Among Sweden’s top exports are brands like Volvo, Saab and Ikea, all of whom are renowned for quality and reliability. The Swedish are famous for their attention to detail and efficiency, and it’s these intrinsic attributes that make the Swedish economy one of the most stable in Europe.

Handelsbanken’s Swedish pedigree means that the bank’s ethos is built on quality of service and prudence, which has enabled us to maintain a healthy position even in these challenging times.

Unlike many other high street banks Handelsbanken has operated on a decentralised basis since the early 1970’s. This autonomy allows us to build long lasting relationships with our customers, provide the best personal service and make quick decisions at a branch level.

Although we have the freedom to offer bespoke banking solutions for our customers, the bank’s operations are underpinned by a common culture that is expressed in a document called ‘Our Way’.

‘Our Way’ is written by CEO Pär Boman and it provides an insight into how Handelsbanken is run, why we remain strong and continue to provide exceptional service.

Stable finances
At Handelsbanken we have a long-term credit rating of Aa1 (source: Moody’s 11.11.08) and a proud history of sound financial security. As a bank we ended 31.12.07 with 0.00% bad debts to loans and our exposure to the US sub-prime market has been minimal due to our cautious, personal approach to lending.

“Stable doesn’t mean scared or timid. Stable means strength when others must be defensive. A crucial part of our idea of how a good bank should be run is that we are here, with our stable finances, with a consistent credit policy, ready to do business when others are forced to tighten their belts,” says CEO Pär Boman.

The branch is the bank
For us the branch is the bank and our decentralised management is the key to our success. It enables us to provide a professional, and more importantly, a personal service where the branch manager is always available to talk; either in person or on the phone, instead of a faceless call centre like so many other banks.

At Handelsbanken, we feel that nobody understands the customer better than the local branch, which is why all business decisions are made there. This results in more satisfied customers, greater efficiency and higher quality credit decisions.
A View From The Top

Handelsbanken – a safe home for your money

With so many high profile banks having problems in the current climate, protection of a business’s money has now become a critical area of risk mitigation. Many companies are now looking to spread the risk by placing a portion of their cash deposits with more than one financial institution. But in today’s market, how can you be confident that the institution receiving your deposit is sound and prudently run?

At Handelsbanken we can provide a safe house for our customers’ deposits and we have the evidence to prove it. Handelsbanken is a Swedish bank founded in 1871 and is the oldest listed company on the Stockholm Stock Exchange. With more than 600 branches worldwide and 60 in Great Britain, we have a long, proud history of financial security. Our strong position and quality reputation is seeing more companies in Kent choosing to place deposits with Handelsbanken, Maidstone.

The table below provides a comparison with our peers and demonstrates our solidity, even in these troubled times. As a bank we are still financially strong and have healthy capital ratios. And unlike some of our competitors we have not needed to turn to rights issues or government bail outs.

Handelsbanken is a solid and secure safe house for your savings. We would be delighted to discuss how we can protect your finances and provide you with peace of mind. To find out how you can benefit from competitive interest rates on a new deposit account, call Jonathan Watson, branch manager on 01622 669795.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>Long-term ratings*</th>
<th>Cost/income ratio #</th>
<th>Credit loss/loans #</th>
<th>Return on equity #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lloyds TSB Bank plc</td>
<td>Aaa</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handelsbanken</td>
<td>Aa1</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barclays Bank plc</td>
<td>Aa1</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC Bank plc</td>
<td>Aa1</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBS plc</td>
<td>Aa1</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBOS plc</td>
<td>Aa2</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source Moody's 11th November 2008
# Figures taken from 2007 Annual Reports. Source: Deutsche Bank AG

News in brief

Dartford branch

A new Handelsbanken branch is now open in Dartford strengthening the bank’s position in the south east. Now business and private customers in this important area of the Thames Gateway can benefit from Handelsbanken’s traditional relationship banking. The Dartford branch is located in Bridgeview House, St Mary’s Road, Greenhithe, Dartford, Kent, DA9 9AS and branch manager, Trevor Adams, can be reached on 01322 387609.

Seasons greetings!

We would like to thank all of our customers and professional contacts for their business in 2008. It has been a challenging year for everyone but ‘tis now the season to be jolly and take a well deserved break! We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2009.