

LET'S TALK BUSINESS

Focusing on business news in the St Albans district

From The Apprentice to one of a kind St Albans

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It's not hard to see why St Albans might be the perfect fit for aspiring entrepreneurs.

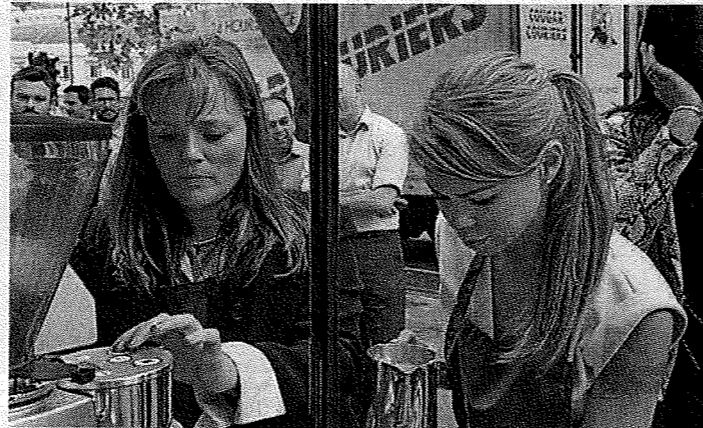
Just a stone's throw away from the big smoke and with key links to the city, business is thriving.

And with backing from successful solicitor Lauren Riley, star of the BBC hit show, *The Apprentice*, the city really is on to a winner.

Lauren, who left the show at the end of week seven despite being pegged as one of the series' frontrunners, now works at Labrums Solicitors in Cottonmill Lane.

Although she only joined the company in June, she firmly believes St Albans is one of a kind.

She said: "Obviously I'm fairly new but I think it's a wonderful place; you're so close to the city, it's within that commuter band so it has a wide appeal for the people working in the city but



■ Lauren in The Apprentice

Picture: BBC/BOUNDLESS

also for the younger generation who maybe socialise more and go out.

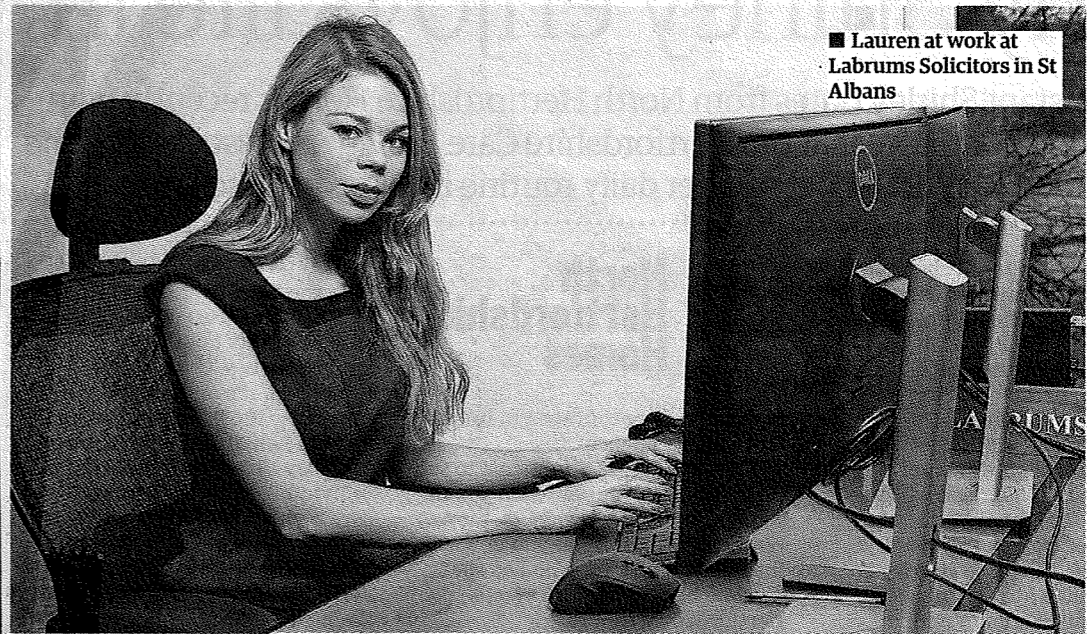
"There's so much to do and I think it's a beautiful area so to my mind it really is rather unique.

"I do think the city breeds some very entrepreneurial people because their parents and their grandparents probably all worked in the city. And as cost pressures on

businesses rise, they're all looking to be just on the peripheral so there's probably more and more business opportunities."

Lauren herself is no stranger to the business world as she is now preparing for the launch of a new electronic tool that aims to keep clients in the loop - The Link App.

It was her proposed business plan when she appeared on *The*



■ Lauren at work at Labrums Solicitors in St Albans

Apprentice.

And though her position as a practising family law solicitor and experience on a business graduate scheme meant she was a worthy candidate for the show, she admits she didn't tell anyone she had applied.

"I didn't tell anyone because the odds were stacked against you to get on.

"I had the idea for my business from practice and basically it was the fact that I'd had this great idea and the more I was in law, I thought actually, this is really going to work but I obviously needed investment."

Even though she didn't make it until the end, she still feels the show was a positive experience.

"Obviously when you go into something like that you're quite apprehensive, particularly for

myself as a professional but you know what, it was actually a lot of fun.

"I feel like I got a lot out of it in terms of putting myself out there and getting on in business."

Apart from the praise she received for her flawless tour of Blenheim Palace in week five, she revealed that it was week one that gave her the self belief and confidence to continue.

"You're very nervous because you're not sure how you're going to go in to this and my background isn't sales at all, but I did really well on that.

"I thought, wow, okay, actually I can do this and I've got skills that maybe aren't honed every day but actually that are sat there in the background."

Though Labrums might be a far cry from the boardroom she

already feels very at home.

"I really like it because they're very much a family-focused firm but are very professional and I know they work hard to make their clients feel at ease which is a big hurdle for law firms.

"I'm the family solicitor, so what comes under the umbrella of family is obviously divorce, cohabitation issues if you weren't married but are separating, or you're in a new relationship and you want to dictate the terms of that.

"We also do private client children's law.

"The team are very supportive and it's a really nice environment to work in."

■ For more information about The Link App visit www.thelinkapp.co.uk