

Woman turned hobby into a business

FEW businesses in the county can claim that their products are invariably received with a smile and sense of pride. But then few businesses in the county are quite like CGA Engraving, the Dursley firm that makes, among other things, the awards that are received at ceremonies to celebrate achievement the length and breadth of the country. When founder Amanda Cale started the company in 1986 the name on the letterheads was Classy Glass.



“But then when we began producing trophies in acrylic, silver and other materials we outgrew the name” explained Amanda. A graphic artist by profession and a Craft member of the Guild of Glass Engravers, Amanda spotted a niche opportunity to turn her hobby into a business. She took the plunge to go it alone with the help of a £40 a week grant from the Government Enterprise Allowance Scheme and recalls that her first order was from the Gloucestershire Football Association for 15 engraved crystal tankards. Since then the business has expanded in all directions and now occupies a 1,500 square feet workshop and extensive showroom in Long Street, though a high percentage of sales are via the website (www.classyglass.co.uk), which Amanda designed herself. “About 50 per cent of our orders are from corporate customers with 35 per cent from sports and other clubs, then the remainder come from individual customers” said Amanda. “The biggest single order we’ve had to date was for 2,500 engraved pieces for a bank merger, but we also engrave many one-off items”. The company is supplying the awards for the 2009 Echo and Citizen Business Awards. High profile customers include the Prime Minister’s Office, for which the Dursley firm made paperweights. They also engraved the glass goblets that appear in several Harry Potter films. “We stock a large selection of glassware and other attractive items that are suitable for engraving” said Amanda. “Along with the medals and trophies, silverware and a large selection of economy cups; we also have lots of resin figures to choose from, covering numerous sporting activities. Awards can be supplied in glass, metal or acrylic. “For the commercial customer we offer labels, badges, commemorative plaques, key fobs, serial plates, memorial plates, signs and name plates which we can supply as one-offs, or by the thousand”. After 23 years Amanda says she still gets a buzz from the business that she loves and from supplying products that people remember receiving for the rest of their lives. “Many of our customers return to us year after year. Almost everything we supply celebrates a special occasion and it’s lovely to be part of that.”