

Quarterly increase

An increase in non-tobacco sales in the 16 weeks to 29 December 2017 more than compensated for a further decline in tobacco business for **Booker**.

Total income for the period rose by 3.4% (like-for-like 3.8% ahead), of which non-tobacco grew by 5.9% (6.2%) and tobacco declined by 2.6% (2.1%).

Chief executive Charles Wilson reported that both the retail and catering sides made good progress.

He added that the Premier retail chain continues to grow while Budgens and Londis are performing well.

Internet sales increased by 14% to £381 million (excluding Budgens and Londis).

In the petrol forecourt sector, Booker has begun supplying Shell and MRH petrol stations.

Commenting on the merger with Tesco, Wilson said that final shareholder approval is expected by the end of this month.

► **Booker Group (01933) 371000**

Oriental prize

Entries are being invited for the sixth **Wing Yip** Oriental Cookery Young Chef of the Year competition.

There are two stages: a written paper, including an Oriental recipe, and a cook-off at University College Birmingham on 28 March.

As well as the title, the successful contestant will win a trip to Hong Kong, including experience in some of the city's top restaurants.

► **Wing Yip 0121-327 6618**

Bestway launches van sales

Bestway Wholesale has set up a new van sales operation selling crisps, snacks, confectionery and soft drinks, following the placing into administration of P&H's Snacksdirect and Sweetsdirect businesses.

The van sales operation will service over 20,000 retail customers using a fleet of 180 vans acquired from P&H's administrators PricewaterhouseCoopers. Deliveries will be made fortnightly.

Heading the division is Noel Robinson, who previously ran this business when it was part of P&H. He reports directly to Bestway Wholesale's managing director Martin Race.

Many of the former P&H



Bestway acquired 180 former P&H vans.

van sales staff are being re-employed by Bestway.

Race commented: "The new Bestway van sales division is a welcome addition to the business. We feel we will be able to drive operational efficiencies by running the business out of our existing network of depots.

"Moreover, as many customers look for alternative

sources of supply after the collapse of P&H, this move will reinforce our ability to offer further support and supply customers, continuing to demonstrate our commitment to the wholesale channel and to independent retailers.

"We feel this new service will be a great fit for us in delivering our future growth plans and building on our already close relationships with customers.

"The addition of a van sales business will make us even stronger and enable us to help service independent retailers even more effectively as they compete in an ever-changing retail space."

► **Bestway Wholesale 020-8453 1234**

Confex's action man races again



Confex's business development manager David Lunt (left) completed the first-ever Marathon Des Sables, Peru. This followed his participation in the Marathon Des Sables, Morocco, in 2016.

He finished the 250km endurance race in the Ica desert – one of the world's driest regions – in 68 hours, 12 minutes and 16 seconds, over seven days, raising nearly £2,000 for Confex's

chosen charity, the Helen & Douglas House Hospice in Oxford. This provides support for families dealing with the implications of living with a child who will die prematurely.

Over the years, Lunt has raised in excess of £80,000 for various charities and has run over 70 marathons. His next event is London Marathon in April this year.

► **Confex (01608) 652333**

Growth after label change

Landmark Wholesale's Vintners Collection wine range has experienced sales growth since introducing a more up-to-date look.

Available to consumers for less than £6 a bottle, the varieties include Italian pinot



grigio, Argentinian malbec, Chilean sauvignon blanc and Californian white zinfandel. The full selection comprises 12 styles from six countries and 10 varieties of grape.

"The range features the same great tasting wine, but now with a

fresh, contemporary look," senior trading controller Jon Burton told *Cash & Carry Management*.

"We are delighted to have received positive feedback from retailers and consumers."

► **Landmark Wholesale (01908) 255300**