



DIAMOND GEEZERS: John Hays, the founder of Hays Travel, presents the Sales Award to Steve McKenzie and Steve Ritchie (left). (IRN 483584)



ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF HER HARD WORK: Community Award winner Barbara Chrisp with John Hays. (IRN 483585)

Smart ideas win awards

HOME grown fruit and vegetables and telephone training for doctors have helped two companies to clinch trophies.

The Celebration of Enterprise Awards, at Shotton Hall, in Peterlee, saw five companies honoured.

Among them was Wingate woman Barbara Chrisp, who owns The Cabbage Patch, which picked up the Community Award.

She started the firm from home in

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March when she was made redundant after 20 years of working in the mortgage sector.

Barbara turned her love for home grown produce into a business which delivers bags of fresh fruit and vegetables to people's homes and offers a voucher scheme to low income families.

The former Peterlee woman said The Cabbage Patch was now looking at establishing links with schools, and added: "I work from home and things are going really well. Winning this award is fabulous."

Fellow winner Sally-Anne Pygall, owner of Telephone Consultation Services, based in South Hetton, won the Innovation and Technology Award.

Former Peterlee woman Sally-Anne offers telephone training to health workers.

Her expert advice means doctors, nurses and other medical staff are trained to deal with patients who they can only communicate with over the telephone.

She said phone line handling of patients meant health staff had to learn how to communicate in a way which reassures people.

Sally-Anne hopes to expand the serv-

ice to help other companies which have telephone clients.

She added: "I feel privileged to be able to do something I feel so passionately about."

She described winning an award as "a delight, but an absolute shock."

Easington firm Hillcompare.com was set up by Timothy Hill.

It is a website which compares the prices in areas such as utility bills, finance and insurance.

The firm, which was not able to pick up the trophy on the night, collected the Young Entrepreneur Award.

Two Seaham companies picked up the remaining honours.

Lickety Split, a 1950s-style ice cream parlour on Seaham seafront, took the Best Business Idea Award and the overall title of Business of the Year.

Owner Cindy Bettcher is a former customer service advisor who had been off work for two years after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She is now in remission.

She formed her own business three months ago after returning from a holiday in the USA.

The Sales Award went to The Trust Sales Consultancy, which supplies diamond cutting tools to the construction industry. It is run by directors Steve McKenzie and Steve Ritchie after being set up in April.



DOUBLE WINNER: Cindy Bettcher with her awards. (IRN 483581)



DELIGHTED: Innovation Award winner Sally-Anne Pygall with John Hays. (IRN 483587)