

Where were you on 14 March 1989?

13 March 2009

14th March, marks the 20th anniversary of Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs). They were introduced by the Conservative Government to widen the flexibility and appeal of personal pension provision and announced in Nigel Lawson's Budget speech of 14 March 1989, when he said "I propose to make it easier for people in personal pension schemes to manage their own investments." They were hardly an overnight success – ten years later around 40,000 SIPPs had been set up but in the next ten years that has increased more than ten fold so that we fully expect the half million threshold to be crossed during this year.

But where were you in March 1989? Well to give you a reminder, here are some of the other events happening around that time, as if SIPPs weren't enough!

- Desert Orchid won the Cheltenham Gold Cup
- Michael Jackson was topping the UK charts with "Leave me Alone"!!
- Salmon Rushdie had gone into hiding
- "Driving Miss Daisy" won the Oscar for best film
- Arsenal and Liverpool were locked in a fight for the first premiership title which would go down to the last minute of the season with a Michael Thomas goal taking the title to North London
- The Exxon Valdez oil spillage occurred
- Theo Walcott was born!

Some other highlights of 1989

- The destruction of the Berlin Wall
- Ford buys Jaguar
- The 486 microprocessor was released by Intel opening the way for the next generation of much more powerful PC's
- Sky TV launched in UK
- Nintendo begin selling the Game Boy in Japan
- The first episodes of the Simpsons are shown
- The Fourteenth Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize
- Pan Am files for chapter 11
- Toyota launches it's luxury brand the Lexus
- Scientists pronounce 1989 as the warmest on record possibly a sign of the greenhouse effect
- The Tiananmen Square massacre

Some economic statistics for 1989

- FTSE 100 March 1989 2075
- Bank of England base rate March 1989 12.88%
- Average House Price in UK £71,733
- Exchange rate in March 1989 of 1.71\$ to the £
- Gallon of Petrol £1. 85
- Annual Inflation Rate in UK 7.8%

"The introduction of SIPPs in the 1989 budget was a big surprise. Will the current Chancellor have any surprises this year? We'll have to wait until April 22nd to find out. However, perhaps the snippets above simply demonstrate that whilst the world has changed dramatically in the last 20 years some of the issues and many of the challenges around pensions remain much the same."

Further details on Suffolk Life can be found at www.suffolklife.co.uk

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About Suffolk Life

Suffolk Life is one of the UK's leading providers and administrators of specialist pension products, primarily Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs). It has established over 14,000 self-invested plans and total assets exceed £3 billion. Suffolk Life has acquired over 1,600 properties for over 2,500 SIPP investors.

Established in 1971 and based in Ipswich, Suffolk Life employs around 200 people and has built an enviable reputation based on its expertise and knowledge of the SIPP market.

This has been recognised through numerous awards including:-

Technology, Admin and Service award, Income drawdown – Pensions Management 2008
Technology, Admin and Service award, SIPPs – Pensions Management 2007 & 2006
Best SIPP Provider - Professional Adviser 2006
Best SIPP Provider - Professional Pensions 2006 & 2005
Best SIPP Product - Moneyfacts 2005
Best Buy - Investors Chronicle 2005
Admin & Service awards, SIPPs – Pensions Management, wins in 2002, 2003 & 2004, commended in 2005

Financial Adviser 5 star service award 2008

Investor in Customers 2 star award for 2006 & 2008

Suffolk Life was acquired by Legal and General in May 2008