Of The Year Awards.

Top broadcaster John Humphrys hosted last night's glittering ceremony at the Hilton Manchester Deansgate.

As always, the event attracted hundreds of guests to mark the achievements of firms across the region.

**Pets at Home** was top dog in the category for firms with a turnover of over £50m.

The Handforth-based retailer provided one of the region's biggest business stories of the year when it was bought in January by American private equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts for £955m.

**Pets at Home**, founded by Anthony Preston in 1991, then showed its pedigree with rocketing profits for the year to March 25, up from £40m to £54.24m. It opened a record 24 outlets during the period and now has more than 265 stores nationwide.



Cheshire engineering company **Oliver Valves** took the top spot in the category for firms with a turnover between £25 and £50m.

The company, founded by chairman Michael Oliver from his garage in 1979, leads the world in designing and manufacturing valves for the petrochemical industry.

The largest privately-owned valve maker in Europe, it has a turnover of £42m, up from £38m in 2008/9, with 250 staff at its Knutsford HQ and another 600 around the world.

Wythenshawe-based accident management company **Easi Drive** - a losing finalist in 2009 - took the honours in the category for firms with turnover of between £10 and £25m.

The business was founded by brothers Simon and Daniel Belamy in 2001 and now has 135 staff managing a fleet of 1,000

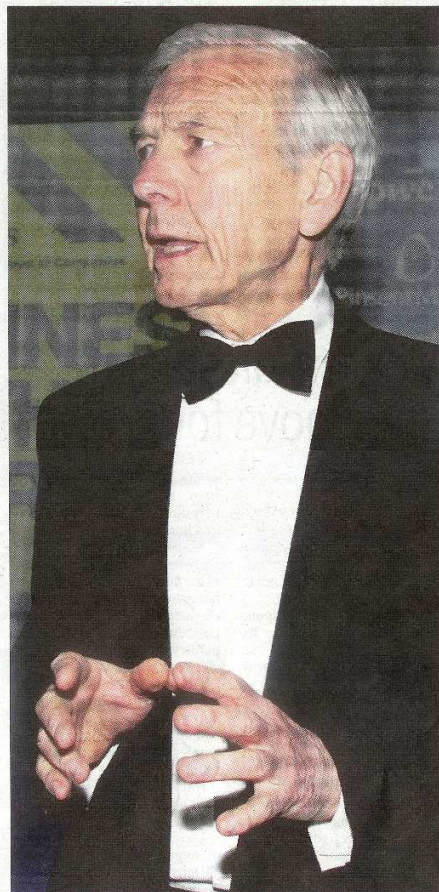
vehicles. It recently opened new £1.6m headquarters with plans to expand north into Scotland and south into the Home Counties.

Manchester-based data centre specialist **Sudlows** won the category for businesses with turnover of under £10m.

Sudlows, which was founded in 1912 to convert Manchester's gas-powered street lights to electricity and was also a finalist last year, is now at the forefront of IT-hosting technology and is riding a wave of investment in the sector.

The firm has won business from clients including **The Co-op** and **British Telecom** during 2010. Congleton pharmaceutical design company **Protomed** won the Young Business of the Year prize, for firms less than three years old.

Protomed is on track to achieve turnover of almost £1.5m this year after winning new business both in the UK and Europe. Founded in 2007 by Norman Niven and his son John, Protomed will now target territories



» TODAY'S WINNERS Broadcaster John Humphrys hosts the 2010 Manchester Evening News Business Of The Year Awards

including the US with its medicine packaging system **Biodose**.

Last night also saw the announcement of a new sustainability honour at the awards.

Train operator **First TransPennine Express** impressed the judges with a variety of initiatives, including training its drivers to drive more efficiently, which has saved more than 7.5m litres of fuel.

This year's awards sponsors were accountants **PricewaterhouseCoopers**, law firm **Pinsent Masons**, **The Co-operative Bank**, **Reich Insurance** and **Healthcare** and **Holland's Pies and Puddings**.

Business editor Kevin Feddy said: "The winners all proved they have the entrepreneurial skill and industry expertise needed to succeed in a difficult economic climate."

"The judges all agreed that the strength and diversity of this year's finalists surpassed our expectations and the 2010 Awards delivered a truly outstanding set of winners."

» Go online to the MEN website for more pictures from the event, and look out for our eight page pull-out on the awards in the MEN next Thursday.

### ROLL OF HONOUR

Winners at the M.E.N Business of the Year Awards 2010

Young Business of the Year **Protomed**

Turnover under £10m **Sudlows**

Turnover £10M-£25m **Easi-Drive**

Turnover £25M-£50m **Oliver Valves**

Turnover £50m plus **Pets at Home**

Sustainability Award **First TransPennine Express**