



HERON LOOKS TO 'GO FURTHER'

We've made it cleaner, clearer and easier to shop. We've introduced some space planning and a whole new EPOS system – Mike Igoe, commercial director, Heron Foods



NHS and council contracts for foodservice operator

Three new contracts for Bestway

Bestway Batley's Foodservice has bagged three new contracts.

The foodservice operation of Bestway, launched nationally last September, said it had secured contracts with Nottingham NHS, Burton NHS and Rotherham Council worth a combined £2m. "We are now a major player with great credentials in purchasing, delivery and service, yet have the flexibility to serve bespoke needs," said senior contracts manager Steve Irons.

Heron Foods refresh programme on track as it eyes new stores

Andrew Don

Heron Foods expects to complete the revamp of its 240-strong estate by the middle of next year.

Speaking to The Grocer after the discounter opened its latest store in Runcorn, Cheshire, this week, commercial director Mike Igoe said the new-look format, which includes changes to merchandise, branding and marketing, had been implemented in more than 100 stores so far.

"We've rationalised our ranging, we've created very clearly defined categories within our store environment between the frozen, chilled and ambient areas," he said.

"We've made it cleaner,



Heron is set to complete the overhaul next year

clearer and easier to shop. We've introduced some space planning and a whole new EPOS system, with hardware supplied by Toshiba and software by Datasym."

Igoe said the "new look and feel" to Heron's stores was being rolled out at a time when the group was continuing to expand at a rate of 25 to 30 stores a year for the

next five years.

He added Heron would consider acquisitions of groups of stores as it did in September 2012 when it bought the 54-store Cooltrader from Iceland.

Most of the Cooltraders have now been converted to the Heron format, but five or six remain, which Igoe said operated successfully in their own right in close proximity to Heron stores.

Heron's stores are situated in the North of England and the Midlands, with its most southern store in March, Cambridgeshire. But Igoe said: "We are looking to go further in adjoining areas beyond the extremes. We look at any opportunities."



The Top 50 indie reported pre-tax profits of £237,895

Tout Budgens returns to profitability

Budgens retailer Tout is back in profit.

The Top 50 indie, which has four stores in the South of England, reported a pre-tax profit of £237,895 in the year to 31 March 2014 versus a loss of £65,184 the year before, according to accounts at Companies House. Turnover rose 3% to £24.5m.

In the accounts, MD Philip Tout said "profitability was determined by fuel costs and prices charged by major suppliers" in its market.

Forecourt operator Sewell aims to grow to 20 sites in five years

Sewell Retail is on the hunt for new sites in a bid to become a regional operator.

Patrick Sewell, retail MD of the East Yorkshire fuel and c-store operator, said the company hoped to have 20 sites in three to five years' time, up from 12 at the moment.

"We would like to be a regional operator," Sewell said. "There are opportunities but nothing solid at the moment." He added the company would not look beyond Yorkshire.

Sewell Retail is also



Sewell: "We would like to be a regional operator"

rebuilding and extending a quarter of its estate. Three existing sites are going through the planning process for knock-downs, rebuilds and extensions at South Cave, Maybury and Sutton. Sewell said they would

be extended from about 1,600 sq ft to 2,000-2,500 sq ft. The forecourt operator is also piloting a loyalty scheme that rewards shoppers with "offers, discounts, and a bit of added value. It's gone live internally and we've issued 1,000 cards," Sewell added.

Results filed at Companies House this week revealed pre-tax profits fell 36% to £234,000 in the year to 31 December 2013 on sales up 1.3% to £54.6m. Sewell said this year shop sales were up 6%.

Jeroboams reports 45% surge in profits

Wines and spirits merchant Jeroboams has reported a 45% jump in pre-tax profits to £339,000 for the year to 31 March 2014.

MD Steve Gamble told The Grocer the increase was due to an increased

turnover, up 4% to £20.5m, and reduced costs.

He added that the company, which has seven outlets in London and is ranked 42nd on The Grocer's Top 50 UK independent grocery operators, had had a positive start to its financial year – in line with budget and ahead of 2013.

Gamble also revealed the company would roll out a new website this October. "We are very excited about the opportunities this service will present," he said.



Jeroboams pre-tax profits are up 45% to £339,000