

Jobfinder Propertynews Drive My Ideal Date Search



Cambridge Evening News Online

Favourites | Login/Register | Help | Cont

## CEN Business

Business Home  
Companies News  
Your Money  
E-commerce  
Events Diary  
Business Awards

## CEN News

## CEN Sport

## CEN Lifestyle

## CEN Marketplace

## CEN People

## CEN Quicklinks

# John de Bruyne's entrepreneur's view

## Penthouses in Cambridge

Luxurious penthouses in Cambridge. Only seven apartments remaining.  
www.thelevels-cambridge.c

"Polite Notice. We respect God's name and on these premises do not accept the use of blasphemy or swearing. While in our store we ask you to respect this. Thank you for your cooperation."

A music store, a piano shop, a bike shop, a cooker shop .. I can count at least five local stores with this little notice on the inside of their front door.

Oddly, all are closed for the whole weekend, and none has a website.

A little further digging reveals that they are all run by members of a religious sect called The Exclusive Brethren. And they certainly are exclusive. I first came across them when I was selling them a building and we had agreed the price when they discovered that the access drive was also used by the people in front. They withdrew. I pointed that the Queen's highway which served the drive was shared by everyone but they were unmoved.

They keep themselves to themselves, making Howard Hughes seem positively gregarious by comparison. They will not join any professional organisation so they can not be estate agents, accountants, doctors, pharmacists or opticians. They are not allowed to go to university because that would encourage mixing with all of us. They are not allowed to read novels, listen to the wireless or TV or use the internet. They don't go to the theatre or cinemas, let alone pubs. They may only stay in hotels or eat in restaurants in an emergency

and then they have to sit at a table all on their own.

All of which makes them a little strange in that earnest, polite and clean-cut manner you will find if you deal with Mormons: but it certainly makes them terrific entrepreneurs because they don't have much

choice other than to work for themselves. A boss might want them to eat in the staff canteen or use a computer or work on Saturdays.

It does, interestingly, show that you don't need to do all that frantic networking that the Judge Business School teaches as the prerequisite for a successful entrepreneur. I suppose that they get a bad name (the term cult being the dreaded four letter word for all these sects) because most of the information we outsiders glean is from members who have left.

The chief complaint seems to be the way their women are treated. Girls marry young and are encouraged to have lots of little brethren. They can marry only within the

sect and if they don't they risk being ostracised. But they will defend their unliberated womenfolk by citing the very low divorce figures.

I confess I rather like them and I can empathise with them as my mother's family were Quakers. They had historically been prevented from going to

## Also in sec

- ▶ Cambridge Index
- ▶ Make allowance tax breaks
- ▶ Fancy a bi



Cambridge Evening News

A fanta selection travel o

NEWN Holiday

## Entrepreneurs Wanted

Become a Serious Entrepreneur Executive Level Income Potential BlueprintforSuccessNow.n

## Intl Organizations MBA

An "MBA with a Soul" with a unique focus on Social Entrepreneurship  
www.iomba.ch

university because they were non-conformists. They were millers, one of their windmills was on Hampstead Heath and with it went the un-Quakerly duty of patrolling the Heath to prevent duels. One wonders what they would

have made of the things the men get up to if they still had to patrol Hampstead Heath at night.

They all look so earnest in the family photos and it is my eternal regret that I just cannot grow those mutton-chop sideburns - how did the Quakers achieve such intimidating facial hair?

I found a letter written by my great grandfather to his son at Grantchester:

"Please go and visit Mr Foster at Anstey Hall and enquire if he will sell his farms at Cherry Hinton."

The reason was that they had married into the Quaker owners of Rugby Portland Cement and the soil at Cherry Hinton was full of just the right limestone for cement.

It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up to think that my great grandfather must have walked up the front steps of Anstey Hall in 1890.

The Quakers were terrific entrepreneurs and they stuck together just like the Exclusive Brethren. My grandfather was bidding against Sam Courtauld for a water mill at Halstead. He thought he had been out-bid but discovered that it had been bought for him by a Quaker uncle who "wanted the boy to have it".

My mother's family was for ever marrying cousins, which is perhaps why we are so daft today (Tuesday, 31 July). In one case two had the same surname which meant a big saving on the bride's nametapes.

Gradually they became integrated. They went to non-Quaker schools (my triplets were all expelled from the Friends School, Saffron Walden, which is a good omen for later entrepreneurial success). Eton was stuffed with successful Quakers called Cadbury, Fry, Gurney, Buxton, Barclay Triton etc, and I swear (although not in their shops) that the Brethren could go the same way.

31 July 2007  
Cambridge  
Evening News

#### **Back to top**

All original material on this page unless specified by another URL is the property of Cambridge Newspapers Ltd ©2005 and may not be reproduced without permission. Cambridge Newspapers is not responsible for the content of any external links. Cambridge Newspapers is registered in England and Wales No. 240968

[As of 22nd February 2007, Illiffe News & Media is Registered with ABC Electronic and supports industry agreed standards for website traffic measurement.](#)