

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

JULY 2017



TIER ONE CAPITAL

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issue 25

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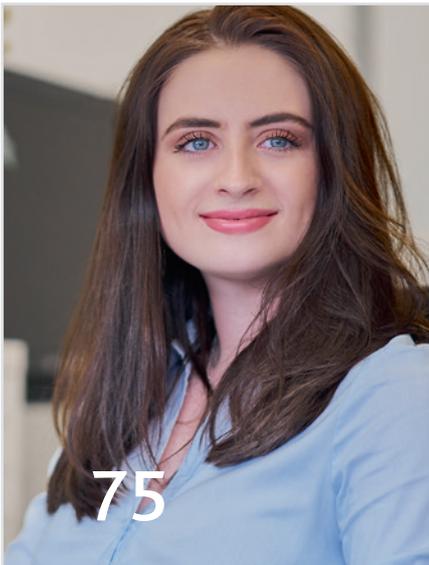
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FOREWORD

Welcome to the July edition of Northern Insight

As we enter the second half of the year we are pleased to bring you another exceptional issue jam packed with features, interviews and social photographs.

Our cover star is Tier One Capital a true North East success story.
What a cover image also!!

The subject of our Staying Power feature is Simon Williams from Crest Photography who reflects on an illustrious career behind the camera.

Look out also for our special feature on the Northern Law Awards which was a terrific celebration of the regions legal talent.

July marks the second anniversary of the birth of Northern Insight and the growth of the magazine over that period has been nothing short of incredible.

May I place on record my sincere thanks to all readers, advertisers, supporters and suppliers on a wonderful journey so far.

Thank you for your continued support. Till next month...

Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher

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Editorial must be received by the 15th of the month or no responsibility is accepted for errors.

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Complaints will only be considered for up to a week after publication. Advertising must be received by the 20th of the month. No responsibility is accepted for errors.

NORTH EAST LAWYER AWARDED FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF LONDON



One of the North East's leading lawyers has been awarded the Freedom of the City of London.

Barry Speker OBE DL joined the likes of Michael Caine, Winston Churchill and Lord Nelson in having the Freedom bestowed. He received the Freedom in a ceremony at the Chamberlain's Court in London's Guildhall.

A prominent medico-legal expert lawyer and Employment Judge, Mr Speker – a consultant with Newcastle law firm Sintons – is also heavily

involved with an array of charities. He writes and lectures widely in his various specialisms, and is a trusted advisor to the Chinese community.

Being a Freeman of the City of London carries various traditional 'privileges', including the right to drive sheep and cattle over London Bridge; to have a silken rope if the Freeman is hanged; to carry a naked sword in public; and that if the City of London Police find a Freeman drunk and incapable, they will send him home in a taxi rather than arrest him.

Mr Speker, whose ceremony was attended by family and friends, said: "This is a huge privilege which I am delighted to receive.

"It was a very special and memorable occasion, during which the Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court gave a very personalised speech to showcase his knowledge of my native North East, making reference to celebrations on the Quayside as well as memories of the Get Carter car park in Gateshead, which he said he found useful when making Sir Michael Caine a Freeman."

GLOBAL MANUFACTURER INVESTS FURTHER IN THE NORTH EAST

One of the world's most advanced automotive and robotics manufacturers, Comau, has demonstrated its commitment to the North East by relocating to a larger facility in Gateshead with the prospect of creating up to 60 jobs.

Comau UK, which has its UK headquarters in Rugby, has invested over £200,000 and has taken a ten year lease on a 15,000 sq ft plant at Follingsby Park, which will be the primary manufacturing base for the UK plant projects division.

The company develops and produces process automation, manufacturing and service products and specialises in delivering turnkey solutions. It employs 12,500 across the globe and the UK operation, with an annual turnover of circa £100m, is widely recognised within the industry for its supply of high profile contracts to Jaguar Land Rover to deliver complete systems in the UK.

Neil Geeson, Operations Manager of the UK plant projects division for Comau UK, outlined the company's intention to engage fully with the regional automotive supply chain to support future contracts.

Neil, said: "We are the UK division of one of the world's leading suppliers of automotive equipment and we differentiate ourselves in the market in that



we manufacture our own standard product range including AGVs, laser sources and robots. We don't need to source these from any other suppliers, unlike our competitors. At the same time, it is our intention to collaborate and engage with other companies operating within the automotive sector who can assist us when delivering projects.

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EDWARD REED LAUNCHES NEW BRANDING

Newcastle-based management recruitment specialist Edward Reed Recruitment has undergone a complete rebranding exercise, launching a new logo and website design to support its evolution from start-up to a leading North East recruitment consultancy.

Founded in 2015, Edward Reed has fast become a key player in the region's recruitment sector, working with a range of private and third sector clients including botanical drinks manufacturer, Fentimans and charitable organisation, Age UK Northumberland to place candidates in management roles.

The new modernised branding reflects the firm's strong position in the recruitment market. With bold, clean lines and iconic North East imagery used throughout the company website, the new look and feel of Edward Reed is one of grown-up sophistication.

Managing Director at Edward Reed Recruitment, Chris Stappard, said: "The business has grown beyond all recognition in the last two years and we wanted to update our branding to reflect that."



GRASS IS DEFINITELY GREENER FOR NORTH SHIELDS BUSINESS

A North Shields business has secured the UK rights to distribute Blaupunkt's new gardening power tools range.

Blaupunkt Tools, a North Shields based company which specialises in multi-channel retailing, is working with the German electronics manufacturer to launch its innovative new range of gardening equipment in the UK.

Initially selling directly via its own online store, the Blaupunkt Tools team is also looking to partner with UK retailers keen to associate themselves with the globally recognised brand, synonymous with German precision and quality.

Dave Crowder, Chief Technical officer for Blaupunkt Tools said: "My business partner and I have worked with the Blaupunkt team in previous roles and we knew they were a brand we would be more than happy to be associated with so when the opportunity arose to partner with them on this exciting project we jumped at the chance."



NORTH EAST BUSINESSES RAISE VITAL FUNDS FOR MARIE CURIE

Marie Curie has held its first ever Out of Office Challenge with businesses right across the region taking part to raise awareness and money for the charity.

Teams from several North East companies took on challenges to win points, finding 'wish list' items for Marie Curie's hospice and patients, acquiring new stock for Marie Curie shops and finding weird and wonderful raffle prizes as part of the challenge.

St Martins Care, DWF Law, Ryder Architecture, Ryecroft Glenton, Procter and Gamble and a team from the Marie Curie Hospice all took part, with St Martins Care winning the challenge on the day. Before the final count, Marie Curie had raised over £3,000 and have over £2,000 worth of prizes and donations.

Katie Searles, Partnerships Manager at Marie Curie said: "The response from North East businesses was overwhelming and we wanted to express our gratitude to everyone who supported the teams for their kind support and generosity."

NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT JOINS ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM

Newcastle International Airport (NIA) has given its further backing to North East enterprise by becoming a Business Support partner of the Entrepreneurs' Forum.

NIA will support the ambitions of the Forum's members to grow and create further employment through the organisation's Business Support Partner programme, which gives entrepreneurs access to a broad cohort of regional organisations.

The programme expands the reach of the organisation to

embrace those from within the business community that are outside of its membership criteria, but can add value to the entrepreneurial endeavours of the region.

It supports the development of entrepreneurs, allowing companies to expose themselves to new ideas that will help to drive growth and change and create opportunities.

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COVER STORY



TIER ONE CAPITAL BRANCHING OUT

Local wealth management company Tier One Capital and its sister companies, Cascade Cash Management and the TOC Property Backed Lending Trust are progressing well across three of an intended four core divisions of the growing group.

The Wealth Management division is hiring an additional seven staff to bolster the in-house infrastructure and capability of the team. The new hires will allow internal legal work to bring an additional responsiveness for borrowers and quicker transaction turnaround, will bring internal corporate finance expertise to aid financial reporting and data room management and will see additional experienced client servicing and operational support join the existing team. To also bolster distribution, and respond to the predominantly city based fund management industry requiring people to be closely located to the larger funds, Tier One Capital are closing in on opening additional satellite offices in Mayfair, London and Lausanne, Switzerland near Geneva.

Cascade Cash Management has recently added five staff to help the existing team cope with an increasing workload driven by the hugely successful delivery of the first phase of the company's unique cash management platform. This positions the company in a particularly competitive place for SME's, charities and larger corporates alike due to the innovative cash optimisation process employed across well over 1,000 onshore and offshore rates daily from over 170 live banking and building society counter-parties.

The recently launched TOC Property Backed Lending Trust, a predominantly income focussed investment trust listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange, has now successfully deployed all of the £21.5m held by the trust within the first five months of the launch. Another market placing is due in July 2017 where the expected pipeline of c£1.5m will see the Trust grow to c£23m. Fund manager Stephen Black explains "Above and beyond the fund volume continuing to pleasingly nudge up, the next placing will see the Trust importantly gain its first city funding



through investment allocations from two large regional wealth managers. We've only recently launched with the kind support of our existing clients and being based from the Quayside in Newcastle, and also having not previously been fund managers, we're keen to quickly break through the impression of kind of being city outsiders. The quick deployment of capital comfortably within the agreed parameters of the Trust married to the recent uptake from the two regional wealth managers will provide others with growing comfort that the Trust is here to stay and worth allocating to."

What next then for the fourth division to complement the other three? Never shy of a challenge, the team are about to embark upon the hugely exciting prospect of applying for a new banking licence and have now appointed the banking licence teams of KPMG and Gowling WLG to act for them on the accountancy and legal fronts respectively as the application progresses. "We've been working towards this opportunity for about three years now and have sequentially brought through the wealth management

operation, sectioned off the non-traditional savings delivered by the cash management operation into a standalone entity and recently effectively achieved the same for non-traditional lending in listing the TOC Property Backed Lending Trust." Explains Ian McElroy "On a higher level, the existing three operations give superb access to clients through Tier One Capital, access to saving infrastructure through Cascade and access to lending infrastructure through the TOC Property Backed Lending Trust. It's therefore a natural next step to bring through a traditional savings and loans business model which will serve to create a virtuous circle where each division of the team complements and adds value to the other three".

"If we put aside for a moment the fact a new banking licence is exceptionally difficult to attain and will require a huge effort, and no short amount of capital, to even have a chance at successfully achieving a positive application, we think a new banking entity would be a great strategic addition to the wider group. To be able to do this locally would be both the culmination of many years hard work from the team and also a dream come true. As a locally based team, we strongly feel that in the aftermath of Northern Rock, its hugely important for the area to bring through new banks capable of lending and supporting local borrowers and development opportunities." says Stephen Black. "It's been a highly productive few years for the team in building out what we have delivered thus far and, because applying for a new banking licence is a particularly difficult task, the only thing that's certain whilst embarking on the banking project is that if we do manage to hit it out of the park and deliver it, the team will be enjoying an extended period of consolidation thereafter whilst they have a well deserved rest!"

The Wealth Management division, known for its popular adverts featuring a lions head around the city, is hiring an additional seven staff to bolster the in-house infrastructure and capability of the team.

To contact the Tier One Capital team or group call 01912220099 or please visit:
www.tieronecapital.co.uk www.cascade.co.uk www.tocplbt.co.uk



NEWCASTLE UNITED SPONSOR'S DAY 2017

Newcastle United Golf Club held their annual event on Wednesday 14th June where their loyal sponsors came together for a day of sunshine, good company and some healthy competition.

The Texas Scramble event made for a close game and a great victory for Lafarge Tarmac who came in pole position.

Golfers also raised an impressive £500 for the Percy Hedley Foundation with an on-course competition on the day. The sun shone all day making for some rosy glows back at the clubhouse.





DAIMON BARBER A CUT ABOVE AS HIGH END MALE GROOMING RANGE GETS FENWICK WINDOW SHOWCASE



Steve Crosby, Daimon Barber and Michael McGee, RMT Accountants

A high-end male grooming range with regional roots has been in the spotlight in the North East's most famous shopping window.

The Daimon Barber range of hair styling, skincare, beardcare and shaving products went on show on Fenwick's Northumberland Street window in central Newcastle in the lead up to Father's Day on Sunday 18 June.

Originally founded by Morpeth-born entrepreneur Steve Crosby and business partner Leo Neelands in 2013, The Daimon Barber was established as a prestige independent brand with a strong emphasis on design and functionality, as well as on innovation and the use of healthy ingredients in the formulation of its products.

The company, which has its administrative headquarters in Hexham, originally focused on hair styling products before branching out into other areas.

Four new hair styling products will be added to the Daimon Barber range over the summer, while its first ever fragrances, which have been developed in conjunction with Robertet, one of France's leading fragrance houses, are scheduled to come to market in the autumn.

It achieved a 300% year-on-year growth in turnover since 2015, and its seven-strong team is aiming to break the £500,000 turnover barrier this year.

To help work towards this landmark and to ensure

the right structures are in place to support future growth, the Daimon Barber management team has been working with RMT Accountants and Business Advisors around all aspects of the business's financial performance and operational evolution.

As well as being sold in Fenwick, Daimon Barber products are also available in some of the retail world's most famous names, including Harvey Nichols and Fortnum & Mason, are stocked in landmark department stores in overseas locations such as Paris, Milan and Rome, and are sold online via the www.daimonbarber.co.uk website.

Distribution deals are already in place in North America, mainland Europe and Scandinavia, while discussions are currently ongoing with potential partners in Asia and Australasia, and moves are being made towards creating a new 'professional' product range for use and sale in hair salons.

Steve Crosby says: "We've built a strong platform over the first few years of The Daimon Barber, which is increasingly being recognised for the quality, design and desirability of its products, and we feel we're starting to realise the massive potential for growth that it has both at home and overseas.

"We have extremely rigorous product development systems in place, and have control over every aspect

of the process, from the initial idea right through to the final product hitting the shelves, so we know that it will comply to the quality standards on which everything we produce is based.

"Fenwick's window plays a very visible role in the life of everyone who grows up in the North East, and seeing our products on show in it has been quite an emotional landmark for us.

"We're focusing on delivering a long-term plan in place to turn The Daimon Barber into a market-leading male grooming brand, and the RMT team has been central from the off to putting the financial and operational frameworks in place that will allow us to deliver on our objectives."

Stephen Slater, Director at RMT Accountants and Business Advisors, adds: "The Daimon Barber team has already tapped successfully into the highly lucrative male grooming market, and is being rewarded for a very carefully crafted approach to developing and extending their product offering.

"Taking centre stage in Fenwick's window has provided a real boost for Daimon Barber at a key time of the retailing year, and it's great for us to be playing a part in the evolution of another expanding North East success story."



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AND THEN THERE WERE TROIS

Team Leathers (Michael Leather, Neil Matthews and Barry James) are currently in France, undertaking the formidable Tour de Force cycling challenge in aid of the William Wates Memorial Trust.

Taking place one week ahead of the 2017 Tour de France and covering exactly the same route, it is not for the faint-hearted!

Here, Team Leathers analyse the numbers behind the madness.



For cycling fans and non-cycling fans alike, the mention of the Tour de France stirs up images of one of the world's premier sporting events and one of the most physically demanding; for the man on the street, and even the experienced amateur cyclist, the sheer scale of the race can be hard to comprehend.

Being accountants, we pride ourselves in our ability to analyse numbers and explain complex issues to our clients in a way they can relate to and understand... to put the challenge into context, we've had a look at the numbers behind the Tour de France:

21 Days

The riders will cycle for 21 days. For many of us, doing any form of exercise every day for 3 weeks would be a struggle. Cycling for 3 weeks takes an enormous amount of fitness and willpower!

2,100 Miles

The overall distance of the Tour exceeds 2,100 miles. That's over 100 miles per day. That is the equivalent of cycling from Newcastle to Edinburgh. Every day. For 3 weeks. And Newcastle to Edinburgh is relatively flat.

8 Hours per Day

The professionals can average speeds of over 24mph, depending on the stage profile, racing for an average of 5 hours per day.

Amateur cyclists will average nearer 14-18 mph. This means that they can be in the saddle for between 6 and 10 hours per day. As a comparison, imagine cycling non-stop for a whole day at work!

70,000 Feet of Climbing

One the great features of the Tour de France are the mountains. The Pyrenees, the Juras, the Vosges, the Massif Central, the Alps. The mountains are where the race is won and lost.

In the classified climbs (mountains which have been given a difficulty rating), the riders will ascend over 70,000 vertical feet. That is the equivalent of cycling over the top of Mount Everest. Twice. In fact, it may even be nearer three times over Everest when you factor in the non-classified ascents. And then you have to contend with some of the eye-watering gradients (up to 18%).



60mph Descents

What goes up, must come down. Whilst it can take up to 4 hours to get over one of the Alpine mountains, it certainly doesn't take that long to come down! Depending on how brave you are, speeds can be in excess of 60mph, fast enough to overtake continental caravans and motor homes.

5,000 Calories per Day

All of this physical exertion comes at a price...in order to keep the body fuelled day after day, the riders need to consume up to 5,000 calories per day. This might sound like fun, but in order to perform properly, it needs to be (mostly) the right kind of calories (pasta, chicken etc). Consuming this much food when exhausted can actually be quite difficult!

The numbers above illustrate the point that the Tour de Force cycling challenge is not something which you can just turn up and do. It takes months of preparation/training and the riders rely on the



tremendous support of friends, family, colleagues and the organisers to get them through.

But it can be fun! It is an incredible event for a fantastic cause and it is worth the pain and suffering to know that we've helped the charity in our own way. We've already raised a huge amount of money for the William Wates Memorial Trust and we'd like to thank everyone for their support to date.



It's not too late to donate! Visit www.leatherstourdeforce.co.uk for further information on donations, training blogs and updates from the riders in France.



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BIG DATA – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW



Big Data is a phrase we are hearing more and more in the digital age. Rapid technological advances, coupled with wider accessibility to relevant information, have resulted in the field gaining more importance and adoption in recent times.

Despite being a relatively new concept, it is already helping to reshape corporate decision-making across a range of sectors.

Far more than simply backing up a report with numbers, data analytics centres around presenting and using these numbers in such a way as to drive actionable business intelligence; from trends in sales and customer behaviour, to patterns in performance management, operations and supply chain. The explanatory and predictive models produced have encouraged business owners to allow Big Data to influence key business decisions and future strategy.

Organisations are now in a position where they collect vast amounts of useful information every single day. While many utilise these figures to derive actionable insight, there is still a vast number of companies oblivious to the fact they hold this data, never mind the benefits it can yield. By not

actively extracting, analysing and acting upon this data, they are missing out on the opportunity to add significant value to their business.

This could be down to any number of factors, and organisations should not be put off by the admittedly long, drawn-out process that data analytics can be. Some may also feel they are too small, or don't produce enough data to draw meaningful results. Both factors are irrelevant, as meaningful business intelligence can be produced through any data set, regardless of size. SMEs, for example, are sitting on extensive data sets that could generate worthwhile information and potentially drive the business forward through the next phase of growth.

Valuable data is only beneficial, however, if used to drive actionable insight. Data analytics can be used to measure all aspects of your business (marketing, sales, customers, finance, operations etc.), meaning

future decisions can be made based on concrete evidence, as opposed to gut instinct or second guessing.

It's not just about driving sales and making smarter business decisions however, data analytics can also be used to give organisations an increased understanding of their history, help to define company culture and values as well as identify interesting trends and opportunities for innovation.

The application and embedding of data analytics in a business can be a long journey and significant results should not be expected overnight. However, those that have started their journey early are reaping the rewards and gaining distinct advantage over their competitors.

UNW has significant expertise in this area, and our clients have benefitted from in-depth analysis on financial, transactional and operational data.

For more information on how data analytics can add value to your business, please contact Laura Hudson, Data Analyst, at laurahudson@unw.co.uk or on 0191 243 6000.

DEMENTIA CARE APPOINTS NEW CEO



North East charity, Dementia Care, has welcomed Dr. Fraser Quin as its new Chief Executive Officer. In his new role, Dr. Quin will be overseeing the strategic direction of the North East's leading specialist dementia charity.

Dementia Care is a Newcastle-based charity that provides specialist care, support and advice to people with dementia

The charity runs specialist day centres in Newcastle upon Tyne and Hexham and provides a range of services for those with dementia and their families.

Fraser Quin's previous experience involves being Chief Executive of the Eric Liddell Centre, a dementia and elderly care charity in Edinburgh. Dr. Quin was also the Director of the Edinburgh Care Partnership.

Dr. Quin will be joining Dementia Care most recently from Sealladh Na Beinne Moire (SnBM), where he had overall strategic responsibility for a 93,000 hectare estate, a £33 million asset register and a 30 strong team.



NICOLA SHORT JOINS GRADVERT AS PART OF ONGOING EXPANSION

A rapidly expanding talent development company has brought in one of the North East's most experienced brand managers to oversee its transition to the next level.

Nicola Short has joined Newcastle-based Gradvert, which offers graduate recruitment and leadership and management training to help organisations attract, recruit and retain top talent.

Boasting clients such as Go-Ahead, British Athletics, Sharps Bedrooms, Veolia and Polygon, as well as many of the UK's leading universities, Gradvert also acts as a consultant to businesses on the Apprenticeship Levy.

A specialist in business planning and marketing strategy, Nicola was previously Campaign Manager for the high profile Jeremy4Mayor campaign. Prior to that she was employed as Head of Communications at UNW chartered accountants and held the role of Chief Executive of the Entrepreneurs Forum.

Gradvert's Managing Director Michaela Reaney, said: "Nicola's reputation goes before her and her energy and commitment makes her an excellent fit with the team."

FINANCE DIRECTOR WELCOMES ACCOUNTS APPRENTICE

Nearly 25 years after joining Park Electrical Distributors as an Accounts Apprentice, Finance Director, Bridget Harold, has welcomed the latest recruit to follow in her footsteps.

Park, which is the largest independent electrical wholesaler in the North East, has a long history of growing its workforce, with apprentices operating across the business.

However, the appointment of Paul Dixon, 25, as Apprentice Accounts Administrator, is particularly significant for Bridget who joined the company as an Accounts Apprentice, eventually rising to Finance Director and board member in 2007.

Bridget, from Stanley, County Durham, manages a seven-strong finance and accounts team for the £20 million turnover business, which has its head office on the Team Valley, Gateshead, with branches in Sunderland, Newcastle and Teesside. In addition to its wholesale operation, Park has four specialist divisions – lighting design, energy solutions, building technologies and industrial services.



ACCOUNTANCY FIRM EXPANDS R&D TAX TEAM

A North East accountancy firm with offices in Newcastle and Darlington has appointed a new R&D Tax Executive taking the total headcount of the R&D Tax team to eight.

Dakota Brown has joined the tax department at Haines Watts North East. With a first class honours in Accountancy and Finance, and experience in client-facing roles including a previous role as a mortgage advisor, Dakota is well placed to advise Haines Watts' wide-ranging portfolio on all areas of R&D taxation.

Commenting on her new role at Haines Watts, Dakota said: "I'm excited to be part of the Haines Watts team. I was attracted to the company because of its excellent reputation for client relationships and delivery. The company invests in the development and training of its people which is great to be part of - I'm sure my skills will develop as my career progresses here at Haines Watts."



GOOD THINGS RETURN TO THOSE WHO WAIT

I thought I would recycle an article I wrote a year or so ago. The reason for doing so is the subject provides an answer to the loss of Accumulation and Maintenance Trusts, whereby money is gifted to minors but which they cannot access until mature enough to manage it.



Peter Rutherford

In other words, the parent or grandparent keeps control of the purse strings whilst taking effective steps to reduce their IHT bill.

So far this solution is proving popular in London and other parts of the UK. However, it is yet to gain traction in the North East. Consequently, I thought a reminder appropriate.

"In an effort to make financial issues a little more entertaining, I will now encourage you to drift off into a fantasy world from long, long ago.

"Luke Skywalker, C-P3O and R2-D2 are taking a break from filming the next Star Wars film which has the working title "Gordon Brown stole my trusts."

Luke chirps up "It is a real shame that Gordon Brown made Discretionary Trusts and Accumulation and Maintenance trusts almost redundant back in 2006."

"I agree." C-P3O becomes quite animated. "The ability to make a gift and have it fall out of your estate for Inheritance Tax purposes, whilst maintaining some control, was most useful. There is nothing quite like them available anymore."

R2-D2 whistles. The other two look at him askance. C-P3O pipes up "You are a silly little droid. I think your circuits must have fused. How can you still get the same benefits even now?"

There is a lot more whistling and some spinning. C-P3O strikes several poses. Luke Skywalker's jaw slowly drops.

Luke asks, "So what you are saying is that an individual can place a sizeable sum into an investment and even if that is over the Nil Rate Band, it will fall out of that person's estate after seven years? And yet they can still control who gets what and when just like the old trusts?"

A whistled "Yes" follows.

"Tell me more as my dad, Darth Vader, wanted to leave me a couple of planets but reckoned that they were too valuable and he didn't fancy the tax at the lifetime IHT rate. He also thinks I am a bit immature to own them outright."

R2-D2 whistles and spins for a good five minutes as he explains it is possible to gift money and to control access by using a life insurance investment bond. In basic terms, it is a contract between two

parties and as such can alter and amend its terms and conditions.

Luke and C-P3O were impressed and the robot patted the droid on the head saying, "I do apologise if I was a little rude earlier. You have surprised me and Master Luke. I think his father would like to discuss this with you." At this point there was a wheezing sound.

The droid shivered and started spinning, looking for an exit. Fortunately, it turned out to be a broken winded Wookiee wandering off set and lighting a cigarette."

I apologise to both Star War fans and non-Star War fans for this parody. However, I hope that the message has come across. It is perfectly feasible to replicate the advantages of both Discretionary Trusts and Accumulation and Maintenance Trusts without creating a charge to Lifetime Gift IHT, regardless of the size of gift.

We have a copy of the legal opinion that supports this proposition, available upon request.

May the Force be with you."

Peter Rutherford is a Director at Rutherford Hughes Ltd. He can be contacted on 0191 229 9600 peter.rutherford@rutherfordhughes.com

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JOINED UP THINKING

Back in the good old days of local offices your tax records were held by whatever district covered that income and any liaison between offices was on more of a 'need to know' basis. But in 2009 HMRC introduced their 'state of the art' super computer system, Connect. And that's exactly what it does, it connects all your information together and it is now being fully deployed by HMRC.

The obvious connection is the ability to link together all tax departments, self assessment, PAYE, corporation tax, VAT, NI etc. That list also includes benefits, tax credits and any child maintenance payments through the CSA. A lot of that is income that you have declared to HMRC via various returns - but are they correct? Connect can check that.

The system will link to the banks including overseas establishments and in December 2016 HMRC sent letters to 10000 individuals who had submitted their 2014-15 tax return without a complete declaration of savings interest. In 2014-15 bank interest had already been taxed at source but now it is paid gross and potentially taxable. It also links to Companies House which gives access to details of directors, shareholders and from there, potential dividends.

There are links to other government agencies such as the Land Registry so HMRC know which



Cyd Smith, Owner, CS Accounting

properties are registered in your name and they know which one is your principal private residence, so who lives in the others? That can be picked up from the connection to the Electoral Role. If your tenants are receiving housing benefit that's traceable too. And if it's a holiday let there's also a link to Airbnb.

Any potential trading online is also traceable. Links to Amazon, Ebay and Gumtree will pull together

any trends in your buying and selling. So if you are, for instance, buying old furniture, renovating it and selling it then Connect will pick up a pattern which HMRC may then link to an undeclared trade. And of course, this online commerce invariably links to payments via providers such as Paypal or via card payments.

Then there's the whole life style aspect. Connect also links to Facebook, Twitter, You Tube etc and also to the DVLA. So when you have You Tube videos of your exotic foreign holidays and photographs on Facebook of your brand new Audi R8 (I wish) it's all there as evidence. No point in claiming that your business is making losses that year!

Is it used and does it work? Well yes. There are lots of figures to prove that. HMRC collected £845 million from self assessment investigation activities in 2013-14 alone. They have secured £100bn from tax evasion and avoidance compliance activities over 5 years. They have recruited 200 extra 'criminal investigators', increased prosecution numbers from 165pa to 1165pa in four years and now win more than 80% of cases in tax tribunals. A lot of HMRC work is now compliance based and assessed by risk and it's this clever piece of kit that's doing the assessing.

I wonder if it will come up with the same answer as Deep Thought. The meaning of life, the universe and everything, is it still 42 and is that taxable?

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Did you grow up in the North East or decide to relocate here in later life?

Yes, born and bred, and proud to be so. I have lived here all my life other than a brief excursion to Cumbria. I went to school and University in the North East and got my first real job working for Bank of Scotland Group in Newcastle.

What is your favourite aspect of business life in the North East?

I love working within the North East professional community. Whilst it's very competitive, this doesn't get in the way of you being able to conduct and transact deals in a friendly and respectful way. I have been humbled by the support this community has given me since I started my business and I will always remember that. This drives me to help others in any way I can.

Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?

It has to be one of the Grey Street networking hotspots of Blake's or Brown's, where you can find a veritable smorgasbord of professional advisers, bankers and venture capitalists.

Where do you like to eat out in the North East?

As I live in Whickham, Newcastle tends to be where we eat out most. Café 21 is fantastic and you never have a bad experience there, but for me the best food you can get in the North East is at Kenny Atkinson's House of Tides. The quality is exceptional. However I cannot miss the opportunity to mention a local family favourite The Jamdani, where the hospitality is unsurpassed. But don't tell anyone or I'll never get a table!

Where do you like to unwind in the North East?

As a family we spend a lot of time on the Northumberland coast at Beadnell or Newton By The Sea. It doesn't matter whether its summer or winter, walks on the beach and the coastal views are amongst the best in the country. The occasional round of golf at Dunstanburgh, Bamburgh or Goswick has been known to feature!

Are the people really friendlier?

Yes I think we are, but I genuinely think Northerner's in general are friendly.

What is your favourite view in the North East?

When you reach the brow of the hill walking down to Lower Newton, the view of the beach and Dunstanburgh Castle in the distance always takes my breath away.

Do you think living and working in the North East offers the same opportunity as elsewhere in the UK?

I think the region suffers from its geographical location as far as opportunity is concerned, maybe because of the relative size of the regional economy. However I do think the region's business community is pretty resilient and is protected to some extent by its remoteness and parochial nature. I think North East business people like to deal with North East business people.

Have you had any experience of working elsewhere and how did it compare?

I have worked mainly in the North East but did work in Cumbria for a brief period. Working and running teams previously for major financial institutions means I have spent a lot of time in Leeds, Manchester and Scotland, but there's nothing quite like being back in the North East.





THE CHANGING FACE OF NORTH EAST NIGHTLIFE

As the summer weather begins to take effect, the eateries, pubs and bars in the cities and towns of our region inevitably get busier, especially those with outside space.



Richard Urron

Even before the summer, the latest **Coffer Peach report** shows that like-for-like sales in the pub and restaurant sector are up 4.4 per cent nationally in April against the same month last year.

The sector is performing well generally. This is particularly evident in relation to those operators who have updated their offering to track trends and spending patterns. There have been significant changes to the type of establishments and their food and drink offerings since the days of cheap drink offers, limited food and queues outside of nightclubs.

It is one thing being busy, but it's important for operators to have a clear picture of how having a busy venue is reflected in financial terms. Regular management accounts reviewed against KPIs are vital and is one way in which RSM has been assisting clients in the sector, producing reports in real time. It is also important that as and when operators open new venues or refurbish existing ones, all available tax allowances are identified and claimed, a key financial benefit that can sometimes be missed by busy business owners.

The smoking ban and change to licensing hours have undoubtedly had a significant impact on the sector, as has the increase in the number of

national operators in areas such as Newcastle's Grey Street and Eldon Square's Grey's Quarter. These national chains sit alongside some excellent local independent operators all offering something a little different with gourmet burgers, wood fire pizzas, real BBQs and clean eating all now being available next to the more traditional operators.

This is also the case with bars and pubs. Whilst national chains and large corporate landlords will always be present, it's the rise in craft breweries, micro pubs and gin bars that is testament to the type of experience the typical customer is now looking for. The drinks selection is bigger and better than it has ever been but evidently now it's how drinks are served, with branded mixers such as the North East's own Fentimans and fresh ingredients, that is just as important as the choice and brand of spirit.

Premiumisation of food and beverage sides of the leisure sector has resulted in the consumer having a wider choice and the ability to almost tailor their afternoon or evening out to a bespoke experience.

The North East is a hotbed for craft breweries, with the established names such as Wylam with their magnificent venue in Exhibition Park, Maxim, born out of the ashes of Vaux, and Tynebank with an impressive facility along the River Tyne

sitting alongside the new kids in town such as Almasty Brewing Co, Anarchy Brew Co and Box Social Brewing, to name but a few. This has left the consumer with a real alternative to the large corporate brewing groups.

Last, but certainly not least, are the fantastic theatre and music venues in the region, from the iconic Sage Gateshead, the newly improved Boilershop in the Stephenson Quarter and the legendary Cluny, to the second season of Kynren close to Auckland Castle and the unique Live Theatre on Newcastle's Quayside. There are several generous tax breaks available to the creative sectors and these can assist with the real cost of productions and performances.

All in all, the quality of choice in the North East has never been better, so here's to a great summer. Fingers crossed the weather keeps its side of the bargain so we can all enjoy it in the sun.



For more information on how RSM can assist leisure and hospitality businesses, please contact Richard Urron, Tax Partner and North East Head of Leisure & Hospitality, on 0191 255 7091 or richard.urrone@rsmuk.com or your usual RSM contact.

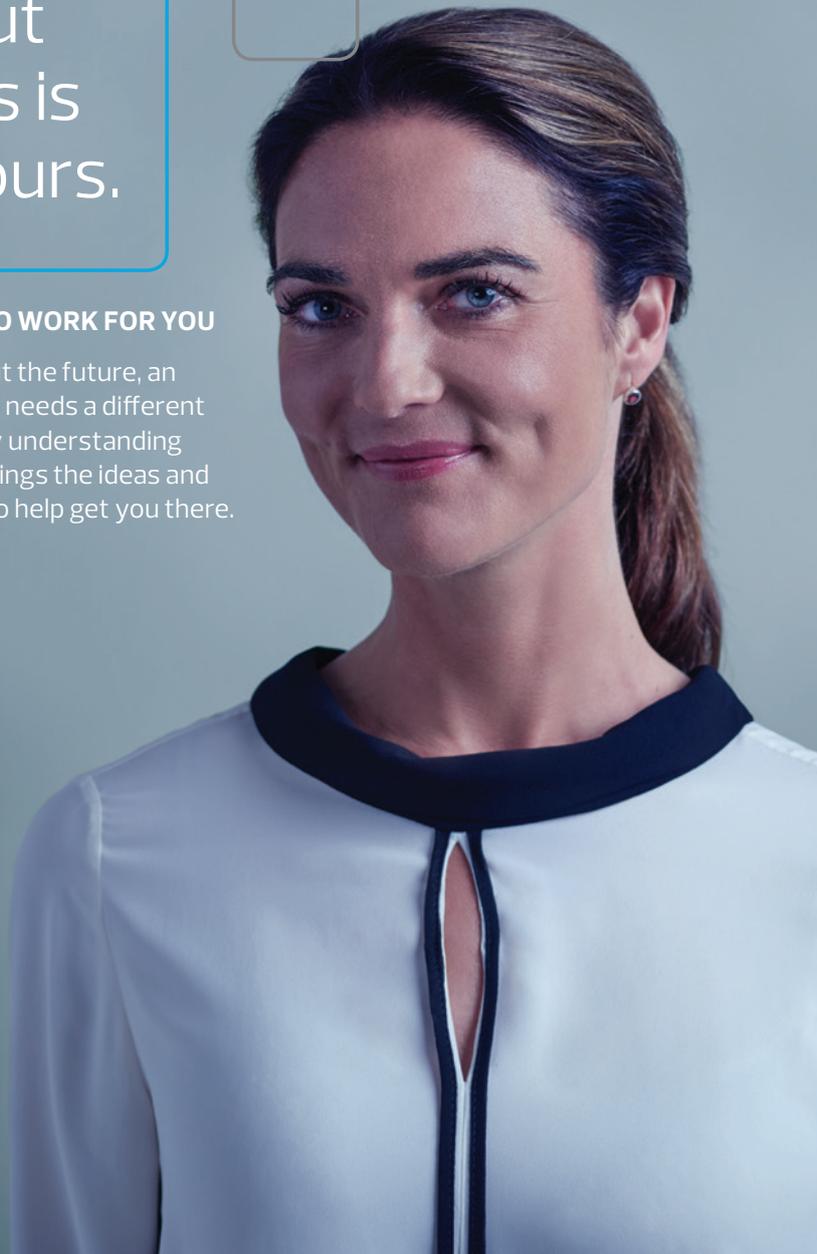


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ARE NORTH EAST BUSINESSES PREPARED FOR THE YEAR AHEAD? – ESPECIALLY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

After more than 15 years working at Lloyds Bank, Simon Quin, has just been appointed as the Area Director for SME Global Transaction Banking in the North East.



Leigh Taylor and Simon Quin

After previously working as head of International Trade for the Bank, Simon will now return to his roots in the North East, to lead a team of 10 regional managers specialising in asset-based lending facilities for businesses with a turnover of between £1m and £25m.

He plans to use his expertise to help businesses in the North East to prosper. Here he discusses how North East businesses can manage their cashflow more effectively, particularly in uncertain times.

After the events of the past 12 months in particular, businesses in the North are quickly becoming used to dealing with political and economic uncertainty. But are they doing so at the expense of greater pressure on their working capital?

Working capital is vital to businesses as it's the amount of money a company needs in order to cover its day-to-day running costs.

According to the first Lloyds Bank Working Capital Index (WCI), which launched last month, pressure on working capital is at a 13-year high, with businesses in the North having £59.6bn tied up in everyday operating activities.

The more money that is tied up, the less is available for investment or reducing debt, so it's important that businesses prioritise keeping these funds as accessible as possible.

How can companies improve their working capital effectively?

Firstly, implementation of any changes needs to be seen as a priority throughout the business. There

needs to be a clear vision and appropriate senior sponsorship to manage any challenges that may happen across business units.

The action plan should be clear and should be included in business targets and objectives so that it can be adopted across all parts of a company. If an organisation is not fully motivated and aligned to the goal of working capital improvement, any programme will meet resistance.

While different parts of a business have conflicting priorities – whether it's the accounts team chasing invoices, or the relationship team looking after suppliers and clients – it's important that the working capital strategy is executed by all.

By having a good management structure that oversees all departments, the strategy for effective working capital can be achieved.

For these management teams, it's vital that correct measurement procedures are put in place to analyse the payment and collection processes, and inventory management information should be at the right level of detail to focus attention on areas of improvement.

Bolster your working capital plan with new technology and skills

A technology-only solution is not the answer but it can be an enabler to increase real-time focus. Equipping staff with the right skills and knowledge in working capital will go a long way in increasing focus and ensuring changes are sustained.

Whether it's the owner-manager, managing

director or financial director, those responsible for a business' finances should look at improving working capital.

While this needs a cross-functional approach, those involved in finance play an important role in developing a case for change. As part of this, businesses should be aware of the full range of levers available to them, both process improvement and financial solution, to improve working capital.

Why focus on working capital?

Tidying up your finances may seem like a laborious task, but it can greatly benefit the growth of a business if done efficiently and sustainably.

The successful management of working capital releases cash back in to the company, and enables the business to accelerate its strategic objectives whether that is new product or market development, paying down debt or meeting shareholder expectations.

To simplify this, Lloyds Bank has created a working capital management tool that allows our colleagues to analyse the cycles of their clients, benchmark them against their peers and identify financial opportunities and challenges.

Speaking to a working capital expert can improve a company's cashflow, reduce any potential risks posed by market uncertainty and, ultimately, help towards achieving a prosperous Britain.

SPECULATE TO ACCUMULATE WITH INCENTIVISED INVESTMENTS

There is a wide range of products and services available to UK investors that allow various tax advantages and benefits, with associated risk and reward relationships.

While most people opt to invest their hard-earned cash in low-risk ventures that are likely to guarantee a return, albeit a small one, others could be attracted by plans that are of a longer-term, higher risk nature if incentivised to do so by 30 per cent tax relief, tax free dividends and inheritance tax relief.

Venture Capital Trusts (VCTs) and the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) between them offer these benefits in order to encourage investment into smaller, less established companies.

Despite the inherent risk involved with investing in companies of this type, the tax benefits can make this type of investment attractive to certain types of investor.

VCTs and EIS investments are also a good way of supplementing retirement plans. For example, the maximum amount that an individual may hold within a single or in multiple pension plans during their lifetime is currently capped at £1 million. This is a large sum of money for most people, however more and more investors, particularly those who are fortunate enough to be members of final salary based schemes, are finding that this limit



Stephen Sumner, Managing Director at Explore Wealth Management.

is restricting the benefit of making future pension contributions towards their retirement.

VCTs and EIS plans therefore could provide one viable alternative to such investors as they offer similar income tax reliefs.

Of course, VCTs and EIS investments aren't for everyone. The relatively high-risk nature of these plans must be taken into account and you must always be aware that you could actually get back less money than you initially put in. For this

reason, we would always recommend consulting a professional financial adviser who can talk you through the pros and cons and help you decide if this is the right type of investment for you.

At Explore Wealth Management, our team of experienced advisers can help you to make investments with confidence as well as provide professional, honest advice on a range of other financial services, including cash flow forecasting, pension schemes and retirement planning.

For more information, visit www.explorewealth.co.uk or call us on 0191 285 1555 to arrange your free, no-obligation consultation.

FUSION OF BAND AND BUSINESS SET TO HIT THE RIGHT NOTE AT NATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

A North East steelband is set to take to the stage at a national music festival thanks to support from a local PR firm of the same name. Fusion Steelband has been selected to play on the Main Stage at the Music for Youth national festival in Birmingham on the 7th of July.

Northumberland-based Fusion PR has donated £500 towards the cost of transport for band members and their instruments.

The band secured its place at Birmingham having qualified from the Regional Festival Series of Music for Youth held in Wakefield in March.

Musical Director Claire Falcus said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the talent in our band so we're incredibly grateful to Fusion PR for helping us get to Birmingham. Without the generosity of local people and businesses our group of amazing young musicians would miss out on this prestigious opportunity to perform.

"The band is working hard in rehearsals to ensure we fly the flag for the North East when we get to Birmingham."

Fusion Steelband is an ensemble of various bands from across the North East, led by Cramlington



Fusion PR's Joanne Hunter (centre) with Fusion Steelband members Jenny Chan, Claire Falcus, Caitlin Lockey, Sophie Purvis and Josephine McCabe.

Caribbean Crew. The 30 strong band is made up of musicians ranging in age from six to 21 years. The band also plays at events and gigs across the North East.

Joanne Hunter, Head of Client Services at Fusion

PR, said: "Having seen the band perform live I've no doubt it will put in another showstopper of a performance in Birmingham. The music is fantastic of course but we've also been really impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of everyone involved in the band and of course, we love the name!"

Anyone wishing to support Fusion Steelband or with an interest in booking the band should contact Claire Falcus via cramlingtoncaribbeancrew@outlook.com

CASE STUDIES



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

Every month is different in the mortgage world with a wide variety of scenarios presented to us and June was no different.

First time buyer applications are on the increase, which is an indicator that the lifeblood of the housing market remains confident in the face of often negative media reporting of the property market.

All of the following mortgage offers were successfully received from mainstream lenders at prime rates - could we help you?

First time buyer – one client on a fixed term contract, the other about to leave self employment and take up an employed role again on a fixed term contract. Tricky circumstances for some lenders, but many well known lenders can consider these circumstances.

Poor credit first time buyer with two self employed income streams – our first time buyer had some fairly minor historic missed and late payments, which were enough to rule out some lenders. Alongside this her self employed income was both as a sole trader and as a shareholder of a limited company.

Interest only re-mortgage – the clients interest only mortgage was due to end soon and due to their age and make up of their income, mainstream bank and building society options were not available. We

sourced a mortgage from a private bank to ensure that the old mortgage can be repaid and the clients can stay in their home.

Marital breakdown – our client owned her home jointly, but as a result of a marital breakdown needed to re-mortgage to buy out her former husband. We identified a suitable lender and secured a mortgage offer within two days enabling the client to move on with her life.

Buy to let investor – already turned away by their own bank due to new buy to let mortgage regulations, we successfully re-mortgaged two properties enabling the release of capital for property improvements, alongside 5 year fixed rates offering safety and significantly lower monthly payments.

Repayment of a house builder shared equity loan – our client bought her house via a shared equity scheme 10 years ago. She was now under pressure to repay this loan and turned to us after being refused by her current lender.

This is a snapshot of the enquiries that we have received with positive outcomes for our clients. Local, face to face, independent mortgage advice can smooth the whole process and we would be delighted to help.

Paul Hardingham and Tony Ibson are Mortgage and Protection Advisers at Innovate Mortgages and Loans. Both have over 20 years of experience advising individuals and businesses across the North East of England. They can be contacted for bespoke advice at paul@innovateml.co.uk or tony@innovateml.co.uk or call 0191 223 3514.

Your home is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loan secured on it.

DEVELOPER UNVEILS NEW PLANS AFTER CONSULTATION

The developer planning to renovate and extend a famous historic building in Newcastle into a business hub and conference centre is ready to unveil exciting and revised plans after extensive consultation.

Pendower Hall Limited wants to breathe life back into the Grade II listed building, which has stood empty for a decade by transforming it into a hub for business development.

Providing a range of state of the art office accommodation with onsite finance and technology support it plans to include an exhibition, conference and event venue for up to 450 people.

Exhibitions of the proposals in late 2016 were followed by extensive public consultation during 2017 and together they have helped to refine the designs for refurbishing and adapting the former home of the Pease family into a business campus suitable for creating jobs and inward investment. Feedback from adjacent residents to have more light into their gardens has helped to shape plans to redesign the landscaping and setting of the hall.

Careful attention to detail will ensure the refurbishment reflects the historic characteristics of the hall, whilst the many archaeological finds from the nearby Military Way and Vallum will provide the basis of unique exhibitions, displays and interpretations for visitors, schools and those working on the site.

David Redhead, Project Manager at Pendower Hall Ltd, said: "Everybody benefits from the restoration of Pendower Hall. A derelict building is brought back to use, jobs are created and a landmark project such as this, with the significant investment into the area it brings, can only positively help the pace of change in and around Benwell.

"We've carefully considered all the feedback we've been given on the initial proposals, we've changed the car parking, landscaping, detailing of the internal

refurbishment, external appearance and size of the extension and how we protect the heritage and archaeology. Our revised proposals now balance the need to have a commercially viable scheme with the heritage, planning and landscaping aspects of the site."

Essential to the commercial viability of the scheme is the extension. Peter Nugent is the Conservation Architect at Ainsworth Spark who is using his many years' experience of working on listed buildings to create a stunning extension that balances heritage and business.

The revised plans and proposals will be submitted shortly; council officers and councillors will then consider them with work hoping to start in the Autumn.





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NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

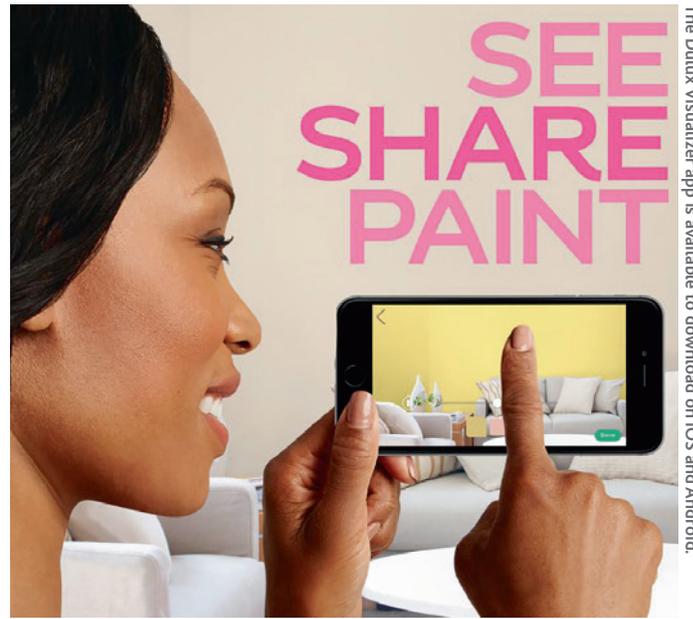
How do you solve a problem if you don't know it exists? For decades people who want to decorate their homes have been heading off, on the bus or in the car, down to their local DIY store, poring over paint samples for ages before selecting a couple to take home and try on their walls. Only to realise they wanted a different colour after all, and having to head back to start all over again. That's how we buy paint though, isn't it?

"As a leading paints and coatings company making the move into developing augmented reality tools might not have been the most logical step," explained Ross Phillips, continuous improvement manager at AkzoNobel in Ashington. "We work closely with our customers across the world and research shows that 30 per cent of consumers struggle to visualize what a colour will look like in their homes, and 39 per cent discuss colour schemes with friends and family before making a purchase."

AkzoNobel developed an augmented reality app that allows customers to try out our colours in their homes and then show others to see what they think too before making a purchase. The Dulux Visualizer app has been downloaded over 10 million times and helps consumers see, share and virtually paint in their chosen colours – before anything is actually applied to the walls.

Innovation for AkzoNobel doesn't just stop at virtual reality tools explains Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel's Ashington site. "We're dedicated to delivering only the highest quality and most innovative solutions to our customers. We do this by utilising the world's most advanced and most sustainable technologies at our manufacturing units and, working together with specialist partners and suppliers, we are continuously improving and perfecting the science of paint-making."

With sustainability at the heart of the business, AkzoNobel's research and development work is delivered as part of its Planet Possible scheme which strives to deliver more value from fewer resources. The science within the company's products helps to conserve energy by keeping buildings cool and save shipping companies both money and carbon emissions by helping their



The Dulux Visualizer app is available to download on iOS and Android.

vessels glide through the sea easier and more efficiently.

In March this year, AkzoNobel also committed to accelerating its sustainability agenda by announcing a new ambition to use 100% renewable energy worldwide and become carbon neutral by 2050.

"Innovation and sustainability have to be invested in continuously," said Jeff. "Be it looking at your customers or looking internally at the things you do day in and day out; there is always scope to make changes and improve."

To find out more about AkzoNobel, visit www.akzonobel.com

#KPSPOTLIGHT ON ASHTON BUTLER

From a young age, many people have ambitions to be a footballer, a pop star or maybe even an astronaut.

But far from floating around in space, KP Simpson's Ashton Butler has always been down to earth – and has made her dream job a reality, thanks to the Jarrow based accountancy firm.

Ashton has been with KP Simpson for a little under two years now in the role of VAT clerk, but don't be fooled, she's far from a newcomer to the accountancy and taxation world, having mapped out a career in the industry from a young age.

"Accountancy and tax has always been something that I've wanted to get into", explains Ashton.

"I've always had a head for numbers and I really enjoy problem solving, so a place in the tax world seemed to make perfect sense to me. No two days are the same at KP Simpson and that applies to clients too.

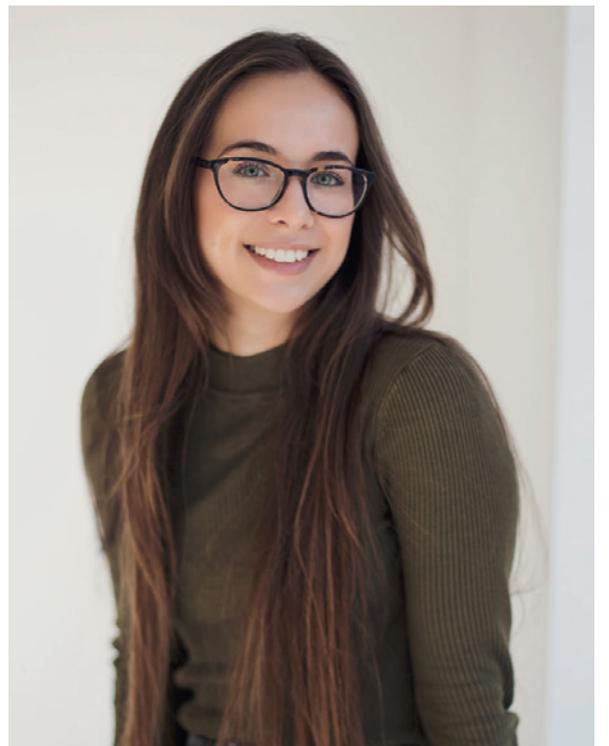
"There's a new set of challenges with each account and to me, it's massively rewarding to be the one who solves them."

Ashton's role sees her give an individual level of service to each and every client, avoiding the one size fits all approach which many other firms may offer. The approach has paid dividends for KP Simpson, whose team of experts looks to turn the view of accountancy on its head – from dull grey landscape, to something much more approachable and friendly.

Ashton says the working atmosphere has a lot to do with that.

"Everyone who works here is always friendly and smiling and that I think that really rubs off on customers. We always have people commenting on how we're different to other accountants and tax companies and I think a lot of it is our attitude to the job.

"We're not grey, we're not dull. We're innovative, auspicious and scrupulous, and we offer service with a smile, not a scowl."



To find out more about KP Simpson and what they can do for you and your business' taxing and accountancy needs, visit www.kpsimpson.co.uk, call 0191 420 0550 or drop them an email to info@kpsimpson.co.uk.



Independent living with Eothen Homes

ONE BEDROOM APARTMENTS FOR THE OVER 75s

Eothen Homes Wallsend has eight new apartments now available to rent.

Overlooking landscaped gardens and accessible by lift, the apartments are ideal for those who wish to live independently within a safe and secure environment.

Tenants have use of a roof-top area, café, outdoor terrace and spacious gardens. Cleaning services, laundry and meals can be secured for an additional charge.

Rents range from £600 - £750 per month, inclusive of maintenance charge, gas, electricity and water but excluding council tax and telephone.

For further details or to arrange a viewing appointment, please call 0191 2819100 or visit www.eothenhomes.org.uk



Gill Burgess is a member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, a unique group of like-minded people who come together through peer-to-peer mentoring and a series of inspirational events to share best practice, create valuable connections and grow their business. For more information, visit www.entrepreneursforum.net

GILL BURGESS

r//evolution

Gill Burgess founded r//evolution and has grown it into one of the region's most respected marketing agencies, servicing a list of well-known clients throughout the UK, across a wide range of sectors.

Tell me a little about your background

I first got into marketing after doing some work experience at Faulkner Browns, the architectural practice. I'd been unsure of the direction I wanted to take, but a conversation with the person that coordinated their marketing activities changed that. My work took me to the North West, where I settled.

In 2002 we suffered a bereavement in the family and this meant spending more time back in the North East. I realised I wanted to move back to the region and dragged my husband and children with me. It was at this point I started the business, more out of necessity than a burning desire to be self-employed, although I had always liked the idea of running my own agency.

How has the business grown?

It's a bit of a cliché, especially for a creative and services business; I started in the spare room of our house in Corbridge, with just me in the company. Within a few months I knew this wasn't sustainable, I found some office space in Hexham and took on my first two members of staff. We were based there until five years ago when we moved to the Northern Design Centre in Gateshead. There are fifteen of us in the company now and we have big plans for growth.

Our first client was in the education sector, which matched my background. I'd say our first big client was Hadrian's Wall Corridor, this was the first of a number of destination-based clients, which is still a sector we do very well in today, although our portfolio is much more diverse. We have clients in sectors including construction, energy, charity, logistics and professional services. Regardless of sector, the one thing our clients have in common is a genuine determination for growth; it's very exciting to be part of that.

What attracted you to join the Scale-up Leader's Academy?

For me the Scale-up Leader's Academy has a number of attractions, but first and foremost I'm looking for a blueprint for growing r//evolution. I'm also looking forward to the mentoring element of the Academy. The timing was perfect for us; it was launched at exactly the time we were looking to scale-up.

It is a great opportunity to share challenges with our peers, and to help them with their scale-up issues too. It was very helpful to hear from Sherry Coutu at the Entrepreneurs' Forum conference, she founded the Scale-up Institute and wrote a report on how UK companies can overcome the barriers to growth.

I'd heard of similar programmes, like Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, so definitely had an idea of what I was looking for. I've been a member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum since the business has been large enough for me to join. It's a different kind of businesses organisation, there is a real will among the members to welcome new people and share the benefits of their experience in business. I don't think any other region has anything like it.

How did the recession affect your business?

In short, it was a difficult experience. I had not seen such a downturn before or since. The phones stopped ringing and existing clients found it harder and harder to get projects signed off. We were well prepared, or as prepared as we could be, we had made sure our list of clients covered different fields across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors.

We got through the recession by focussing on the clients we had and working very hard, there were very few new ones to win. We made sure that the level of service we provided was exceptional.

How has marketing changed since you started the business?

The whole sector has changed massively. While the principles that underpin what we do remain the same, the rise of digital marketing means that on the surface things are dramatically different to how they were in 2002. Digital existed back then, the world had been through the first dot com boom, but the shift has been exponential.

In this time the internet has gone from something that played a small part in our lives to something that underpins the entire human experience for most people, whether they know it or not, and marketing has followed this trend. One of the big challenges for a lot of marketing agencies today is finding people with the right digital skills; we have even recruited from outside of the region.

What would you say your Unique Selling Point is?

We're the results agency. We have always been aware of the need to produce a demonstrable return on investment for our clients and use this to maintain an almost religious focus on results. The rise of digital plays into this in a big way, as you can get feedback on the success of a campaign instantly.

How do you keep your team motivated?

We recruit for attitude and have a stringent

process for ensuring that when we bring new people in, they are a good fit. Once we've found someone with the right attitude, we make sure they have a comprehensive understanding of our roadmap for business growth and their part in it. We also invest in our people and their personal development.

On top of the professional side of work, we're a very energised team with lots of opportunities for social and charitable activities. Recently we have been supporting the Gateshead Foodbank. I suppose the thing that underpins motivation in the company is that people are thoroughly engaged with business metrics and understand that there are good opportunities for career progression.

How has your own motivation changed since you started the business?

I still wake up in the morning excited to go to work. I love growing the company, and helping our clients to grow theirs through marketing. I would say my motivation is the same if not greater.

How does the business structure work?

We have split the company into three service areas, each led by a head of service, one of whom has been with the company for some time and two who are relatively new. Each of these is almost a business within a business, looking after one of our main competencies. This layer structure and layer of middle management has allowed us to improve decision making and communication, while improving the performance of each team and the business overall.

Have you had a mentor?

I have had a mentor in the past, for almost two years. This was someone experienced in business growth who shared invaluable knowledge with me. As I mentioned, I'm looking forward to being linked up with a mentor as part of the Scale-up Leader's Academy. For entrepreneurs a mentor who you can trust and respect, who has no agenda that conflicts with your own, can be a really positive thing.

Any future plans you'd like to tell us about?

Obviously we're looking to grow the business. We have recently created r//ecommerce as a sister brand to deliver our e-commerce work. In the short term we're looking to add another service area, further into the future we're looking to add to the list of clients we have outside of the region, and maybe even open an additional base to support them.



Ivan Jepson, director of business development at Gateshead College.

COLLEGE SUPPORTS FINANCIAL GROWTH OF NORTH EAST SMES

Gateshead College is working in partnership with North East businesses to shape the training and future workforces that are boosting the region's growth and financial prosperity.

Its dedicated team of staff is committed to generating growth opportunities for local employers through bespoke workforce development programmes that have helped businesses widen their skills base, sharpen their entrepreneurial instincts and become more profitable.

These training programmes are driven by, and tailored to, the needs of each individual employer. The overall aim is to provide the training and skills which are vital for companies to scale up, grow and reach their full earning and business potential.

This end goal is also the principal driving force behind Funding Solutions for Businesses, a £4.9m skills programme that helps SMEs develop collaborative projects, work placements and internships to enable employers to add the skills they need to maintain or build their business and ultimately meet financial goals.

Under this programme, experts at the college help SMEs by undertaking a detailed training needs analysis to identify any issues which are preventing the growth of the company. The team at the

college then designs a bespoke work placement or internship to support the business with its development plans, and matches an appropriate candidate.

The programme, which is funded by the Skills Funding Agency and therefore free for businesses to take part in, is open to North East-based third sector organisations and SMEs operating across a range of industries. Gateshead College works with SMEs that specialise in areas such as advanced manufacturing, energy, professional services, creative, digital, software and technology – industries that are vitally important to the fortunes of the North East economy.

For many of these companies, apprenticeships and trainees are a key part of their workforce development strategy and it is well documented that apprentices can present a significant return on investment as well as a positive impact on business productivity and profit margins. According to official Government figures, companies that employ an apprentice boost their productivity by an average of £214 per week.

Ivan Jepson, director of business development at Gateshead College, said: "We work closely with organisations including the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, the North East England Chamber of Commerce and the Entrepreneurs' Forum so that we can support the financial growth and success of the region's SME community. Many SMEs need an injection of entrepreneurial talent that can help them develop new products, processes and services which ultimately lead to increased productivity and profitability.

"With our track record in the SME marketplace and through schemes such as Funding Solutions for Businesses, we can help small employers scale up and develop their business, which inevitably has a positive impact on the regional economy. It also creates employment and work experience opportunities for students.

"Many companies simply do not have the necessary skills to be able to meet their future growth projections. It is our role to help employers overcome this pressing challenge through workforce development programmes that allow them to generate a better return on their investment."

To find out more about Gateshead College and the courses on offer, visit www.gateshead.ac.uk/employer

EXPORTS OFFER OPPORTUNITY TO THE NORTH EAST

By the Entrepreneurs' Forum



New customers are the heartbeat of a growing business and ambitious firms are always looking at ways to develop their products and services in order to attract new sales as quickly as possible.

Seemingly ever keen to expand domestically, all too often growing companies fail to make the leap into overseas markets. Whether that's down to a fear of the challenges and risks, or difficulties with red tape and legislation, there's no doubt that exporting is a valuable but under-utilised route for businesses looking to expand their customer base.

Last year the North East exported more than £10bn in goods, just slightly less than the amount we imported. Of all of the UK's regions our trade deficit is smallest, apart from Scotland which has a modest surplus.

While our balance of trade is in relative terms good, the often overlooked truth is that our region has in fact got the lowest percentage of businesses that trade internationally; only 4% or just over 4,250 companies in 2016.

While at first glance this may seem like a negative, especially considering the high proportion of North East exports accounted for by large multinationals, our reputation in areas such as engineering and manufacturing means we have huge, untapped potential in a world where business growth is increasingly linked to global trade.

It will come as no surprise that the North East, along with every other region in England, exports more machinery and transport equipment than

any other kind of goods. Much of this can be attributed to big international firms such as Nissan, Hitachi, Caterpillar and Komatsu, but if you scratch the surface you will find that we have a number of home grown success stories selling around the globe.

Northumberland-based Miller UK, for example, started out as a mobile welding service in the late 1970s and now supplies innovative solutions for earth moving and related equipment to the world, selling through both large Original Equipment Manufacturers and its own network of distributors.

Ebac, now famed for being the only washing machine manufacturer in the UK, sells water coolers and dehumidifiers the world over. Having invented the only dehumidifier specifically designed for the UK market, Ebac founder John Elliott launched the company's export journey when it became the best-selling dehumidifier domestically and he saw its potential in countries with similar climates.

Wessington Cryogenics was founded in the North East in 1984 and produces cryogenic vessels for customers around the globe. It is an example of an exporter with a highly specialised capability, so specialised in fact that overseas clients have included NASA, The European Organization for Nuclear Research – better known as CERN and home of the Large Hadron Collider, and the United States Air Force.

Outside of the world of manufactured goods, a number of entrepreneurial businesses in the North East are fuelling their scale-up ambitions with exports. Gateshead-based Blue Kangaroo Design sells its time to companies as high profile as Disney and Warner Brothers, while TTE Technical Training Group sells training and consultancy in a number of countries to fund its activities in Tees Valley.

Government grant support is available for product development, job and skills development and exporting, you just need to ask. On top of this the Department for International Trade, the Entrepreneurs' Forum and other business support organisations are ready and willing to help.

The appeal of goods made in Britain is strong right now. Independent research commissioned by Barclays showed that products labelled as 'Made in Britain' could demand higher prices when sold abroad compared to those with no specific country of origin.

In a world where making a profit is an increasingly globalised affair, businesses that successfully take advantage of export opportunities and Britain's reputation for quality will be among those which grow the fastest.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum support more than 300 aspirational North East business owners in all sectors, helping to expand their networks, improve leadership skills, share experience, create new opportunities and grow their business. For more information call 0191 500 7780 or visit www.entrepreneursforum.net

TRAVEL SAFE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO HELP NORTH EAST BUSINESSES TRAVELLING ABROAD



A joint initiative between Travel Bureau Corporate and Athena Risk has been launched to help the region’s businesses protect their employees when travelling.

The two North East-based companies have joined forces to launch Travel Safe to provide a combined booking and safeguarding service pitched at companies working in emerging and developing markets.

Businesses signing up to Travel Safe will receive a holistic business travel service, with everything from transportation and accommodation, to risk mitigation and emergency support, provided through a bespoke dashboard accessible online and through a unique app.

The service was developed in response to an increased number of enquiries from businesses wanting to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their mobile workforce. It will support the North East’s growing overseas workforce and help prepare the region’s businesses for a predicted 50% increase in

the number of mobile employees by 2020.

Anne Bromley, Joint Managing Director of Travel Bureau, said: “Travel Bureau and Athena Risk have come together to deliver an integrated approach to travel management and risk mitigation services.

“Travel Safe is at the cutting edge of best practice and is aligned with the latest guidance contained within PAS 3001:2016 Travelling for Work which sets industry standards. Travel Safe will help business to grow, develop and be successful on a global scale.

“It’s an exciting time for British businesses as Brexit and a changing global business landscape presents new opportunities across the world. Together Travel Bureau and Athena Risk want to help the North East lead the charge and help secure the region’s economic prosperity for years to come.”

Jason Hicks, Director of Operations at Athena Risk, said: “Travel Safe brings together two vital services for businesses working overseas; travel management and travel safety.

“As an increasing number of North East companies conduct business overseas in developing and emerging markets, the policies and procedures which companies have in place become even more important.

“Business owners are responsible for implementing measures to prevent or deal with any crises that employees working abroad may encounter. With Travel Safe, business can be certain that they have experts on hand to work tirelessly on their behalf, before, during and even after any trip.”

For more information on Travel Safe email travelsafe@travelb.co.uk.

FINANCIAL RISKS TO SMES MOVING INTO EMERGING-MARKETS



Over the past years, we have seen an unprecedented rise in the fortunes of emerging-market banks: their collective revenues grew from \$268 trillion in 2002 to \$1,400 trillion in 2012. In addition, for the past couple of years, developed markets effectively exported political and socio-economical risks to emerging markets.

This was perhaps most plainly illustrated by the 'Brexit' vote here in the UK, and the unexpected outcome of the US presidential election – both of which triggered volatility in emerging markets and elsewhere.

However, all of these fundamental challenges seem to have been much less damaging for emerging-market considerations. In other words, the highly collective revenue by the banks and the uncertainty, as well as a decrease in domestic investments, maps out a clear conclusion that the exploration of the emerging-markets by fast-growing SMEs has dramatically increased.

However, the mixture of fast growing SMEs' and global uncertainty, financial risk management has now moved to the top of the agenda for CEOs and their boards.

Via our experience, and a survey conducted by the Risk Management Association on SME practices in enterprise financial risk management, shows there are four main areas of focus:

1. Act on the risk culture across the organisation.
2. Improve the bottom line via enhanced collections processes.

3. Develop innovative risk models through data analytics.

4. Start to deploy more advanced investment allocation approaches.

Carlos Hardenberg, Managing Director at Templeton Emerging Markets Group, highlighted the fact that currencies are once more in retreat. That being said, SMEs in Emerging Markets will start facing some challenges in their day-to-day operations. For example, what if India started imposing capital controls? What will it happen to all of the Software companies from the UK and from the rest of G10 that have outsourced several of their development operations in India?

According to the executives surveyed in the 2016/17, Kroll Annual Global Fraud and Risk Report: "Fraud, cyber and security incidents are now the "new normal" for most international companies across the world".

- Nearly 9/10 executives in the sector reported that their company fell victim to fraud in the past year.
- Theft of physical assets is the most prevalent kind of fraud suffered in the sector, reported by 39 percent of respondents.

- 89% Cyber incidents were also commonplace in the sector;

- In the age of big data, nearly a 25% were victims of data deletion by a malicious insider.

- 57% respondents in the sector reported the occurrence of at least one security incident over the course of the year.

Tommy Helsby, Co-Chairman, Kroll Investigations & Disputes, says: "This year's Kroll Global Fraud and Risk Report shows that it's becoming an increasingly risky world, with the largest ever proportion of companies reporting fraud and similarly high levels of cyber and security breaches. The impact of such incidents is significant, with punitive effects on company revenues, business continuity, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and employee morale.

With fraud, cyber, and security incidents becoming the new normal for companies all over the world, it's clear that organisations need to have systemic processes in place to prevent, detect, and respond to these risks if they are to avoid reputational and financial damage.

SHOULD YOU RE-HIRE AN EX-EMPLOYEE?



Bryony Gibson, Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, discusses the rise in 'boomerang recruitment' and why going back is becoming the new norm.

With the number of people out of work at a 40 year low, many industries are finding it difficult to recruit highly skilled staff.

Couple that with an evolving workforce where people are loyal when feeling challenged and fulfilled, but quick to broaden their horizons elsewhere if that changes, then the challenge of building a great team is getting tougher and tougher.

So could re-hiring ex-employees be the way to bridge the skills gap? Or is it just a catastrophe waiting to happen?

Well 'boomerang' hires have always been a contentious area of recruitment, not least because their success depends heavily on your company policy, the availability of new talent in your sector, how people are welcomed back by old colleagues and the reason they left in the first place.

That means it's practically impossible to say whether this is the right or wrong choice for you as a business, but re-hiring is a rising trend and a very successful practice for seasonal employers. In an era where recruitment is being defined by regular job hopping, maybe it's time to reassess your approach.

Concerns that people will leave again quickly, upset team morale or return with the same baggage

they left with are common amongst employers; but bringing back previously high performing and engaged recruits has the potential to deliver huge mutual benefit.

Whether the individual departed a year ago, or five years ago, they will have new experience, connections and ideas to offer.

Already familiar with the business, its culture and the people they will be working with, a returning hire can save you time and money in terms of recruitment fees, the induction they require and their ability to hit the ground running almost immediately.

Rather than divide teams, if you get the right former employee it will boost staff retention as co-workers will see that the grass isn't always greener and your company is in fact worth coming back to. Boomerang recruitment strategies are now the norm in the USA, where a recent Workforce Institute survey found 76% of HR professionals are happy to recruit former employees; despite nearly half saying they used to have policies in place against this exact practice.

To develop your own plan, why not start by making sure communication channels are open with any valued ex-employees; even if it's just regular contact through LinkedIn.

Going forward you should be using exit interviews as a way to really get under the skin of why people are leaving. If the time comes to re-hire them, this in-depth knowledge will give you the insight you need in order to make the right decision for both parties.

Once re-hired, you must focus on making the early transition back into the business as smooth as possible. Build a bespoke induction programme that aims to counter any initial awkwardness that could be felt on both sides.

While your ex-employee gets re-accustomed to the workplace, introduce them to the different teams as if they were new to the company and, most importantly, give them very clear guidance in terms of what you expect from the very start.

Of course not all former employees are good re-hire material, but people and organisations are both capable of change and in a lot of cases a move could have been the best thing for everyone.

If you're a forward-thinking company with a strong culture, boomerang workers can be an untapped resource. By contributing quickly and fitting in effortlessly, they will often repay your decision to hire them with extra effort and loyalty; all good reasons to keep them in mind the next time you need to fill a vacancy.

Contact Bryony for career advice and for help finding the right tax & accountancy role or recruits on (0191) 375 9983.

Alternatively, visit www.bryonygibson.com, connect on LinkedIn or follow @bryonygibson.

**BRYONY
GIBSON
CONSULTING**

Recruiting specialists, helping you grow.

NORTH EAST FIRM VOWS TO MAKE APPRENTICESHIP MARKET MORE INCLUSIVE

Chris Quickfall, CEO of CognAssist, on coping with his own learning difficulty and how his business can help apprentices with hidden learning needs.



As the only kid in my school class unable to spell my own name, I have first-hand experience of the practical consequences of thinking differently to the norm. Whilst I was studying Mechanical Engineering at Northumbria University, I was diagnosed with having dyslexia, at the age of 21.

Naturally, this was somewhat of a shock to me, but I soon got it into my head that it's just an alternative way of thinking. By this time, I had already developed coping strategies which aided me when obstacles came my way. Once I had begun to receive strategy support, along with the coping mechanisms I developed myself, my progression in my studies vastly improved.

I later spent a year working for Shell Oil Company as an undergraduate, but ended up turning down a full-time position with them to start my own business - e-Quality Learning - during my final year of university. It was here where I provided assistive technologies to people with learning difficulties here in the North East.

After graduating, I was determined to make this type of support more widely available so others could also benefit, for both those learning practical skills as apprentices and learning academically in schools, colleges and universities.

Now one of the largest providers of disability services in Europe, the company I started in my student bedroom has a workforce of over 100 people, with our head office in Hebburn and an office in London. We're experts in blending technology with applied neuroscience and focus this skill-set to design solutions to support end-users with hidden learning needs.

My flagship product, CognAssist, was launched last year to aid apprenticeship providers in their support of learners with hidden learning needs and has since seen superb growth. Presently we are only aimed at apprenticeship providers that are on the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP). In upcoming years, as we expand, we are hoping to increase our services to a wider range of training and apprenticeship providers.

Our three main benefits - improve your Ofsted grade, enhance learner progression and support the drawdown of LSF1 - has attracted various training providers such as Learndirect, InTraining and Bradford College among many more, so that that can ensure they are getting the best out of their learners as well as providing suitable and well accommodated resources.

CognAssist is the first product of its kind in the UK and has been developed to screen learners in further education and apprenticeships through a simple but scientifically engineered assessment. This identifies a range of learning needs and provides a management tool for supporting those learners identified. It also helps the apprenticeship providers attract the right Government funding for their work, so as well as improving learner journey, its revenue generating too.

In the U.K. only 47% of those with a disability are currently working, and although this is increasing slightly, it's important we accommodate their learning journey by offering tailored support to suit their needs, so that they can maximise their potential and secure the right employment. Our passion in doing so has allowed us to lead in this industry as we continue to drive change.

Around 20% of the population have some sort of learning need which is rarely identified. I know from our own apprentices the challenge of retention and progression due to difficulties in learning, so I'm really happy this innovation is now available.

Contact us today to find out how CognAssist can help your business on (0191) 230 66 88. Alternatively, you can visit www.CognAssist.com, email us at info@cognassist.com or follow us @CognAssist

LATE NIGHT BAR TO SUNDAY LUNCH STAR... IN JUST 8 HOURS!

By Michael Grahamslaw

Last month I wrote about trying to wangle a Sunday Lunch review of Bonbar and I'm pleased to report that I've landed the opportunity to do just that!

As we all know, Bonbar is a popular fixture in Newcastle's vibrant nightlife. Every Saturday, partygoers flock in their droves to dance, drink cocktails and suck the marrow out of life. Resident "DJ Cueball" spins an eclectic mix of RnB, Hip Hop and Commercial House and the revelry often extends well past the 4am mark. Renowned for bespoke drinks packages and private booths, it's a venue frequented by much of the Tyneside glitterati. What's remarkable then is its rapid transformation from late night bar to fine dining restaurant with lunch beginning every Sunday at 12pm.

When I pitched up recently with my Wife Lisa and Son Jack, we all marvelled at how pristine the dining area looked. The surfaces had been wiped down, the parquet flooring looked sleek and immaculate and the bottles and cocktail vessels had been replaced by knives, forks and sideplates. There was seemingly no trace of the previous night's tomfoolery.

Like much of the Bonbar faithful, we'd also "played out" that Saturday evening so were feeling a little worse for wear. Luckily, at the head of the menu is the "Pick Me Up" section which speaks of various different incantations certain

to quell even the most tormenting of hangovers. It was 3 Aperol Spritz's all round then which we sipped on whilst surveying a delicious-looking Sunday lunch offering.

Sunday lunch is a real favourite at Bonbar and the sense of quality is evident. They champion fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and dishes are presented with flair and expression. Sharing boards are often used and - much like our business lunch last month - this was fayre perfect for relaxed social grazing.

Although subject to change, there was a tantalising array of starters on offer and we kicked off with three of the very best. First up was a lovely cream of broccoli soup with toasted croutons. Thick and flavourful, this boasted a delightful texture and was the perfect way to begin. Next was the Thai crab cakes spiked with a ginger & sweet chilli dressing which was suitably tangy and especially tasty. Finally, there was the chicken ribs in a sticky BBQ jerky - a sloppy yet smile-inducing affair which ticked all the boxes for me. Of course we also decided on an excellent, easy-drinking Malbec which chaperoned these flavours perfectly.

Then came the main event. We'd heard some glowing reports of Bonbar's Sunday

Lunch and were not to be disappointed here. Diners are given the choice of either beef, lamb or chicken with vegetarian options and other alternatives also available. I personally have a fondness for chicken and they were even kind enough to serve it off the bone as is my preference. The Bonbar team really are immensely accommodating and we were looked after flawlessly throughout the duration of our meal.

Needless to say the chicken was cooked supremely well as was the beef chosen by Lisa and Jack. This was served with Yorkshire pudding, "proper" gravy and a sharing board of veg and potatoes. This included creamy mash, duck fat roast potatoes, garden peas with crispy pancetta pieces and a medley of carrots and parsnip in a wholegrain mustard & maple syrup glaze. Delicious!

Of course, all of this is set against a backdrop of easy opulence. The décor at Bonbar is quite something. Ceilings are high and ornately corniced, walls are bathed in ambient purple spotlighting and booths are nicely spaced out which lends a feeling of intimacy and exclusivity. Much like our business lunch last month, this was a dining experience in the top echelon.





STAYING POWER...

Longevity in business is something to be admired. In a new series of features, we are celebrating some of the most accomplished professionals from across the North East business community. Aimed at major players with 20+ years' experience in their respective sectors, we provide a fascinating insight into what makes them tick and what we can learn from them.

This month we chat to...

SIMON WILLIAMS

Crest Photography

Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

It was basically a toss up between farming and photography and the latter won. I went from tinkering in the school dark room to getting a job at a Gosforth based studio which meant that my planned college course didn't happen.

What is the favourite aspect of your job?

The sheer variety of my work gives me a constant buzz. I am fortunate to meet many amazing people and often get the chance to photograph them in stunning locations.

What has been your career defining moment?

I had the enormous honour of a one to one shoot with Prince Charles which was a wonderful experience. I've never quite got as nervous before any work since and it certainly toughened me up and gave me the confidence to believe I could do anything.

How do you measure success?

Being able to smile and enjoy my work everyday. Also the amount of repeat business I handle with some clients going back over 20 years.

What has been your career highlight?

Many to choose from. Being host photographer for the Queen was an unforgettable experience. Working for Richard Branson and then seeing him use my shots on his own personal social media was great, and of course having a full day shoot for our very own Cheryl Cole was an insight into celebrity life.

What have been the biggest changes in the industry since you started?

Going from print to digital I suppose although the same principles and skill set apply. This has now given me the opportunity to work on the go, on the train or in a clients office.

Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

I suppose leaving a good job all those years ago to set up Crest Photography would show me to be a risk taker.

To what would you attribute your success?

Working in a professional manner and always endeavouring to get the correct shot for the client.

What is your biggest weakness?

Easy...not switching off and not taking enough time off.

How do you remain motivated?

The variety and travel involved with the job means I never get bored and wake up every morning raring to go.

How do you like to relax?

Spending time with my 14 year old son Harrison at my retreat/sanctuary in the stunning Northumberland hills near Ninebanks, also playing the drums...and trying hard not to take photographs in my time off!

How would you like to be remembered?

As a top dad and genuinely nice bloke.



BUSINESS STUDENTS HELP 'PUTT' GOLF CLUBS ON COURSE FOR SUCCESS



Business Clinic students with representatives of Whitley Bay Golf Club. (L to R): Ashleigh Foster, Megan Barratt, Steve Combe (Director/Chairman WBGC), Keith Williamson (Director WBGC), Alan Gair (immediate past Captain, WBGC), Kirsty Huggins, Heather Johnson. Ashleigh, Megan, Kirsty and Heather worked together as 'Four Bridges Consultancy'.



(L to R): Colin Wraith, Chairman and Secretary of Allendale Golf Club, with club Treasurer Robin Down.

When two North East golf clubs felt that aspects of their operations risked veering off the 'fairway' and 'into the rough', they decided to introduce some new players to their game and talk to business students at Northumbria University.

The two clubs are located in very different areas of our region but both have particularly scenic settings. Allendale Golf Club's nine-hole course in Northumberland is situated among the hills in an area of outstanding natural beauty, while Whitley Bay Golf Club's 18-hole course in Tyne and Wear enjoys stunning views of the coast and countryside. Each had very different reasons for seeking support from the University's business students.

For Whitley Bay Golf Club, with over 800 active members, the question was mainly about how to make better use of the facilities to generate additional income, without compromising the positive experience of the club's loyal players.

In contrast, Allendale Golf Club has a much smaller membership of just 128 and with many of them older, there were concerns over how to both maintain and increase membership levels going forward. The club is kept open mainly by the hard work of volunteers and many facilities, such as the bar in the club house, are not fully utilised due to a shortage of employed staff to run them.

Both called on the support of Northumbria University's Business Clinic on the advice of friends and acquaintances who'd had good experiences with the initiative. The Business Clinic at Newcastle Business School is an education scheme whereby a group of students form a 'consultancy firm' to provide free advice for clients. Students are asked to analyse the problem they are presented with, consider possible solutions and provide

a detailed report and full presentation of their recommendations.

Two teams of business students chose to tee-up for the challenge. Each group thoroughly researched their respective courses, the facilities and current and potential usage, considering a range of options to suit each club.

Colin Wraith, Chairman of Allendale Golf Club, was impressed with their work. He said: "They were excellent, their work provided a great refresher for us when looking at different areas where we could potentially develop the club. Their report was very helpful, particularly the review of possible community initiatives and we'll be sharing their findings with the general committee. Overall, I have to say they were extremely professional, the work was of a fantastic quality and the whole experience has been great."

Keith Williamson, a Director at Whitley Bay Golf Club, is in agreement. He said: "The students were very easy to work with and had clearly thought about the problem we posed to them before we met for the first time. The research they provided was thorough and very relevant and it was great to get a fresh look at our club from four non-golfers, as this provided a level of insight we would not have been able to get internally."

Both Colin and Keith would recommend the Business Clinic service to other organisations facing challenges or looking for a new direction. Since the Business Clinic launched, over 600 students

supervised by University staff have advised over 145 organisations on a wide range of business problems. The total value of the students' pro bono expertise has been estimated by the client organisations to exceed £700,000.

Nigel Coates, Director of the Business Clinic for Northumbria University, says: "We have found that the Business Clinic is not only a great experience for our students, but a huge opportunity for organisations of all kinds, large and small, local and national, to get the kind of comprehensive advice they might otherwise be unable to access.

"The feedback we've had is extremely positive across the broad range of organisations we have worked with recently and we're looking forward to supporting more businesses in the years to come. We'd encourage any firms considering getting involved to get in touch."

The Business Clinic's consultancy services are available to all types of businesses from SMEs and multinationals through to not-for-profit organisations. If you feel the students may be able to help your business and would like to find out more, you can get in touch by email: nb.consultancy-projects@northumbria.ac.uk.

The Business Clinic is part of Northumbria University's award-winning Business School; recognised as Business School of the Year in 2015 and more recently, the first North East Business School to win the Small Business Charter for services to SMEs.

Northern Law Awards 2017



Thursday 1st June

at the

Hilton Newcastle Gateshead





NORTHERN LAW AWARDS HONOUR THE REGION'S TOP FIRMS

Celebrating the wealth of legal talent across the region, the Northern Law Awards are fast becoming one of the most prestigious evenings in the social calendar.

Returning for a third time, the event took place recently at the Hilton NewcastleGateshead and was compered by BBC Radio Newcastle Presenter and Comedian Alfie Joey.

The annual awards recognise achievement in a number of different categories and unite the best of the North East's legal community in celebration of their successes over the previous year. The awards are judged by some of the region's leading business professionals across a number of sectors whilst the main partner this year was NWG Property Solutions. The evening is a glamorous black tie event which features a drinks reception, 3 course-meal and the awards ceremony itself.

The night's two leading prizes went to firms Swinburne Madison LLP and Collingwood Legal. The Durham-based Swinburne Madison LLP was named "Large Law Firm of the Year" in addition to taking home the "Litigation and Disputes Resolution Team of the Year" prize.

The "Small Firm of the Year" award honours companies with fewer than six partners and was this year presented to Newcastle-based Collingwood Legal.

Elsewhere, national firm Irwin Mitchell LLP scooped three awards including the "Personal Injury/Clinical Negligence Team of the Year" alongside the "Trainee of the Year" award for Kimberley Fryer and the "Rising Star" award for Emma

Crowther who delivered a highly impressive performance across all criteria.

Other big winners included Ward Hadaway who claimed the "Employment Team of the Year" and the "Corporate/Commercial Team of the Year" double and Newcastle-based Hay & Kilner who also won two awards receiving both the "Private Client Team of the Year" and the "Crime/Regulatory Team of the Year."

The "Property Team of the Year" proved the most fiercely contested category and the judging panel couldn't separate DAC Beachcroft and Jacksons Law who shared the award.

In other categories, the Teeside University Law Clinic won the "Pro Bono/Community Initiative" award whilst Beecham Peacock was named the "Family Law Team of the Year."

The "Law Practice Management" award went to Scott Garson of Cartmell Shepherd Ltd for his work across all areas of the practice whilst the newly-introduced "Employer of the Year" was awarded to TLW Solicitors for their impressive levels of staff retention and internal progression.

Finally, Judith Archibold who heads the legal team at Parkdean Resorts was named "Lawyer of the Year" while Toby Hedworth Q.C. Head of Trinity Chambers was recognised with the "Outstanding Achievement" award.

DUAL AWARD SUCCESS FOR DURHAM LAW FIRM



Swinburne Maddison award-winning team

Since its creation in 1998, Swinburne Maddison LLP has undergone significant change and development and has now been named winner in two categories at the recent Northern Law Awards - Law Firm of the Year (6+ Partners) and Team of the Year – Litigation and Dispute Resolution.

The firm has not only developed an enviable client base over the intervening 19 years, but has also established itself as the pre-eminent law firm in County Durham and one of the region’s leading law firms.

With 10 partners, its ratio of partners to staff enables the firm to provide an exceptional, partner-led service; a factor which received plenty of positive client feedback in a recent independent market research exercise.

According to the judges, "Swinburne Maddison showed excellence across all criteria – a substantial increase in turnover in the past year, a clear and well-positioned strategy, excellent client feedback, staff training programme and CSR policy." And, "was to be praised for its wide client base and an impressive breadth of expertise as well as its strong home-grown team that delivers results for clients, who describe their services as 'first class'".

Commenting on the firm’s success, Senior Partner, John Davison, said: "Excellent service delivery and client satisfaction are key drivers for us. We constantly strive for both while providing unrivalled partner access and a personal, tailored approach to all clients in our desire to achieve what is best for them.

"Currently just over 70 per cent of our professional staff are under the age of 40, which reflects our belief in recruiting, nurturing and developing young talent and choosing to evolve and grow organically. I believe this is a big factor in our success because there is a great sense of mutual respect and team spirit in the firm.

"Making the shortlist in eight categories of the Northern Law Awards and walking away as the winner in two is a tremendous result for us. Everyone in the practice is absolutely thrilled."

Over the last five years, turnover at Swinburne Maddison has increased by 55% and a progressive management style has seen the firm reposition itself within the market with a greater focus on commercial and corporate services.

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OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR TOBY HEDWORTH Q.C.

Head of Trinity Barristers Chambers, Toby Hedworth Q.C., was presented with the prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award which was the highlight of the evening.



The Award celebrates individuals who have made an outstanding impact on the legal profession in the region and to their organisation. Toby was recognised for his contribution to the legal community, as well as overseeing and inspiring the expansion and diversification of Trinity, making it an outward-looking, vibrant and commercial barristers chambers that has lost none of its commitment to publicly funded work. Welcomed by a standing ovation, the award was presented by Tonia Reeve from the Title Sponsor of the evening, NWG Property Solutions. Caroline Goodwin Q.C., also from Trinity, was one of the five Lawyer of the Year Finalists at the Awards.

Representing Chambers, fellow Trinity Silk, Nicholas Stonor Q.C. introduced Mr Hedworth by saying "to his great credit and to the great benefit of our regional legal community – his reputation for excellence extends nationally. He is a great ambassador for the North East."

Toby Hedworth Q.C. was born in Tynemouth, and educated in the North East before studying law at Cambridge. Happy to return to the North, Toby was called to the Bar in 1975 and undertook pupillage

and became a tenant at 60 Grainger Street, Newcastle, later to become Trinity Chambers. Toby rapidly established himself as a leading junior, specialising in prosecuting and defending criminal and regulatory cases. He was appointed Crown Court Recorder in 1991 and became Queen's Counsel in 1996. Toby has dealt with many complex and high profile cases, including the prosecution of child killer Robert Black. He also acted in the first ever prosecution under the Terrorism Act for membership of a proscribed organisation. As well as regular recommendations in the leading Chambers UK and Legal 500 directories, Toby is given specific recognition in the memoirs of high profile Silk, Michael Mansfield Q.C.: "Toby Hedworth QC...cool, calm and effective".

Toby became Head of Trinity Chambers in 1998. During his time as Head, he has driven the rapid development of Chambers, including the renovation of and move to the historic Custom House on Newcastle's Quayside in 2004, as well as opening a Chambers in Middlesbrough in response to a growing Tees Valley client base.

Under Toby's leadership, Trinity has tripled in size, now with approaching 80 barristers and Silks.

Through its specialist practice groups, Trinity provides specialist advice and advocacy in a wide range of legal areas including agriculture, business, chancery, costs, crime, employment, environmental protection, family and matrimonial finance, immigration, licensing, Court of Protection, personal injury and clinical negligence, planning and regulatory. Trinity has developed an Alternative Dispute Resolution team dealing with mediation and arbitration.

Many of the practice groups are recognised in the leading legal directories, Chambers UK and the Legal 500, where Trinity is listed as a Tier One Set. The directory highlights Trinity's range of counsel, who are 'easy to deal with and always high quality', with service rated as 'first class', thanks to the 'fantastic clerks', who 'always go the extra mile'.

Reflecting on receiving his Outstanding Achievement Award Toby Hedworth Q.C. concludes "Any professional success that I have enjoyed has been largely because of the guidance and support of those around me in Chambers. I regard this award as very much being for everyone, the barristers and the staff, at Trinity Chambers".

For further details about Trinity Chambers please contact Practice Director, Simon Stewart on 0191 232 1927, email simon.stewart@trinitychambers.co.uk or visit www.trinitychambers.co.uk

TLW SOLICITORS CELEBRATES ITS STAFF

Flexibility, investment in training and staff well-being came up trumps for TLW Solicitors at this year's Northern Law Awards.

The North-Shields based firm, which was also shortlisted in the Law Firm of the Year, Rising Star and Practise Management categories, beat off stiff competition from some much larger firms and budgets to win the Employer of the Year award.

To win the award, TLW had to demonstrate how it 'offers the best possible opportunities' for its employees.

Ongoing investment in staff training and well-being, staff away-days, charitable giving and regular internal communications were highlighted as part of the entry with judges praising TLW's flexible working policy and staff retention record.

Partner Peter McKenna said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won the Employer of the Year award. We invest a lot of time and effort into making TLW Solicitors a great place to work and pride ourselves on being the best – both for our staff and clients.

"This award recognises the continued self-improvement and learning of our staff and is something which we are very proud of."

This latest success follows another busy year for the firm which has seen it branch out into new areas of work including serious injury and mis-sold solar panels and successfully gain re-accreditation with Lexcel, the Law Society's legal practice quality mark for excellence in legal practice management and excellence in client care.



The firm has also continued to boost its expertise and learning by strengthening partnerships with charities such as Momentum.

Alistair McDonald, Head of Marketing and Business Development at TLW and shortlisted for the Law Practice Management award, said: "We work very hard to make sure our team is happy. We aim to get the best possible results for our clients and we know that investment in our staff, through training and well-being, means we'll get the best outcomes.

"Ultimately, our staff and our clients benefit from us bringing together the legal expertise and experience in our team with new partnerships, staff rewards and access to learning."

Established in 2000 and specialising in the areas of serious and personal injury, financial mis-selling, professional negligence, road traffic accidents and motoring law, TLW Solicitors has grown into one of the UK's leading accredited law firms.

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COLLINGWOOD LEGAL: LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR



Paul McGowan

Paul McGowan, Principal Solicitor and Founder of Newcastle-based specialist employment law firm Collingwood Legal, reflects upon the firm's last six years following its success at this year's Northern Law Awards.

Here at Collingwood Legal, we're extremely proud and humbled to have been named Law Firm of the Year at the Northern Law Awards 2017.

It feels like only yesterday when Collingwood Legal had its first day of trading in September 2010. Back then I was on my own working from a small serviced office in Corbridge. I was soon joined by Jane Sinnamon and the team has steadily grown to the 12 we are today.

Since those days we have achieved a great deal and external recognition such as the Legal 500's "leading Top Tier" employment law practice accolade has helped cement our reputation as the employment experts to turn to in the North East.

Being shortlisted for the Law Firm of the Year award was fantastic recognition in itself. Attending an assessment interview with an esteemed panel was a little daunting but as it turns out, the interview-style grilling resulted in success.

I first set up Collingwood Legal as I felt that there was a gap in the market for focused and dedicated specialist employment law experts who focussed on client service. Starting a law firm from scratch and with a blank sheet of paper has actually been

quite liberating. We have kept our core overheads low compared to many other firms and we make the best use of technology and resources to provide the best service to our clients.

However, the market for legal services keeps changing and whilst technology and software solutions help, as trusted legal advisors we recognise that strong client relationships are key and we work hard at maintaining them.

Winning Law Firm of the Year at this year's Northern Law Awards is fantastic recognition for our firm but what I am mostly proud of is that we have a strong team of grounded and practical employment lawyers and support staff who are passionate about what they do.

We always aspire to live and work by core values of candour, integrity and trust and to deliver brilliant client service and I believe this has genuinely set us apart from other law firms.

We also recognise that the market we work in is

extremely competitive and businesses clearly have a choice as to who they wish to represent them. This helps keep us all on our toes and our model of delivery means we remain nimble and fleet footed to quickly respond to any changes and client needs.

I believe that the way in which we operate is valued by our clients and it has also been recognised by some of the key independent legal guides. Indeed the latest edition of Chambers and Partners legal directory guide described Collingwood Legal as "small enough to care, large enough to battle" and I think that sums up the philosophy of all of the team at Collingwood Legal nicely.

In terms of the future, we do not have any immediate plans to change what we do at all other than keeping our eye on the ball, guiding our clients and responding to their needs. I would like to think that by continuing to focus on excellent client service that we can continue to expand our client base in the region.

Which leaves me just one more thing to say. We couldn't have done it without you so from all of the team, a huge thank you to everyone who has given us their trust, support and loyalty. Thank you!

COLLINGWOOD LEGAL 

**Law Firm of the Year
(1-5 Partners)**



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NWG
PROPERTY
SOLUTIONS

Winner

**Collingwood Legal
Firm of the Year (1-5 partners)**

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“
We were delighted to receive the Law Firm of the Year Award (1-5 Partners) at the Northern Law Awards 2017 and wanted to say a huge thank you to all of our clients and contacts for your support.

THANK YOU!

”

IRWIN MITCHELL CELEBRATE AFTER TRIPLE AWARDS SUCCESS



The North East offices of national law firm Irwin Mitchell are celebrating more success after winning three awards at this year's Northern Law Awards.

Irwin Mitchell has had a presence in the North East for 14 years and has offices in Newcastle and Middlesbrough helping clients across the entire region.

The Northern Law Awards recognise the very best legal talent across the North of England and Irwin Mitchell won:

- Personal Injury/Clinical Negligence Team of the Year for the third year running
- specialist asbestos-related disease and child abuse lawyer Emma Crowther was named Rising Star of the Year
- and personal injury expert Kimberley Fryer was also awarded Trainee of the Year.

The Serious Injury team alone has recovered more than £45 million in damages for its clients and has several new team members including new Associate, Andrew McGowan who has 25 years' experience of high value PI work, two new Solicitors, Laura Gabbey-Cristofini and Alastair Elliot. Registered General Nurse Kim Davies has been appointed as a Client Liaison Manager delivering a unique support service to the firm's clients.

Commenting on this year's award wins, Paula Myers, Regional Managing Partner of Irwin Mitchell's Newcastle office, said: "We have enjoyed a huge amount of success in recent years and these latest award wins are another great tribute to the phenomenal work and great talent we have within the firm.

"We are very proud of all of those who have won prizes and are delighted that so many talented individuals have been recognised. However, this will not stop us from continuing to look to further develop our offering to ensure our clients always get the best possible outcome in their cases."

Fran Mayes, Lead Partner for the Personal Injury team at Irwin Mitchell's Newcastle office, said: "I am incredibly proud of the work that we do to support individuals that have suffered injury and illness."

"The damages we recover for our clients enable them to have access to the rehabilitation and care that they require rest of their lives. Our teams work hard to get the best possible outcomes for our clients so that they can live as independently as

possible and get the help and support they need to recover."

"The Personal Injury team works closely with our Court of Protection and Public Law and Human Rights teams to ensure that our clients are supported whilst their case is ongoing and after their personal injury claim has concluded."

"Our Court of Protection team has extensive specialist knowledge to assist clients who lack the requisite capacity to manage their own property and affairs such as those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's, or brain injuries caused through medical negligence or severe head injuries in accidents or assaults."

It is not only their clients they help as last year the Irwin Mitchell Newcastle office raised over £14,000 for its charity of the year, Tiny Lives which helps to care for premature and sick newborn babies, their mothers and families at the Royal Victoria Infirmary. The firm is supporting Rape Crisis Tyneside & Northumberland in 2017 to help support survivors of sexual abuse.

WARD HADAWAY CHALKS UP DOUBLE AWARD WIN

Ward Hadaway's double win at the Northern Law Awards 2017 reinforces the firm's place as a leading adviser to the region's business community.

The Top 100 UK law firm was named Corporate and Commercial Team of the Year and Employment Team of the Year at the prestigious awards held at the NewcastleGateshead Hilton.

For Ward Hadaway Managing Partner Jamie Martin, the double victory is further evidence of the firm's position as a key partner for North East companies and a successful business in its own right.

Jamie said: "It is always gratifying to win such awards, not only because they recognise the hard work, dedication and considerable skill of the teams involved, but also because of what they say about our firm.

"As one of the largest independent law firms in the North East, we are dedicated to helping businesses and organisations to achieve their aspirations and to playing our part in helping to drive growth.

"We have worked hard to establish an enviable reputation for meeting companies' needs in a commercial way that helps to build and protect their businesses.

"Both of our award-winning teams from this year's Northern Law Awards are proof positive of that – the work which they carry out for a wide range of clients plays an important part not just in those



Major win – members of Ward Hadaway's Corporate team (from left) Tom Pollard, Danielle Kelly, Head of Corporate Martin Hulls and Imogen Holland accept the Corporate & Commercial Team of the Year award from Jo Aitken of Acritas at the Northern Law Awards 2017. Ward Hadaway also won Employment Team of the Year at the awards.

businesses but to the wider North East economy."

The corporate team, one of the largest pure transaction corporate finance teams in the North East, covers all types of corporate transactions, with specialists in private equity and venture capital investments, acquisitions and disposals, and IPOs.

The employment team is again one of the largest of its kind in the North. It is a multi-disciplined team

of Solicitors and Human Resources professionals who work together to ensure their clients receive commercial, practical and pragmatic advice and support.

Jamie Martin concluded: "The awards are richly deserved for these two outstanding teams who work hard to deliver the very best services to their clients."

For more information on how Ward Hadaway can help your business, head to www.wardhadaway.com or contact Jamie Martin on 0191 204 4341.

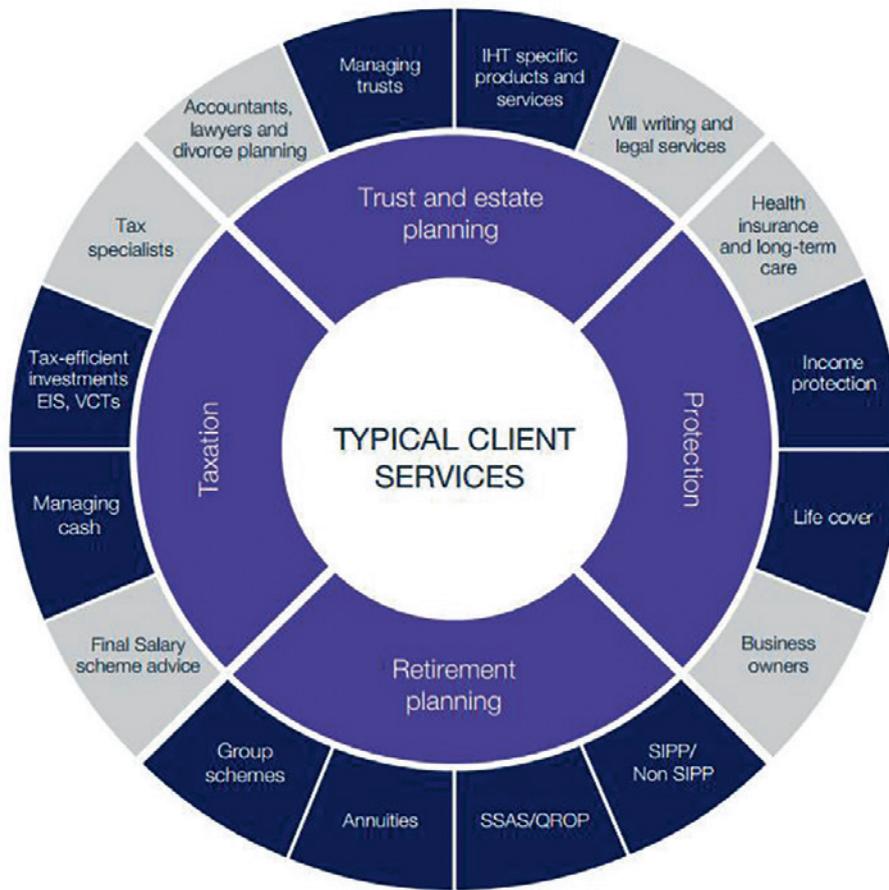


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Our focus is on providing quality advice – not on selling products – and our goal is to inspire confidence so that you can make the right choices. Established more than 250 years ago, we are one of the UK's leading wealth managers. We work closely with over 300 law firms ranging from Big Four to medium-sized firms with national and regional offices. Our clients include a wide cross section of senior managers, associates and partners.

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- An investment manager builds a portfolio for you based on your personal circumstances, objectives and attitude to risk. These investments are recommended by our award winning research team. Your investment manager will then manage your portfolio on your behalf to ensure it stays on track to meet your long-term objectives and remains compliant with respect to partner independence rules. You can meet them as often as you need to – however, they respond quickly on your behalf when market conditions change, adjusting your portfolio as appropriate.

Our clients tend to be self-employed partners who have worked for one or more firms for up to 20-25

years. They range from those who have just accepted a partnership right through to senior partners contemplating retirement in the near future.

We find our clients' financial needs change across the years as their careers and family circumstances evolve...

- In the early partner years, your disposable income typically increases and so planning for the future generally becomes more of a focus. Savings and pensions and the need for wider financial planning become more important as you look to safeguard and grow your wealth.
- Once you have been a partner for 10 years or so, your disposable income will typically be proportionally higher. The choices you make now can make a significant difference to your options later in life.
- Unless you have other career plans, there comes a time to make arrangements for retirement. The reality for most is that there is no ownership stake to sell and so, unless you have an alternative income, your retirement savings pot may have to fund your lifestyle.



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FIRST CUMBRIAN FIRM TO WIN NORTHERN LAW AWARD

Cartmell Shepherd are delighted to announce that the firm have won the Law Practice Management award at the recent Northern Law Awards.

Scott Garson, the firm's practice manager, was recognised at the prestigious legal awards held at the Newcastle Hilton Hotel. The Cumbrian law firm succeeded in fending off stiff competition which included some of the biggest firms in the North of England. This is the first time in the history of the awards that a Cumbrian firm has won.

Speaking about the win, Scott Garson said "this award is testament to the commitment, hard work and dedication from the whole team at Cartmells. I'm very proud to have received it and proud to work with such a forward thinking business." He added "it's great to work with a management team who listen to ideas and are not afraid to try something different."

Scott was short-listed along with 6 other finalists in what was described as a "hotly contested" category. Candidates had to demonstrate evidence of innovation and enterprise, leadership, strategic thinking and contribution to the success of the organisation. The judges described an "outstanding and clear winner" as they announced the award at the event.

Since joining Cartmell Shepherd in 2012 Scott has worked with the management team to drive the firm forward. Improvements in the firm's IT



infrastructure, management processes, business planning and internal communication are just some examples. The introduction of Skype for Business and a completely new pricing structure, for instance, has been revolutionary in the way Cartmells interact across the firm and with our clients.

Scott was the instigator in setting up the firm's

hugely successful Twitter account. He embraced and encouraged the use of social media for Cartmell Shepherd.

Cartmell Shepherd were finalists alongside Sintons Law, Swinburne Maddison, Jacksons Law Firm, TLW Solicitors, Irwin Mitchell and Parklane Plowden Chambers.

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BREAKING: THE LATEST IN THE KITKAT TRADE MARK PROCEEDINGS

On Wednesday 17 May 2017, the UK Court of Appeal ruled that Nestlé could not trade mark the shape of its four-fingered KitKat wafer bar.



The decision is the latest in a series of long-running legal battles between confectionary rivals Nestlé and Cadbury and represents a blow to the strength of Nestlé's IP portfolio. The decision also highlights the complexities of exactly what is capable of being registered as a trade mark and the various requirements associated with registration.

So, what exactly can be registered as a trade mark? As you can imagine, businesses and companies don't often seek to register the shape of their product as a trade mark. Registration is more commonly sought for the company's name or the name of its products (both "Cadbury" and "Dairy Milk" are registered trade marks).

Other common trade marks include logos, which can be registered themselves (like the Nike tick) or may be accompanied by some wording (for example the "KitKat" logo). Slogans are also commonly registered as trade marks but can be more difficult to register due to the basic registration criteria of "distinctiveness" (see below). Nestlé originally failed to register the slogan "Have a Break" without the addition of "Have a KitKat" due to a lack of distinctiveness, but did subsequently go on to successfully register "Have a Break" as a trade mark in its own right.

Various other types of mark are also capable of registration despite being less conventional. Some of these less common marks are summarised below:

Type of Trade Mark

Shapes and 3D marks

Duracell's black and copper square battery is a registered trade mark.

Colour

Kraft Foods successfully registered the lilac/violet colour, used on the wrapper of its "Milka" chocolate bars, as a trade mark.

Sounds

MGM have successfully registered a lion's roar as a trade mark.

Smells

Smells are, in theory, capable of trade mark registration but in practice struggle to meet the registration requirements (see below).

There are a number of "absolute" requirements which all marks, despite their form, must comply with to be registered; if these criteria are not met, the relevant intellectual property office will refuse registration outright. The two main, and most stringent, requirements are that the mark should be both "distinctive" and capable of "graphical representation".

Marks that are "devoid of any distinctive character" are prohibited from registration. Distinctiveness is tested by reference to the NICE classes of goods and services against which registration is sought

and the public perception of the mark. It was due to this requirement that the UK Court of Appeal ruled that shape of the four-fingered KitKat bar should not be registered as a trade mark; Nestlé failed to establish that the shape was distinctive.

A mark must also be "capable of graphical representation", meaning simply that the full extent of the mark must be clearly identifiable from its entry on the relevant intellectual property register. This requirement is easily met for a mark consisting solely of a word or logo but less common marks may fail to meet this requirement. Applicants have attempted previously to register smell marks by submitting an in-depth description of the smell, its chemical composition and a sample, but this wasn't deemed sufficient to meet the graphical representation requirement.

Less common marks, including shapes and colours, are therefore in fact capable of trade mark registration despite the ruling given against Nestlé's four-fingered KitKat bar. That said, the requirements for registration are more easily satisfied in relation to more conventional marks such as words (including company and product names) and logos. Regardless of form, registration of a trade mark allows the owner to protect (by preventing unauthorised use) and exploit (by selling and licensing) their brand.

Mincoffs Commercial Team has a wide range of experience in dealing with applications for all types of trade marks in the UK, EU and internationally through the World Property Organisation. If you would like advice on an intellectual property matter please don't hesitate to contact Lucy Cook, Associate Solicitor on 0191 281 6151 or email lcook@mincoffs.co.uk.

LAWYER SECURES TOP MEDICO-LEGAL QUALIFICATION



A Partner in a North East law firm, who changed her area of expertise after more than 20 years of practice, has now become a recognised medical law specialist following her achievement of a highly-regarded legal qualification.

Kathryn Riddell has gained a Master of Law degree (LLM) with a distinction in Medical Law, making her one of only a few specialist medical lawyers to hold such a qualification.

Kathryn, a Partner in Newcastle-based Sintons, has achieved her LLM from Northumbria University after three-years of studying, which she combined with her role as a healthcare lawyer. Kathryn provides specialist advice to NHS Trusts and

healthcare professionals on all aspects of legal and ethical issues arising from patient treatment and she has extensive experience of representing Trusts at inquest.

Prior to taking up her role in Sintons' highly-esteemed healthcare team, Kathryn was a Partner in the firm's personal injury department, having been with Sintons since undertaking her training contract 24 years ago.

Now, her role sees her working closely with the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, to which Sintons are long-standing legal advisors. She works with Barry Speker OBE DL, consultant at Sintons and a nationally-renowned

medico-legal specialist who has been solicitor to the Trust since its inception.

Kathryn said: "While I have been with Sintons for my whole career and worked as a litigation lawyer for over 20 years, I have relished my move into healthcare and the challenge of gaining an expertise in medical law.

"Having an LLM in Medical Law is not essential for a specialist healthcare lawyer, but was something I wanted to do to help gain a greater understanding of a practice area that was totally new to me and get me up to speed with issues of consent, capacity, mental health and confidentiality, which are so central to my role."

Barry Speker OBE DL said: "Kathryn's admirable performance in her LLM is a tremendous credit to her. Her significant specialist medico-legal knowledge is a very important addition to our leading healthcare department."

Mark Quigley, Managing Partner of Sintons, said: "Kathryn has very successfully moved from one very complex area of law into another, and the achievement of her LLM confirms her as a specialist in medical law. She has secured this qualification while continuing to excel in her role in our healthcare team, which is quite a feat to achieve.

"We are all very proud of her achievement; yet another success story to come out of our healthcare team which enjoys such a strong national reputation."

www.sintons.co.uk

DEALING WITH HARASSMENT

By Claire Rolston, Solicitor, Director, CLR Law

Uber has made the headlines again, this time in relation to reports that it has dismissed 20 staff following an investigation into allegations of harassment.

What is harassment?

In the employment context, harassment has a specific legal definition.

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

There is no specific employment legislation dealing with unwanted behaviour that is not related to a protected characteristic (although employees can bring claims under the Protection From Harassment Act 1997 where it applies).

That is not to say that there are no consequences of bullying where there is not a discriminatory element. Bullying can impact on morale, performance and attendance. It could also lead to successful unfair constructive dismissal claims being brought if the employee resigns.

How to avoid the risk of a claim

Employers should:

- have in place up-to-date policies dealing with harassment and bullying and a clear procedure as to what to do when an allegation is raised;
- ensure the disciplinary policy makes it clear that such behaviour will constitute gross misconduct;
- ensure the policies are accessible and brought to the attention of employees, particularly during induction and any updates should be clearly communicated;



- ensure that their employees receive regular training on the policies and procedures;
- keep records of the training and the employees who have attended; and
- implement and follow the policies when an allegation is raised.

Above all, take advice. As well as there being a risk of claims, and the financial and reputational cost that brings, you could also risk losing talented employees.

Claire Rolston is a Solicitor/Director at CLR Law. Contact her with any queries on harassment or other employment law matters on 0191 6030061 or hello@clrlaw.co.uk



FIZZ IN THE CITY BY MINCOFFS

Mincoffs recently held yet another successful Fizz in the City at Mr Lynch in Jesmond, Newcastle. Lots of inspiring business women turned up to enjoy a relaxed afternoon of networking over a couple of glasses of prosecco. The afternoon is fast becoming a firm fixture on the region's networking calendar and once again was enjoyed by all.

The next Fizz in the City will be held at the end of summer - keep an eye out on Facebook and Twitter for updates!

@mincoffs #FizzFriday
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PRE-NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS – NOT JUST FOR THE SUPER-RICH

A recent divorce case has illustrated the value of pre-nuptial and pre-civil partnership agreements. Sarah Crilly, Partner in the Family Law team at Ward Hadaway, has more.

In a recent High Court divorce case, a Russian billionaire was ordered to pay his wife £453m. The award was intended to reflect 41.5% of the total marital assets.

This was a long marriage and therefore the principle of equal sharing applied. However, the husband did claim to have brought significant wealth to the marriage and that he had made a "stellar" contribution but the Judge rejected any special contribution arguments saying they were both equal.

The reason the percentage was not 50% precisely was not that the court believed the wife had given less of a contribution but rather the nature of the assets being divided some being liquid and some illiquid.

The court did acknowledge that the husband had been extremely generous to the wife but that counted for very little.

This case highlights how parties getting married should consider how they may wish to ring-fence certain assets and protect their positions by giving consideration to a Pre-Nuptial/Pre-Civil Partnership Agreement when planning their future. This is the

case even when the sums involved are not as large. A Pre-Nuptial Agreement is a contract entered into by a couple prior to marriage/civil partnership which sets out which party owns, or will own, certain assets on any future breakdown of the relationship.

It will usually define "matrimonial property" and "non-matrimonial property" or "joint property" and "separate property". Matrimonial property usually includes assets acquired during the marriage and assets held in joint names, such as the matrimonial home or joint bank accounts. Non-matrimonial or separate property usually includes assets owned before the marriage, inherited assets or gifts received by one party during the marriage.

The Agreement can also deal with income, such as treatment of earnings and interests under trusts.

Likewise, couples who are already married or in a civil partnership may wish to give thought to entering into a Post-Nuptial/Post-Civil Partnership Agreement. It will work in the same way as a Pre-Nuptial/Pre-Civil Partnership Agreement and there is no difference in its legal status.

These Agreements have a number of key

advantages. They give both partners certainty and are a sensible form of wealth protection.

If you have either inherited or been gifted property from family members or simply have acquired your own property portfolio before meeting your partner, it makes sense to consider what you wish to happen if you later divorced. The Agreement could also detail how the parties arrange their finances during the marriage.

It will also help to reduce legal fees as the issues for the court will be clearer and narrower in the event of a divorce.

While it is not currently possible to exclude the jurisdiction of the Court in dealing with the breakdown of a marriage where there is a Nuptial/Civil Partnership Agreement, the Court will take an Agreement into account as a consideration, providing the Agreement meets a number of key requirements.

So while signing a Nuptial/Cohabitation Agreement will not feature in your typical romance novel, giving consideration to one is a sensible notion for any couples considering taking their relationship to the next step.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

PHILLIP DEAN

Director, PG Legal



What were your career ambitions growing up?

Coming from the old mill town of Bingley I originally wanted to be a train driver. I was also a huge fan of Crown Court and Rumpole of the Bailey and toyed with being a barrister before deciding the bar wasn't for me. At heart I'm a very competitive person and I like to push myself so I was delighted to get good enough A Levels to allow me to start a Law degree at Newcastle Polytechnic.

What has been your career path so far?

I started working with Bradford and Bingley during recession which was very challenging. I then received a call out of the blue to take a trainee role at a high street firm in South Shields which I didn't really suit me. Fortunately the Managing Partner at Gordons in Leeds, John Singleton, remembered me and I had a marvellous time working there. A fond memory is of our favourite client Timothy Taylor Brewery serving us a drink or 2 on completion of deals.

Having met my wife at Polytechnic I grasped the chance to come home and join Ward Hadaway, a terrific firm where I met so many people. I then moved on to be a partner at Mincoffs and then head of Commercial Property after their merger with Jacksons. Sadly this didn't work so in January 2011 PG Legal was born which initially was just me and a telephone and no staff within the old Metro Radio Headquarters in Swalwell. Jonathan Fletcher subsequently joined me as an equal partner and natural organic growth has seen us grow to 22 staff housed in new Team Valley premises.

What are PG Legals defining qualities?

We employ experts in their fields with vast experience and offer cost effective legal solutions within a fixed fee structure.

What is the greatest challenge you have faced so far?

Continuing to function and work after the death of my father which knocked me for six.

What is your greatest achievement to date?

Setting up a Commercial Property focussed business whilst in the middle of recession.

Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

Play fair, be honest and don't hurt others.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

My brother who entered the Army as a Private and left as a Major before carving a new career as Head of IT with an international bank. Also Simon Leonard from Gordons who taught me how to tackle big projects and cases in effective bite sized fashion.

How do you like to unwind?

I'd love to be able to although 3 young children certainly demand my attention. I love being outdoors and fishing is a passion when time allows.

How would you like to be remembered?

First and foremost as a good dad.

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INVOLVING SOCIAL SERVICES

For any family, the involvement of Social Services can seem frightening and parents often will not know where to turn to for help. Here Sam Wardle, Solicitor in the Family Team at Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF), outlines the sensitive topic of Social Services.

It is natural to feel anxious or worried about the thought of Social Services, or more specifically Children’s Services, investigating your family. However, you need to remember that Children’s Services have a statutory duty to respond to any referrals made about children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm.

What should I do if Social Services are investigating the care of my children?

Try and stay calm. Often when a social worker comes to your home to speak to you and your child it will be to see whether any support or assistance can be offered to you. Always try to be as open and honest as possible with Children’s Services and any other professional that might be involved in the care of your child. Always keep in mind that it is always the aim of the Local Authority to try and keep families together if it is safe to do so.

What are the next steps?

Children’s Services’ involvement will only become more formal if the initial enquiries lead the social

worker to the conclusion that a child may be at risk of harm.

If it comes to this then the social worker should clearly explain their concerns, expectations, what will happen and likely timescales. This could also involve the social worker arranging something called an Initial Child Protection Conference.

Don’t worry, this does not mean that your child is about to be removed from your care. It does, however, mean the social worker is sufficiently concerned that there may need to be professional support to prevent an identified risk of harm occurring. This may lead to support being offered under a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan. These plans should clearly set out what is expected of you as a parent and what support you will be offered to address the concerns of the Children’s Services.

Will that be the end of Social Services involvement?

Not necessarily, if concerns remain for your child’s

safety, Children’s Services will consider the need to initiate the Public Law Outline (PLO) process. You will receive written notice of the Local Authority’s intention to begin court proceedings if you do not address the concerns as a matter of priority.

If there is clear evidence that your child is likely to be at risk of significant harm if urgent steps are not taken then Children’s Services will consider removing your child from your care while a full investigation into their welfare takes place. They can either ask your permission to do this or apply to court for a Care Order.

What should I do?

If you believe that Children’s Services are considering taking those steps then it is important that you immediately contact a Family Law solicitor, who specialises in cases involving child protection, for advice. If the situation is so serious that Children’s Services are considering removing your child, legal aid is available regardless of your financial position.

THE RISE OF FORMAL INSOLVENCIES

We're experiencing an upturn in the volume of formal insolvencies and we are starting to see the impact of this on regional businesses across the board.

Sadly recently we've seen high profile names affected here in the North East, with Stockton-based Cordell Group and Ashington-based A-Belco both going into administration with the loss of a significant number of jobs.

When a company enters formal insolvency, it not only impacts on that business itself, but also affects businesses from up and down the supply chain, with a ripple effect across many parts of the regional economy.

Last month, Begbies Traynor published a survey which found small businesses in the North East were feeling the strain with financial distress on the rise during Q1, a 6% rise in the first three months of 2017 compared to the same period in 2016. The Red Flag Alert data revealed that 5,700 of North East SMEs, compared with 5,360 last year, experienced significant financial distress. Larger businesses undergoing financial distress remained steady, up from 346 to 364 year on year.

Labour figures released to the Federation of Small Businesses in April showed that 1,345 North East firms failed due to late payments, with more than 8,000 struggling to pay staff on time and 22,000 paying their own suppliers late. In total, SMEs in the



North East were owed an estimated £707million in late payments and had written off £156million as bad debt.

This is borne out by what we have seen, with an increase in the number of people we've been speaking to and what we've been hearing through our networks.

Against the backdrop of political uncertainty, the true impact of Brexit and general economic conditions, businesses are experiencing difficulties. We're not going to see a sudden avalanche of insolvency, but the trend is towards formal insolvency and it's something which all businesses should be aware of.

Ironically, when companies seek legal advice it is often too late to make a real difference to the eventual outcome. Businesses need to insure themselves against the risk of insolvency in the supply chain and seek advice early.

The upturn in formal insolvencies serves as a warning for businesses, especially where there are more concentrated pressures and risk of exposure - such as those operating in the oil and gas, construction and engineering, or hospitality and leisure sectors.

Many businesses have never experienced the true impact of a significant bad debt but the consequences can range from causing real damage to profitability or, at worst, sinking the entire company.

Once a business discovers a bad debt, the owners are fighting a rear guard battle. They need to be proactive, take charge and manage the risks at an early stage using qualified specialist advisers. Legal advisers and credit controllers are key to a business's success in dealing with - and surviving - bad debt.

Andrew Cawkwell, Partner, Banking and Restructuring Team, Muckle LLP. Tel: 0191 211 7957
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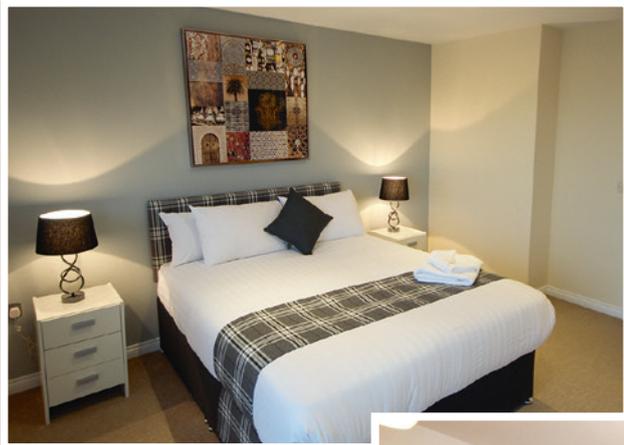
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NORTH YORKSHIRE PLANNING CONSULTANT CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY



County Durham-based developers, Dere Street Homes, have released for sale just one additional, but unique, new home at their prestigious Longhirst Hall development, located just to the north of Morpeth.

In addition to their spacious and luxurious townhouses converted from Longhirst Hall Hotel's former Conference Centre, Dere Street Homes have released the two bedroom detached Coach House for sale at £460,000.

Originally built as a Coach House for the original John Dobson designed country house in 1828, the Grade II listed building has been totally refurbished internally to provide superb contemporary living space whilst the exterior has been carefully restored to retain the original architectural features.

With some 1,600 sq ft of living space, the Coach House enjoys a spacious open plan kitchen and dining space, featuring a fully fitted kitchen with island unit in the centre of the home. The separate living room with French doors leading onto the private garden is located to one side with the hall and stairs to the first floor to the other.

The home contains just two very spacious bedrooms to the first floor – the master with double sink en-suite facilities and the second bedroom with both having access to the family bathroom.

THOMAS:STEVENSON MAKING A MOVE

Commercial property experts Thomas:Stevenson are in the process of completing their own office move. The whole office is relocating to larger premises at Preston Farm Business Park, near Stockton.

Since the business was set up 13 years ago the commercial property consultants have been based in Stokesley but as the business has grown and the team extended, the firm has outgrown its town house office in College Square.

The business has always enjoyed a strong client base in Middlesbrough and Stockton at the heart of Teesside and the move to the spacious offices in Wellington House

at Preston Farm Business Park will allow the firm to be closer to clients as well as comfortably accommodating all of its growing workforce.

The new office location has the benefits of a high specification modern open plan office environment allowing the whole team to work cohesively together and is also complete with client meeting rooms, comfortable staff facilities and ample private car parking for clients on site.

Partner Neil Thomas is excited about the move and commented: "We are delighted to be moving to our new offices and look forward to the business development opportunities it will bring to the business."



NORTHUMBERLAND DEVELOPER GETS UNDERWAY WITH GREAT WHITTINGTON SCHEME

Northumberland-based Anvil Homes has started on site with the development of its new residential scheme in the village of Great Whittington in the Tyne Valley.

Briar Fields will provide ten individually designed four bedroomed detached family homes, the first of which will be completed in October of this year. Anvil Homes is an award-winning, family-run business, which has been established since

1993 and specialises in bespoke rural residential developments.

The firm uses the same pool of local sub-contractors and tradesmen for all of its developments and says the Briar Fields scheme will support 20 jobs during its 18 month construction.

Great Whittington lies seven miles North East of Hexham and the developer believes the site's accessibility to the market town will make it a

popular choice for families.

Alistair Carr, Director at Anvil Homes said: "For this development we have designed ten very outwardly traditional Northumbrian homes, which are all double fronted and stone built with timber sash windows to blend sympathetically with the rural surroundings. Internally the properties will offer the highest levels of contemporary living, each one enjoying a unique character of its own.



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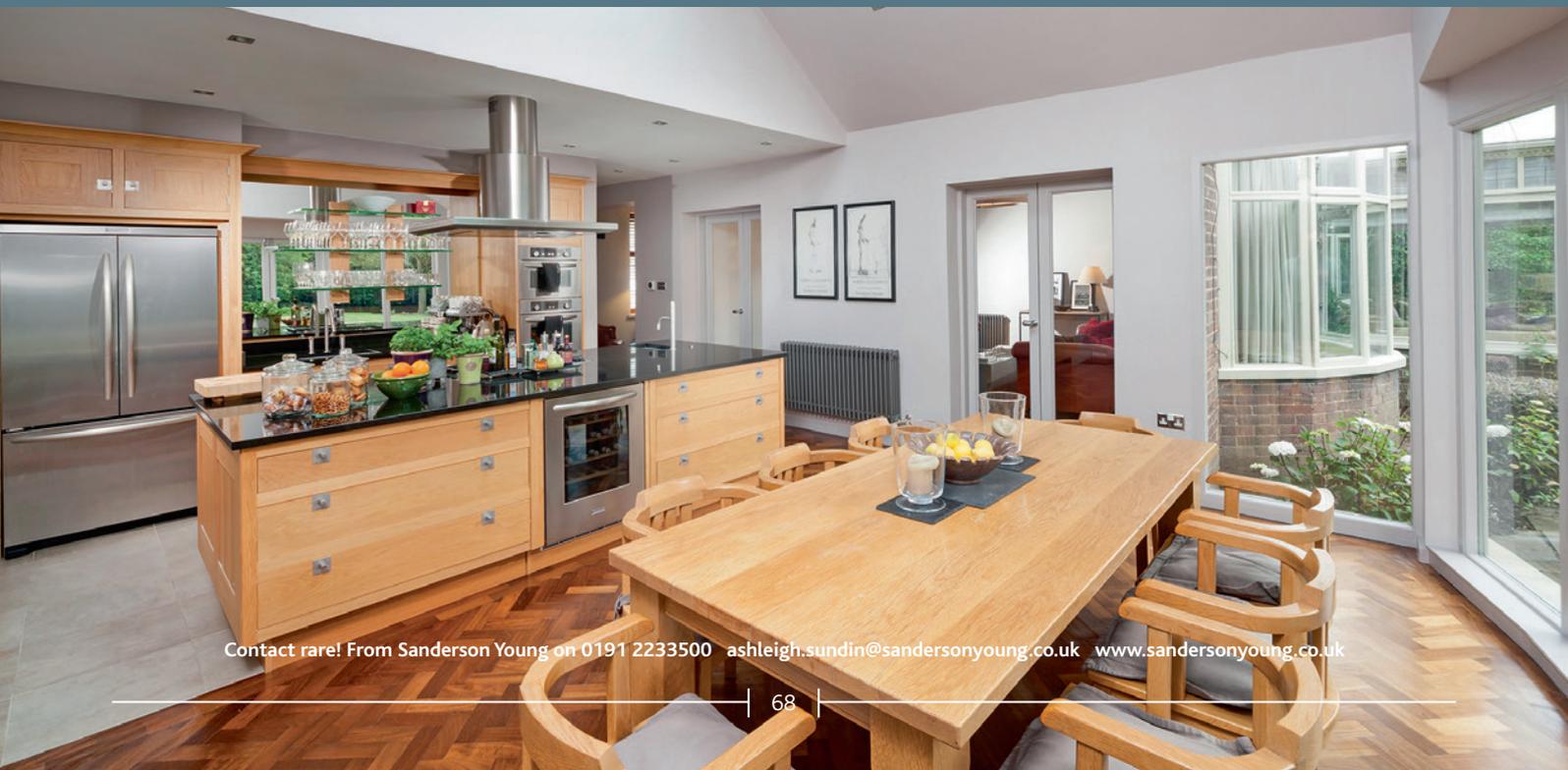


LINDISFARNE ROAD, JESMOND



PRICE GUIDE: £2.95 MILLION

This impressive detached house was constructed circa 1928 and enjoys a magnificent garden site which is certainly one of the largest plots within Lindisfarne Road. The property has extensive living space with the addition of a single storey wing creating a stunning kitchen which enjoys great natural light from its glazed lantern roof, floor to ceiling windows and folding doors which lead onto the terrace. This outstanding family home has three bedrooms on the first floor, two of which have en suites, and the top floor has been newly converted to provide an additional two double bedrooms, one with en suite shower room and dressing room, as well as access to a south facing balcony terrace. The house is ideally placed for access into the conservation area of Jesmond Dene, Osborne Road with its restaurants and shopping facilities on Acorn Road; the area is well known for its quality homes and this is one of its finest examples.



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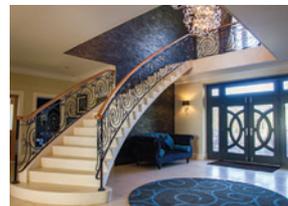
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Lomond House Tranwell Woods, Morpeth

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Lomond House is an impressive detached mansion offering luxurious accommodation in a highly sought after rural setting with stunning views. This magnificent property is beautifully presented with modern fixtures and fittings, and a triple garage block with annex above.



Price Guide £2.85 Million

Ashleigh Sundin

ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk

rare! Office: 0191 223 3500

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The Farmhouse Dodley Farm, Stamfordham

5 4 3 C

A fabulous period Northumbrian home in 2.46 acres with stunning views to the south overlooking a lake. It includes a delightful annexe cottage, ideal for visitors/relatives/teenagers which could be let independently or combined with the farmhouse to provide additional accommodation.



Price Guide £799,000

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BELLWAY LAUNCH COQUET PARK IN FELTON



For lovers of the Northumberland countryside, house builder, Bellway has some good news, they have just launched their latest development at Coquet Park in Felton.

Bellway will be offering a selection of family homes starting in price from £224,995 for a three bedroom detached home with four bedroom detached homes starting from £284,995. In addition, for buyers with a connection to Felton or the neighbouring wards, Bellway has a selection of three bedroom semi detached homes available at a discount to market value and priced from £118,995.

"We are absolutely delighted to be opening Coquet Park," said Bellway's Sales Director, Rob Armstrong. Felton is a delightful village with a strong community feel. During the year there are a host of community centred events which makes Felton a very social place to live. Notwithstanding this, Felton is also surrounded by stunning countryside, market towns and the numerous castles that run down the Northumberland coast all which will make Coquet Park a very special place to live."

Named after the River Coquet which runs through the village, Coquet Park will comprise a range of three and four bedroom homes in a choice of styles. The different floor plans will provide modern living arrangements which include open-plan living spaces, ensuite shower rooms and integrated kitchen appliances.

Externally, all the homes have gardens and garages, or parking. The development itself encompasses areas of open space for the enjoyment of residents and their families.

Day-to-day essentials can be purchased at the village store, while the Running Fox artisan bakery sells a variety of handmade breads and cakes, as well as offering breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea in the adjoining coffee shop. The village also has a traditional pub: the Northumberland Arms bar and restaurant is a former coaching inn next to the River Coquet, which serves a range of dishes

prepared with locally sourced ingredients.

For families, the village school, Felton CE Primary School, caters for young children, while for older students, schools include The Duchess's Community High School in Alnwick and The King Edward VI School in Morpeth.

For commuters, Felton lies 10 miles from Alnwick and 24 miles from Newcastle. The A1 is a short drive from Coquet Park offering access to both in 15 minutes and 35 minutes respectively, while the A697, an alternative route to Scotland, is 10 minutes away by car. The nearest train station is Alnmouth, around nine miles away, from where regular services operate to Berwick, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Durham and south to London Kings Cross. Locally, buses link Felton with surrounding villages, as well as with Alnwick, Morpeth and Newcastle.

Interested buyers can register their interest by calling 0191 482 8811.

GETTING THE RIGHT MIX

Fergus Trim explains how a happy healthy workforce is good for business.



Fergus Trim,
Director at Broadoak
Asset Management

It's no secret that a motivated workforce is good for the bottom line. According to a workplace study by RAND Europe; healthy, highly engaged employees are, on average, up to 30 days more productive annually.

The flip side being that poor health and well-being costs the UK economy up to £57 billion a year in lost productivity. Whether you're a large scale multinational company, or a SME, it can make a big difference.

By creating a positive, healthy and fun environment for employees, the benefits of increased morale, and improved work-life balance can have a significant impact on business. With a falling working age population, and more people in the North East in employment than ever before, it's important to increase the offer, not just financially, in order to recruit and retain the best staff. This is particularly true with younger staff.

There has been a lot of research undertaken on the psychology of the workplace and the influence of the different generations within it. The changing influence and demands of Generation X (born mid 60's to early 80's) and the Millennials (mid 80's to early noughties) mean that businesses are changing the way they work.

Generation X are increasingly decision makers, running businesses and looking to attract and recruit more Millennials. These are workers who identify less with the 9 to 5 routine and have grown up with mobile technology, social media and a blurring of the distinction between work and



leisure time.

This has given rise to more flexible commuting patterns and hours of work, together with higher demands for amenity and quality of life.

So in practical terms, how can companies promote health and bring some fun to the working day?

While larger employers can spend a lot of money on these activities, it's not always so easy for smaller businesses to have the budget or the time to organise such events. However the larger business clusters can offer more to occupiers both

large and small. The 25 businesses and 6,000 staff at Quorum in North Newcastle have access to a calendar of on-site events and activities, from a 7 a side football league at the on-site sports club, to BBQs, food fairs, charity days and various pop up social events. Totting up the various activities mean that there were over 300 events at Quorum last year.

This isn't a 'one size fits all' approach, and staff engagement is very important. A diverse range of activities are offered so that there is something to suit every taste, work pattern, and health need.

Some of the larger events attract over 1,000 visitors, but the smaller pop up events can be just as valuable to a staff members. There is a focus on health and well-being with active cycling, running, triathlon and Judo clubs, that have many dedicated members from across the businesses.

By creating a positive working environment and encouraging a healthy and happy workforce, increases in productivity and business performance can all be seen. A healthy workforce can also demonstrate corporate responsibility through increased volunteering and participation in charity events. Looking after your employees, as well as the wider society, gives businesses a more positive public image.

FROM PATAGONIA TO HEATON

By Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

The North East is fortunate in having a number of excellent universities. The students who attend bring wealth to the region and contribute to our cultural buzz, but for the small business community, universities represent an opportunity for growth through an influx of talent.

We have chosen to partner with Northumbria University and to date have employed six graduates, some of whom are still with us, some have moved up the career ladder, going with our best wishes. The latest addition to our happy band is our new Lettings Manager Lucy Denham (pictured right) who comes to us with a BSc (Hons) in Geography.

"A degree in WHAT?" I hear you ask. How does the knowledge that Patagonia is not a new Indy band help a lettings agency? Admittedly, at first glance there is little obvious connection between the study of landscapes, people, places and environment and the interpretation of a lettings contract but this is where Northumbria University comes into its own, matching the individual graduate to a job opportunity.

Lucy had shown a marked interest in property and real estate so she came to us in order to undertake a specific project in that area. This was to analyse the home leasehold sector then develop

an explanation of the advantages and pitfalls of leasing property. The result exceeded our expectations primarily because it was clear to the laymen. When we try to explain how a lease works we tend to fall into jargon. Lucy did not. As a result, we now have a clear, concise analysis of leasehold written in plain English.

Other benefits in employing a graduate are pretty obvious. Lucy is a 'digital native', having grown up with technology. This means understanding the complex digital systems that underpin our business comes naturally with very little tuition.

Lucy grew up with social media and while we do not expect our Lettings Manager to update our Facebook profile, Lucy has an instinctive understanding for reach, influence and penetration in social media. To us digital invaders who did not grow up with social media this means being able to spot what is cool and what is naff. Vitally important if your target audience is primarily under thirty.

Which brings me to another benefit of hiring a graduate. Our ProShare Plus package matches like-minded young professionals, initially on social media, and offers them an all-inclusive shared rental package. In this respect Lucy is our target market with an intuitive understanding of what is important to a young professional starting out on their career.

Any successful business will have a focus on quality management and process improvement, be it the somewhat formal Kansei QMS systems favoured by manufacturing or our more laid-back Italian approach – having a discussion over a nice cup of Lavazza coffee. It is often astonishing how a new pair of eyes can bring a different perspective to our daily challenges and opportunities.

So, by employing a graduate with a keen interest in our business sector we are gaining far more than an extra pair of hands. Statistically there must be a bunch of miserable, grumpy graduates out there? But in my experience the graduates we bring into the business bring drive, ideas and optimism.

And to quote management guru Tom Peters,

***"When opportunity knocks,
don't pull down the shade".***

Heaton Property is an award winning lettings and property management agency specialising in providing rental property for professionals in Newcastle upon Tyne.



Lucy Denham



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FINAL FEW HOMES REMAIN AT LUXURY DURHAM DEVELOPMENT



Five star housebuilder, David Wilson Homes North East, is encouraging homebuyers to act now to secure their new home at Mount Oswald in Durham, as just four homes remain available on the development. With their stunning views of the surrounding woodland and open areas, these final few homes are in very high demand.

One of the homes available is the Tunstall, which is an attractive four-bedroom home perfect for families looking for plenty of living space. This home has a bright and airy interior, featuring a large kitchen with French doors leading out onto the garden, a separate dining room ideal for entertaining, as well as a

utility room providing useful additional space. The first floor includes a modern family bathroom and four double bedrooms, with the master suite having its own en suite. The Tunstall is currently available from £514,995.

Also available is the Lichfield, a stunning five-bedroom property that is ideal for larger families. Priced at £649,995, the Lichfield provides ample break out space for the whole family, including a comfortable lounge, dining room, study and kitchen with a spacious breakfast and family area. The luxurious master bedroom is situated on the first floor, with a stylish dressing area and en-suite. There are also two further double bedrooms on the first floor as well as the family bathroom. The second floor, which provides stunning views of the surrounding scenery, has two double bedrooms and a dual access bathroom.

Those looking to buy at Mount Oswald can make use of David Wilson Homes' innovative Part Exchange scheme. The scheme gives buyers the opportunity to sell their existing home to David Wilson Homes North East, in order to move with no estate agents fees or chains, making the whole process much faster.

Christie Edge, Sales Manager at Mount Oswald, commented: "Mount Oswald's fantastic homes and stunning location has meant it has proved very popular with buyers. We want to make sure that those who have been thinking about buying here don't miss out on the opportunity, as we're down to the last few homes now. The development is in a fantastic location and we've seen a really strong sense of community develop here. I would strongly recommend that anyone who is thinking of buying at Mount Oswald pays the sales office a visit to discuss their buying options, as these homes won't be available for long."

Mount Oswald is a beautiful collection of 60 homes, offering one of the most exclusive addresses in County Durham, just two miles from the centre. The development is also within easy reach of the Durham countryside, with each home offering stunning views of the surrounding woodland and open areas.

To find out more about Mount Oswald, or to book an appointment, please visit: www.dwh.co.uk/mountoswald

OPENING DATE ANNOUNCED FOR THE SILL: NATIONAL LANDSCAPE DISCOVERY CENTRE

Northumberland National Park Authority has confirmed its £14.8m state-of-the-art visitor centre on Hadrian's Wall will officially open to the public on Saturday 29th July.

The Sill, which is the UK's first National Landscape Discovery Centre, is the result of an innovative partnership between Northumberland National Park and YHA (England and Wales) and has been made possible by National Lottery players through a £7.8m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The public opening is taking place during National Parks' Week, an annual celebration of Britain's 15 National Parks with various events and activities taking place up and down the country.

Tony Gates, Chief Executive of Northumberland National Park Authority, said: "We are very excited to confirm the date for the official opening, it's the perfect way to celebrate National Parks' Week which also coincides with the start of the school summer holidays.

"We've worked extremely hard to bring this iconic and inspirational project to life. The Sill is the single most significant initiative to be undertaken in rural Northumberland in a generation and will transform how people engage with landscape, nature and the great outdoors.

"The Sill gives Northumberland and the rest of the UK a new world-class facility and visitor experience in the heart of Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World



Heritage Site. It's the perfect gateway for people of all ages to explore and enjoy the landscapes, history and rich culture of Northumberland and the wider region."

The Sill building features fixed and temporary exhibitions focusing on landscape, culture and heritage, several learning and event spaces, a 90 seater café showcasing local produce, a world-class Youth Hostel, a rural business hub to house and support new and emerging rural enterprises, a shop packed with local produce, arts and crafts, a tourist information service and a fully accessible Whin Sill grassland roof, the only one of its kind in the world.

When construction began in November 2015, Northumberland National Park Authority also launched The Sill Activity programme to engage

people of all ages throughout the region in the project. To date, there have been over 400 Sill-related events providing a range of educational and volunteering opportunities connected to the landscape and heritage of the Park.

At £14.8 million, The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre is the most ambitious project undertaken by any UK National Park Authority and has been generously supported by National Lottery players through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: "From stunning countryside to Hadrian's Wall, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players The Sill is set to become a world-class gateway to Northumberland's incredible heritage and unquestionable beauty. We look forward to the opening and the beginning of an exciting future for Northumberland's heritage, landscapes and local economy."

Caroline White, Chief Executive of YHA (England and Wales), said: "YHA The Sill is the newest youth hostel in our portfolio and possibly one of the most significant. Our partnership approach with Northumberland National Park Authority has enabled us to create affordable, state-of-the-art, contemporary accommodation which will now make both Northumberland and Hadrian's Wall accessible to many more school groups, young people and their families."

You can view Northumberland National Park's short video revealing The Sill opening date here: youtu.be/zGbScvpP2Go

PLANNING A SELF-BUILD?

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House



Most of us have watched Grand Designs and thought 'I could do that' but in reality, the UK is well behind Europe in terms of actually building or commissioning our own homes.

The onslaught of planning bureaucracy often associated with the show can make people wary about building their dream home - not to mention the rare occurrence when a Grand Design actually stays in budget!

The planning system is more receptive to self-build housing projects than Grand Designs may portray particularly with emphasis firmly from the Government on housing growth and choice.

The Government specifically promotes self-builds through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to plan for a mix of housing, including people wishing to build their own home and through the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placing a requirement on each relevant authority to keep a register of people who are seeking to buy serviced plots of land in the authority's area in order to build houses.

Assuming you have the finance and drive to build your own home, the first hurdle you face is finding suitable land. There are a few common ways to source a site:

- **Internet search** – there are a few land search websites available, you may need to subscribe;
- **Local authority register** – contact the local authority to register interest in building your own home, they should hold a record of available land;
- **Land or Estate agents** – some sites may not be openly marketed therefore it is advisable to contact agents to make them aware you're looking for a site;
- **Local knowledge** – you may know of land which may be acquired.

Deciding if or when to bring professionals onboard is your choice. Some people navigate through the planning process successfully, however often the cost of a planning consultant can save you time, potentially money and in some instances can secure you a permission which you may not have been able to achieve. Even a small planning project can be complex, Planning House are here to help.

The services that Planning House provide are always tailored to the client. Some clients want to go head first into submitting a planning application and some are more cautious and want comfort from the local planning authority through pre-application discussions that 'in principle' their development will be supported – which I would in general advocate, however each case is different.

Should you decide to progress with a planning application without professional help make sure you have all relevant plans, application, fee and supporting documents for your proposal (i.e. Design & Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Contamination Risk Report, Bat Survey etc) not all applications need technical documents but be aware some do.

It's also a good idea to speak to neighbours before you submit an application to make them aware of the proposal and pacify any concerns they may have. One piece of advice I would give is don't take it personally if objections are lodged to your application everyone's home is their castle.

If you want to discuss your own Grand Design PLANNING HOUSE can be contacted on 07944844882/info@planninghouse.co.uk or by visiting www.planninghouse.co.uk



NORTHERN INSIGHT MEETS

EMMA LIDDLE

Assistant Residential Property Manager, Mincoffs

Did you always envisage a career in the property industry?

Not at all! I fell into the world of Conveyancing about 16 years ago and have been working in the residential property sector ever since. Obviously my job is to ensure the legal process of the transaction runs smoothly but I do love all aspects of property including architecture and interior design and I enjoy renovating my own homes.

Tell me about your current role.

I am Assistant Manager to the busy and expanding Residential Property Department within Mincoffs, carrying a full and varied caseload of residential transactions.

I remember being given my first few files and being terrified and thrilled that I was progressing and now I deal with a huge variety of property transactions from investment clients to individuals moving up and down the property ladder. All clients are equally important to be whether they be high profile celebrity clients or sports personalities to those buying their first home.

What services do you provide?

Mincoffs as a whole provide the full spectrum of legal services from corporate, commercial property, dispute resolution and employment to private client work including family, wills and residential property.

Within our residential team, we cover all aspects of residential property work including sales, purchases,

re-mortgages, transfer of equity and lease extensions. We strive to provide a bespoke and personal one to one service as we do appreciate that moving house or buying your first home can be a particularly stressful time. It is important that clients are kept up to date and we do all that we can to keep stress levels to a minimum.

What is your fondest career memory to date?

I have many happy memories as I am involved in major points in people's lives such as young couples buying their first home together and then coming back to move on to their family home as their family expands and getting to meet their children who tell me all about their new bedroom! It is a joy being a part of their excitement, particularly when I am able to tell them that their purchase has completed and that the keys to their new dream home can be collected.

What challenges have you encountered?

Residential Property is a challenging career on the whole with fast paced turnarounds and deadlines but we do joke that you have to be a certain kind of person to thrive off the stress and pressure which a Conveyancing department runs on! I am sure many conveyancers will nod in agreement when reading this! The credit crunch and the government stamp duty changes have brought their own particular challenges, however, I think with experience you learn

that the property world is all about peaks and troughs and challenges are part of the day to day process which all have to be met head on and overcome. There is a solution to every problem.

Tell me about your team.

Since I joined Mincoffs a little over 4 years ago, the team has gone from strength to strength and has doubled in size. We believe it is important to provide the highest level of service and as the demand for our services grow, as does our team, to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to provide all of our clients with our utmost attention and be able to progress their transactions as quickly as we can.

What does the future hold for yourself and your company?

Una Coulson Heads up our Residential Property Department and is well known and respected by everyone within the property market. I am enjoying working alongside Una who is a great mentor and I look forward to a bright future with Mincoffs.

What not working how do you like to relax?

Family and friends are everything to me and so is my dog Zoe. I love winding down with Zoe taking her for long walks in the beautiful countryside which is right on my doorstep. I am involved with agility classes and spend some weekends at dog competitions. Zoe is a little rising star in the doggy world!

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SOLICITORS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – A ONE-SIDED STORY OR AN UNDER-USED OPPORTUNITY FOR TRUE COLLABORATION?



Last month I was among a group of like-minded professionals debating the future of consultation and engagement, and what we – as practitioners – can do to achieve better outputs for all parties. As you would expect, there were many suggestions, some of which inevitably led to more questions. But, asks Ruth Shepherd of Results Communications, shouldn't we be questioning if stakeholder engagement is a missed opportunity for many?

The last 12 months has seen us complete a number of challenging (not unusual) public consultation and stakeholder engagement projects for clients. This kind of project are generally the norm rather than the exception, and they generally feature the same 'characters': angry people who don't want change, misinformed people who believe what is said locally, emotion - rather than fact-led individuals with bold assertions of 'we will stop you' and wide-scale sceptics that what's proposed is what is really intended to be built.

What's notably missing is – among some parties – a willingness, in the true spirit of the word – to engage from the community.

By definition, 'engagement' is actions and processes taken or undertaken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interactions can then take place and the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

Likewise, 'consultation' is the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views and, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

Results Communications provides independent community and stakeholder engagement, and marketing/public relations services to public and private sector clients. If you need help engaging your audiences or communicating your messages, you can reach us via hello@resultscommunications.co.uk

Neither of these definitions – and thus engagement – are achievable if both the consultor and the consultee fulfil their responsibilities within the engagement process.

The consultor has the responsibility of ensuring that the consultation/engagement is being carried out at a time when the subject under discussion is still at a sufficiently early stage that those being consulted can influence the proposals. The consultee has the responsibility to approach the consultation with an open mind – and be prepared for discussions around change.

Quite often we find ourselves – as consultors and consultors' agent – the target of verbal attack, (unfounded) accusations and in the middle ground between the client's genuine desire to find out what people think about their proposals and the community's resolute determination to prevent the proposals coming to fruition.

So how can we – as both consultor and consultee – do things better?

Consultor

- Consult at an appropriate time in the development of proposals
- Be clear about what is under consultation, what the objectives are, and what consultees can influence

- Hold the consultation at a time when people are more likely to engage, and where people can access it
- Develop a strategy which includes a range of options for engaging, and tools for reaching out to different target groups within your stakeholder map
- Provide the appropriate amount of time for feedback to be provided

Consultee

- Be open to ideas – a consultee can campaign, but a campaigner cannot be consulted if they are not open to the idea of change
- Tell us your views – a consultation is not a vote so just saying you object will not help anyone understand your concerns
- Bear in mind that not everyone who is being consulted shares your views, so if you are representing a group be clear about how many and who you are representing and that you are authorised to speak in their name
- Provide meaningful feedback – concerns and questions within the community are known
- Be prepared for multi-directional dialogue – engagement is about relationship-building



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GENTOO - SHINING A LIGHT ON YOUNG TALENT

A Sunderland housing company is building more than houses - it is building confidence with a scheme that puts youngsters firmly centre stage.

When JLS star Aston Merrygold took to the stage to entertain music fans at Sun FM's 20th Birthday Bash in May – he wasn't alone.

Taking their place in the spotlight alongside him were three Wearside youngsters who prove that, when it comes to performing, Sunderland really has got talent.

Singer and guitarist Tom 'Mouse' Smith, 13 from Houghton-le-Spring, and 16 year old Leonie Taylor and Lewis Conlin are among hundreds who have benefitted from the Genfactor – a Gentoo initiative aimed at inspiring the city's young people.

Gentoo, a housing association that owns and manages more than 29,000 homes, formed the Genfactor in 2009. The talent competition aims to boost confidence and nurture home-grown talent and get young people involved more widely in music, arts and culture.

And it has gone from strength to strength. Since 2009 more than 800 young people have auditioned and its 2016 final, held at Rainton Meadows Arena, featured 16 final acts performing in front of an impressive 1000-strong live audience.

Michelle Meldrum, Executive Director, (Operations) said: "The amount of talent that has come out of Sunderland since we launched the Genfactor has been amazing. Sunderland is such a vibrant city and I hope that the Genfactor continues to inspire future generations and open new opportunities.

"This competition helps us to give back to the local community by providing a safe platform for young

people to meet new friends, build confidence and embrace arts and culture."

Many of the finalists have performed at Gentoo's corporate events, helped them to raise money for charity as well as perform in their sheltered schemes, really giving something back to the local community.

The Genfactor's commitment and investment in the city and its young people has also perfectly complemented the Sunderland 2021 City of Culture bid.

But, while the Genfactor is a platform for the stars of the future, the opportunities it gives them and the experiences they take away from it, remain long after the applause has died down.

One finalist not only went on to win a Young Achiever's award, but has also followed his ambition to start a band and go to college. Other finalists have also utilised their success from the competition, with some taking up further education at prestigious performing arts academies and performing at the Sunderland Air Show and Sunnyside Live.

John Craggs, Gentoo Chief Executive Officer said: "It's great to hear about the previous contestants successes since taking part. Our vision as a Group is to build great homes, strong communities and inspire people and the Genfactor is just one of many Gentoo initiatives working towards that goal – indisputably proving that Sunderland has talent."

THE GEN FACTOR

gentoo
It's how you live





Peter Bartley, Senior Director at Bradley Hall, Matt Hoy, Director of estate agency and Lewis Chambers of BH Financial Services

WORK BEGINS ON LUXURY HOMES AT NEWCASTLE RACECOURSE

Work has begun on an £11 million project to create 14 contemporary and luxurious homes within the Walled Garden at Newcastle Racecourse.

Leading North East chartered surveyors and estate agents Bradley Hall has unveiled details of the highly anticipated development of exclusive homes. The properties are set to come to market in the summer of this year, with completion dates estimated to be early 2018.

The properties will boast a range of luxury finishes and aesthetic details, as well as sedum grass and zinc roofs, which will mirror the leafy surroundings and former greenhouses of the Walled Gardens.

Located in Gosforth, one of the city's most affluent suburbs, The Walled Garden will have access to a range of restaurants, pubs and retailers on Gosforth High Street. Home owners will have excellent transport links, such as access to the A1(M) and A194(M), as well as public transport links, providing a prime location for commuters and professionals.

The four and five bedroomed homes will be carefully set within the four-acre site which originally served the 18th Century Brandling Estate. The initial sale of the site for redevelopment also

supported a highly publicised improvement multi-million-pound investment programme at the racecourse.

The exclusive homes will be developed by award winning All Saints Developments, a property development company which specialises in innovative architecture and high quality interior design.

Matt Hoy, director of residential services at Bradley Hall, said: "These outstanding homes have been highly anticipated for a long time, and we were not disappointed to see the plans for this exclusive development.

"We know that All Saints Developments and the homes they build are a perfect fit for this particular location. All 14 of the properties will boast a range of stunning features and practical, yet luxury, living.

"The location of The Walled Garden provides discerning buyers the opportunity to own a home in one of the most sought after suburbs of

Newcastle. The close location to Newcastle city centre provides convenient travel for commuters and those who like to socialise in the city, whilst also enabling a tranquil living environment.

"As there is only a limited amount of properties within The Walled Garden, we expect them to be snapped up very quickly."

Developers have also taken an interest in protecting the native wildlife within The Walled Garden, carrying out protection initiatives and the capture and release of small creatures into more suitable habitats.

Director for All Saints Developments (NE) Ltd. Keith McDougall, added: "In an area renowned for its landscaping and wildlife, we will be building homes which are sympathetic to their surroundings. The modern design of the properties will maximise natural light, with large south facing windows as a key feature in the eight, four bedroomed properties in the northern part of the garden."



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IMPERATOR GROUP

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

PAUL HART

Founder,
Cargo Creative LTD

What were your career ambitions growing up?

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after high school, so I literally did something I thought I'd enjoy - went to 6th form and completed a course in Leisure & Tourism and PE. Basically me and my mate enjoyed two [almost] stress free years. Following this I ended up working in a shop for a year. I was more interested in how good the type looked on the labels I wrote than anything else.

I'd always been interested in graphics and illustration, so at the tender age of 19 I returned to College to study graphic, and subsequently editorial design. Having always had something in the back of my mind about running a studio, after 5 years in London, returned home and started up on my own. Classic back-bedroom stuff...

What were your first business premises?

As above, started in the spare room before moving to a small office on North Shields Fish Quay. I was simply the worst at working from home. Couldn't do anything until the house was tidy, so the sooner I got out the house the better!!

What are Cargo Creative's defining qualities?

We pride ourselves on delivery. We have a very responsive team, and this is reflected in our client base. Alongside our bigger projects, we also have a lot of historical clients who rely on us for quality work, turned round in a short space of time. This may come from my background in a news room environment - I don't know - but there is something enjoyable about the short deadline now and again to keep you on your toes.

How has your company grown?

Steadily, year on year. We have refused the temptation of external investment, but continued to grow our client base through referral and word of mouth. It's a story I hear a great deal, but it works - building relationships and being able to trust your partner agency is a good message to any organisation engaging with a creative agency.



What has been your greatest achievement to date?

From a client perspective, being able to work with some of the North East's leading companies, but ultimately we can only deliver this with the team we have in-house. So for a small company like ours to be able to retain staff and grow is a real achievement.

What is the best business lesson you have learned?

Never trust a book by its cover. Only through a clear understanding of a client can we then produce our best work in response to a brief and go on to add real value to their business.

How do you keep the team motivated?

A mixture of a working environment where everyone is valued, along with a good range of client projects to keep everyone interested. We are pretty flexible as an employer and as many of our staff have been with us of over 4 years, their personal circumstances have changed a great deal in that time - basically we are all getting older! Marriage and the arrival of kids place additional pressures outside of the studio and we are always mindful of this to make sure staff have the balance right.

What are you currently working on?

We continue to work with our ongoing clients in the professional service sector, along with some exciting start ups such as Ride Electric across the North East. On a national level we are working for a range of organisations (who can't be named due to confidentiality) who traditionally have been very 'offline' so exploring the possibilities of what digital can offer them is extremely exciting for us both.

Where do you hope the business will be in 5 years time?

We will continue to grow the way we have. We will never claim to be a full service agency, however our clients no longer require just a one off solution. You cannot deliver a digital solution without considering a brand. You can't deliver a brand without understanding the client and their audience. A website isn't going to return on investment unless it is promoted. With this in mind the Cargo offering has changed a great deal in the last 12 months. We now offer a full range of creative, digital and marketing services to ensure that our clients understand exactly what their digital landscape looks like and how the work we carry out makes a difference to their bottom line.

THE NORTH EAST WINS BIG AT CIPR NATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Three local PR teams are celebrating after winning at the profession's most prestigious annual awards ceremony.

More than 650 public relations professionals from over 120 agencies and organisations gathered at the Artillery Garden at the HAC in London for the 33rd annual CIPR Excellence Awards.

BBC's Mock The Week Comedian Andy Parsons hosted a lively ceremony, which saw Filament PR's Anne-Marie Lacey crowned Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year, Newcastle City Council win for best use of social media, and Up North Communications receive a gong for best external publication, for Byker Community Trust's tenants' newsletter.

Anne-Marie, 30, who also volunteers as Secretary of the CIPR North East committee, was nominated alongside five other young communicators from around the UK. The judges commented: "Anne-Marie has shown great courage and entrepreneurship in founding her own company, where she has demonstrated strong achievements in her client work. She is the epitome of an all-rounder and shows great promise as a future leader."



Newcastle City Council's social media campaign, Channel Shift, beat entrants including the NHS, University of Sheffield and the British Heart Foundation.

Finally for the regional hat-trick, Washington's Up North Communications won out against Macmillan Cancer Support, the Police Federation of England and Wales, and the University of Derby among others. The judges said: "This wasn't a one way broadcast; the publishers clearly demonstrated how Byker News was used to engage, inform and involve its readers.

Chair of the CIPR North East, independent communications consultant Sally Pearson said: "We have some incredible talent in the North East PR industry and it's fantastic that the winners' skills and professionalism has been recognised on the national stage.

"We'd like to congratulate all the winners who are flying the flag for the region and for helping standards in creative communications and professional standards.

ALTOGETHER AMAZING FIRST YEAR FOR CREATIVE EXPERTS



Creative agency Altogether has smashed its two-year target in the first 12 months of trading and has taken on another designer, thanks to winning new regional and national clients.

The Newcastle-based company was founded last year by award-winning team Sarah Tempest and Michael Sutton. Since then Altogether has picked up a raft of new projects with clients including Newcastle United Football Club, Northern Powergrid, Newcastle University, Naylor's Surveyors, and recently a vision development project with one of

the region's leading independent schools, RGS.

Based at Baltic 39 in Newcastle's High Bridge, Altogether specialises in brand, print and digital communications. Using the team's combined experience and its skill set of strategy, creative and illustration, the team brings even the most challenging project to life in a way that resonates with the audience. The directors believe this combination of expertise and chemistry within the creative team is behind much of its success over the last year.

DIGITAL DESIGN AGENCY JUMP CELEBRATE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Founded by Lucy Batley and Robert Brown back in early 2007, JUMP who are this year celebrating their 10th anniversary, are a digital and creative agency providing branding and design solutions to a range of businesses across the North East and beyond. Their celebrations follow Lucy's recent appointment as Ambassador for Creative and Digital for the Institute of Directors (IoD's) regional committee.

Based at Milburn House on Dean Street in Newcastle, the once team of 6 has grown steadily over the years

to a strong group of 20, consisting of a mix of designers, developers and support staff.

Offering a range of services under one roof across brand, design, web and digital, the team pride themselves on being able to deliver bespoke solutions to clients.

To support JUMP's ongoing expansion, the team is taking on larger office space within Milburn House and will be looking to make a range of new appointments over the next 12 months.



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SWITCHED ON

Filament's PR and Communications Director Scoops National Award



When it comes to knowing a thing or two about putting our clients in the spotlight so they shine above and beyond their competition, we really are a bunch of bright sparks.

In fact, our PR and Communications Director, Anne-Marie Lacey, is making a name for herself as a leading light in the industry, after beating hundreds of entries from across the UK to be named the Chartered Institute of Public Relations' Outstanding Young Communicator of the Year at the National Excellence Awards 2017.

The judges described her as being the epitome of an all-rounder and commented on the quality results she delivers for our clients. It's safe to say Anne-Marie is certainly switched on, helping the people we work with to communicate their key messages with the right people, at the right time and in the right way.

But of course, it's not just about being seen and heard. It's about using the opportunities PR done properly presents to achieve tangible business benefits. That's what we do. We've recently worked on a campaign with a client to increase footfall to an inaugural event in Durham City. Through Anne-Marie's know-how and the super skilled team supporting her, the results have been staggering.

With over 50 pieces of media coverage gained including slots on the evening regional news plus six pieces of national coverage across print and online, along with over half a million people engaged over social media, the event was a bumper success. During the course of the event, thanks to our integrated approach to PR and marketing communications, Durham was jam-packed with over 10,000 extra visitors to the City – an increase in footfall of over 8%.

So, when it comes to being switched on about using PR, you really don't need to look much further than Filament PR.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF HIGHLIGHTS PR

Keith Newman is MD of Highlights PR.



Mike Proud of Red Maple is interviewed by Keith

Today, my morning starts very early as I'm up at 5.30am to attend a business networking meeting. Here, I'll meet with colleagues, find out how I can help them to grow their business and receive reciprocal help and advice from them too. By 8.30am I'm back on the road to the office.

My office is quite unique, it's a boat berthed on the River Tyne. I've always had a passion for boats so combining my love of the river with a practical and unusual workspace is quirky and a great place to meet clients.

After managing work for my social media clients, I make a few calls to radio presenters and journalists to see if they need any experts for interviews. I have a new service called RADAR where I look out for opportunities for the people who have signed up to this very inexpensive service. So far, it's proving to be very popular both with my clients and my media contacts.

My first client meeting of the day is with Health Watch Gateshead. They are recruiting volunteer members for their committee and need a press release. I've thought about this and realised that the newspapers aren't going to be too interested in this story. My solution is for the team to write and sing a song asking for volunteers. Once practised, the song (to the tune of the Blaydon Races) comes to life in a short video for social media distribution. It later appeared on BBC radio and attracted a good number of potential volunteers. You can view



The Health Watch Gateshead team work with Keith on their video

it here: highlightspr.co.uk/blaydon-races-inspires-call-to-action-to-health-group/

The rest of the morning is spent completing press releases and issuing to the media before preparing for tomorrow's media training course for small businesses. I hold these intimate (4 people max) sessions at Radio Northumberland's studio every month. It's a great way of building up confidence in a very safe environment.

My afternoon is spent with my clients Red Maple who have just moved to a wonderful rural setting near to the Roman Wall. My brief is to highlight

their green credentials as well as their expertise in technology and cyber security. My interviews take about an hour as I love to really find out about their business and to look for angles that others may perhaps miss.

Then it's a quick visit back to the boat to meet up with Ray Laidlaw from the Sunday for Sammy Trust to discuss PR for the February show at the Metro Radio Arena in Newcastle. Despite it being many months away, the show sells out very quickly and my job is to make sure that everyone knows the date (Feb 18th 2018) and to keep the charity in the public's eye by coming up with stories for the media. It's great fun and I get to work with some lovely people too.

Last call tonight is a working tea as I discuss the next story for The Harbour View Fish Restaurant in Seaton Sluice with the owner. I love going there as the fish is the size of a whale and it tastes fantastic too.

So, from Blaydon Races to giant fishes and celebrities to circuitry my day is never the same twice. I've a passion for PR and I'd love to share it with your business too.

For an informal no obligation chat, come and have a coffee on board Highlights.
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IS YOUR BUSINESS READY FOR GDPR?

With GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) being enforced across Europe by May 2018, change is certainly on the horizon. Designed to tighten the collection, use and retention of consumer data, the new legislation will affect businesses of all sizes irrespective of industry or sector and we all need to be ready.

As marketers and brand specialists exposed to a vast array of client information and databases, it's important that we stay ahead of the curve to avoid potential pitfalls and the hefty fines that may ensue for incorrect or misuse of data. The most critical thing is for organisations to be able to demonstrate to the regulator that they have done their best to comply with the requirements of GDPR.

It's not all doom and gloom however as conversely this does present an opportunity for marketers and businesses to build trust with customers by obtaining consent and opt ins for communications. Consumers will also have the right to withdraw consent at any time with companies required to demonstrate the measures they have taken to fulfil this request.

Introducing GDPR Portal for small businesses

There is certainly a lot to navigate to understand the implications of GDPR with every business benefiting from varying levels of support and resource depending on their size and scale. Luckily help is at hand! We were recently asked to help create a brand identity and online presence for a new website called GDPR Portal that will be launching soon.

Created by IT specialist Ben Grey from GMA Consulting, the highly innovative cloud-based portal is a user friendly and cost effective solution that will help small businesses comply with GDPR requirements. Based on a subscription model, for a small monthly fee, the software provides a suite of useful tools, that enable businesses to record and share important data, thus helping them



avoid some of the hefty fines that may be imposed on them through non-compliance. Put simply, the portal is an easy to use tool, guiding the user through a step by step process to help them stay on track with requirements.

Sarah McCrady, Co-founder and Design Director at Absolute Agency said; "We were delighted to be learn about the benefits of GDPR Portal and are looking forward to signing up as a user. It's going to be a real benefit for SME's in the North East and will certainly help take away the pain when navigating this new legislative mine-field. We have a responsibility as marketers and brand specialists to stay ahead of the curve and we know the portal will help us achieve that."

Sarah McCrady is Co-founder and Design Director at Absolute Agency: www.absolute-agency.co.uk Email: sarah@absolute-agency.co.uk
Tel: 0191 499 8458. Find out more information about GDPR Portal online www.gdpr-portal.com
Twitter: @gdpr_portal or contact Ben Grey on ben@gdpr-portal.com

CPD – GOING BACK TO STUDYING, WHAT IS THE REALITY?

Almost all nesma students are working and learning, and with the new academic term fast approaching in July, I thought I'd give some candid advice to those who are looking to study with us this year.

It goes without saying that time management is critical, but we are not just talking about studying, here, are we? Our students are likely to be juggling family, friends and a busy job, which may involve travel, as well as social commitments like weddings and things to add into the mix.

But with our latest pass rate for CIM qualifications at 98%, our students have proven time and time again it's all possible and nesma tutors are brilliant at helping you to achieve that balance. To the extent that we may even advise you to take the dog for a walk after a phone tutorial on a Saturday morning!

All our students have an incentive to succeed whether it has been funded by their employer or they have funded themselves. As one alumnus commented, "Blood sweat and tears all worth it!"

There's no doubt that studying while working

requires a good level of planning and prioritisation, and that includes looking after yourself too, with healthy eating and plenty of sleep. (Although we are also known by some as the 'Biscuit Club!').

You need to give yourself time to get back into the zone, and that may take longer than you think. A lot of our students talk about the chance to meet and connect with other marketers being almost as useful as the qualification itself.

Make no mistake qualification demands are on the rise but this important decision should not be taken lightly.

To complete your course, you're going to have to work harder and smarter which gives you great discipline for your future career. And the knowledge, skills, contacts and friends you have made along the way are just as rewarding as the final qualification on your CV.

However, please take note employers, there is little value in having employees who have developed their own skills, if no use is made of those skills back at the ranch.



Veronica Swindale
Founder and Director at nesma
North East Sales and Marketing Academy

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SEO ISN'T DEAD, DESPITE WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD

Full service marketing, advertising and digital agency The Works have recently added search engine optimisation (SEO), PPC and social media management to their digital service portfolio. Here, they discuss why they believe SEO isn't dead despite what some people say, and the impact good optimisation can have on your business.

SEO is the technique of ensuring your website and the pages on your site are accessible to a search engine. If done right, it means that when someone searches for a given term on the likes of Google or Bing, they will see you and your website in the results, if any pages on your site are relevant to what they've searched for.

Good SEO is one of the best marketing tactics a company looking to increase their online visibility can use as it ensures your site or page is one of the first results a person will see- nobody has time to scroll through pages of results when trying to find something, so it could be the difference between someone ultimately choosing you or your competitor.

Nevertheless, how many times in the past year have you heard or read something that said, 'SEO is dead?' A quick Google search will bring up thousands of results spreading the myth that SEO is irrelevant. Ironic, isn't it? The people who started that myth to get more people to click through to

their 'fake news' articles have proven that SEO is anything but dead. Yes, SEO and the way the process is carried out is now different (there's no more keyword full hidden text on websites or paid-for backlinks which can lead to penalties), but the outcomes remain the same- the higher you are in the search results, the more visibility you have, therefore, the more chance you have of increasing your web traffic.

Good SEO is a very technical process, but is something every website should be doing as standard. Google are constantly working to improve their algorithm to ensure the results you see on their engines daily are as relevant as they can be, but SEO is about more than just keyword rankings, although undoubtedly, they're an important part. To ensure you climb through the rankings, you must also ensure your website is kept up-to-date with timely, high-quality content. There isn't necessarily a best practice guide as to what type of content will help get you to the top of the rankings, but long-form content and responsive

websites seem to be two of the things favoured by Google- so much so that, unsurprisingly, the company have announced plans for a mobile first index to be rolled out before the end of the year.

There's not one approach to SEO that will work for every website, it's like everything, each website must be looked at individually and a strategy put in place linking to the bigger marketing picture. The biggest frustration we see in clients when it comes to SEO is how it long it takes to see results, whether that's an increase in day-to-day web traffic or improved keyword positions. But, SEO, when done right is something which will pay off in months and years, rather than days and weeks.

With over 3.5 billion searches performed every day, and search demand continuing to grow across nearly every industry as buyers of all types increasingly rely on it to find products, services and answers, SEO is something which can produce a better return on investment than almost every other digital channel you're using.

To find out more about what we do and how we can help you, visit wearetheworks.com or follow @wearetheworks

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

MIKE WILLIAMS

Managing Director, MSGWORKS

What were your career ambitions growing up?

Like a lot of people, I suppose I didn't really have a plan for after university - I fell into a marketing job and discovered that I loved it and was pretty good at it.

Tell me about your career path so far?

After graduating I started into working in newspapers in the circulation and subscription departments. This included a spell at an Arabic newspaper at the time of the first Gulf War which was fascinating. I then entered educational publishing and was head of marketing for Scholastic. When my wife returned to the North East I became sick of commuting up the A1 at weekends so did an MBA at Teesside which gave me the opportunity to change sectors whilst still working in marketing. Teesside University introduced me to Katy Parkinson, a local entrepreneur who had a brilliant idea for improving literacy in schools. I helped Katy get the business (Sound Training for Reading) off the ground and it became a huge, nationwide success. As the business grew I realised that the start up phase was the most exciting and that is why Msgworks was born, to give marketing support and inspiration to start up and early stage businesses.

What are the companies defining qualities?

The ability to step back and get inside customers minds and understand where and how they prefer to communicate. A lot of businesses have a great vision, but don't always understand how to align that with customer needs. In addition, we help Business owners spend their limited marketing budgets most effectively: there are so many different marketing channels and techniques out there - how do you know which is right for you and which is going to generate the best return on investment? That's where we come in - acting as your marketing department at a much lower cost than employing.

What is the greatest challenge you have faced so far?

Every client gives their own challenges, but an ongoing one is convincing people to scale their businesses up. A great idea is worth growing!

What is your greatest achievement to date?

Most recently, being appointed PR and Marketing Partner for the United Kingdom Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Association (UKBJJA) - representing the fastest growing martial art in the world! Before that,

helping to found Sound Training for Reading, which made a big difference to young people's lives.

Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

Use jiu jitsu principles to help smaller businesses succeed against larger opponents!

What is the best piece of business advice you have been given?

Don't underprice, undercharge or undersell yourself - and make sure marketing is at the heart of everything you do.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

Within business, I'm a huge fan of Mark Ritson, columnist Marketing Week.

My all time heroes would be Chuck Yeager who broke the Speed of Sound and Jacques Cousteau, both pioneers who did the impossible.

How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?

Since I'm about to become a father for the first time, I am going to have to work on an answer to that question!

How would you like to be remembered?

As a thoroughly decent bloke who was pretty good at that marketing stuff.



mike@msgworks.com

ASK SILVER BULLET



John Dias

“I was interested in your comment in the June Ask SB on linking social media and email marketing – how can this be done?”

If clients, potential clients and readers of Northern Insight leave with just marketing tip, I hope it is the value of integrated marketing campaigns. In the pre-digital era (yes, we cut our teeth that long ago and have regularly thanked our stars that we had that experience), this meant integrating printed or broadcast adverts with PR, outdoor media and maybe Direct Mail to deliver a consistent message.

Come the modern era, of course, it's meant including all aspects of traditional with digital media including web sites, email marketing and social media. Some marketers advise treating social media and email marketing differently dependant on the aims of the campaign – i.e., is it to increase customer retention and drive actual sales, in which case email is the more powerful channel, or is it to increase brand awareness and community-driven communications, in which case your resources are probably better utilised on social media.

Personally, I don't think there's any conflict between these two aims. Yes, they're different and, yes they work very well independently, but they're also employed to best effect when they're used together or integrated into one cohesive campaign just as the direct mail and broadcast and/or print advertising used to work in the days of yore!

Last month's article gave an idea of the reach

of social media so now some statistics, albeit from American research, on the power of email marketing :-

- 81% of US online shoppers are more likely to make additional purchases, either online or in a store, as a result of emails (Harris Research).
- 72% of consumers say that email is their favored conduit of communication with companies they do business with. 61% say they like to receive promotional emails weekly and 28% want them even more frequently. (MarketingSherpa).
- One in five (19%) of consumers said they read every email newsletter they receive just to see if something's on offer. (Forrester Research).

So exactly how do you put the two together?

Without going into much detail, there's two general ways of doing this. Firstly, social media can be used to increase your list of subscribers or contacts – if they're interested in your brand on social media, they'll most likely be interested in your emails so engage and educate them! Get them to sign up to your contact list or newsletter subscription with an offer or incentive – an instant Call To Action (CTA) that drives web site traffic via a sign up page. Include a preview of the content subscribers can access and change the incentives regularly. You can

also use Facebook's Business Pages tabs to acquire new email subscribers whilst Twitter has their own tools (lead generation cards) as part of their own advertising toolkit.

The other general strategy is to use your email contacts to increase your social media contacts. The easiest way to do this is to include social media icons in your emails and include them prominently, not just tucked away at the bottom almost as an afterthought! Include some copy that boosts them – “see our exclusive Facebook offers” or “follow us on Twitter for a free gift” etc – your emails are now promoting your social media and subscribers are extending their engagement with your brand in addition to reacting to your sales messages, a long and short term strategy in one.

Integrating your email address book into your social media will not only increase the quantity of your contacts and potential clients or customers but moreover it increases the quality of their engagement with your brand. Following your subscribers gives you a greater knowledge of them enabling you to more accurately target them in future campaigns. Whether you do this yourself or use the specific social media tools depends on your budget and level of expertise but I always advise our clients that it's always easier to sell more services or products to existing customers than acquire new ones.

Do you need some assistance with your marketing? Do you need to review your strategy or do you have another marketing question we can help with? Talk to us. Email your questions anonymously to us today hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk or Tweet us (not so anonymously) @SilverBulletPR.

THE CODE FOR SUCCESS



Mediaworks prides itself on being a successful North East agency providing a comprehensive range of digital marketing services. Never standing still, the brand has since added another feather to their cap.

Since we were established in 2007, we've always understood the importance of a great website. It's the most essential tool in digital marketing, helping brands improve their search engine rankings, better connect with their target audience and ultimately, help them achieve their goals.

While we are experts in search engine optimisation (SEO), paid search (PPC), conversion rate optimisation (CRO), online reputation management (ORM) and content marketing, we realised that a crucial service was missing: web and app development. Without it, we were unable to deliver a truly inclusive digital service.

We have invested heavily in our development department in recent times, and we're proud to have some of the industry's brightest and best web and app developers on our team. Through this growth, we have had the opportunity to support

our clients' campaigns even further, laying the foundations for digital success.

Since then, we have developed a number of websites and apps — including the Great North Snowdogs App, which charted higher than Minecraft in the App Store. Our most recent project saw us working with the Newcastle United Foundation, a local charity that's dedicated to supporting the North East through football.

When we first started working with the charity, their existing site was designed to raise funds and encourage bookings for, and awareness of, their community courses. However, the website was falling short of fully meeting these goals, with many users lost through performance and usability inefficiencies.

The brand enlisted the help of Mediaworks to design and develop a new website that would deliver a better user experience. Working closely

with the Foundation, our design team created wireframes and designs that considered the user and accurately reflected the charity and the exceptional work they do.

The site was then developed using WooCommerce. As one of the main issues identified from the old site was the inability to book multiple courses at once, we heavily customised the platform to enable this functionality.

Of course, we haven't forgotten about our core digital marketing services. To ensure the site's future SEO performance, our in-house content team optimised the on-site copy around high-volume search phrases and, before going live, our SEO team completed a 34-point technical audit.

On June 1st 2016, the new Newcastle United Foundation site went live. With a revamped design and improved functionality, the organisation is already benefitting from their new site.

If your app or website is failing to deliver, Mediaworks can help. Contact us on 0191 404 0100 or email us at info@mediaworks.co.uk

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DIAMOND IS A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

Recently, the famous Pink Star diamond sold for \$71.2 million at Sotheby's Hong Kong, however, another pink/diamond relationship was sealed on Tyneside as one of the region's fastest growing IT businesses gave flawless service and perfect clarity to one of Europe's rising entrepreneurial stars.

Diamond Group, based on Gateshead's Team Valley, have completed a major upgrade of telecoms, IT and office equipment for Newcastle based multi-million-pound fashion business, Pink Boutique. The work typifies Diamond Group's work ethos to provide top quality service to the best businesses in the region which ultimately reflects the quality of their work and that of their clients.

Pink Boutique was founded by Alice Hall who started the online fashion business in 2012. Recently Forbes Magazine recognised her business talents by featuring her in the "30 Under 30 Europe Class of 2017" awards.

MD of Diamond Group John Burns was delighted to work so closely with Pink Boutique. "I first met Alice from Pink Boutique at an Entrepreneurs Forum meeting and was impressed at the way that they had grown the business from nothing in such a short time. We discussed their IT systems and it was clear that they could obtain even more success with upgraded systems."



SENTINEL AT ATTENTION FOR OTC LAUNCH

The Offshore Technology Confereneec (OTC), the largest oil and gas show in the world provided the backdrop for the launch of CMP Products' latest innovation, the 'Sentinel' corrosion shield.

CMP Products, a market-leading specialist in cable glands and cable cleats, has designed and engineered the Sentinel to protect glands in some of the harshest environments on the planet, including freezing temperatures where the Sentinel withstands impact tests at temperatures as low as -76o F (-60oC).

The new shield is fully resistant to corrosive substances such as potash, ammonia, chlorine, hydrogen chloride (sour gas) and salt spray; as well as being resistant to other environmental factors such as UV exposure.

Initially developed for Potash mining applications in Canada, the Sentinel is designed for the TMC2 and TMC2X products, which are used predominantly throughout North and South America.

CMP has been designing, engineering and manufacturing cable glands for more than 60 years and the company is keen to showcase the product from their booth at the exhibition, as Jamie Hughes, Regional Manager explained:

"Launching the Sentinel at OTC provides us with the opportunity to showcase our product to as large an audience as possible and directly to the North and South American markets."



NORTH TYNESIDE FIRMS CEMENT DEAL WITH DUEL

Two long-established North Tyneside companies have formalised a strategic partnership in an unusual way, by taking part in a fencing duel at Newcastle Fencing Centre.

Civil engineering outfit, the Owen Pugh Group and IT solutions provider, Perfect Image took part in a team building afternoon at the flagship sporting venue to mark the beginning of an exciting new partnership. The collaboration will see North East-based Perfect Image take over the full management of Owen Pugh's IT services and software requirements.



Eleven employees from across the two businesses stepped up to the piste during the event at the Benfield Business Park based facility, which was

designed to further integrate the teams.

The event formalises a three-year deal which will see Cobalt Business Park based Perfect Image provide a complete IT service across Owen Pugh's group of businesses. The remit covers everything from strategic input into software plans for the civil engineering giant, to day-to-day management of the company's PCs and networks. As well as ensuring that the existing IT systems run smoothly, Perfect Image will work with the Owen Pugh management team to ensure the systems are continuously improved and fully aligned with the needs of the business.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT MANAGED IT SERVICES PARTNER



In the third of a series of articles about the benefits of managed IT services models, Mark Langdown, Head of Support and Managed Services at technology solutions and support company ITPS, gives his advice on choosing the right managed service partner.

Increasingly complex IT environments, the growth of cloud services and the generic trend for IT to be delivered as a service, combined with pressure on IT budgets, are all factors driving the upward trend for the adoption of managed IT services models.

It is not difficult to see the attraction, with key benefits that include predictable costs, a guaranteed service level agreement, proactive support and expert help in creating a future-proof IT road map for your business.

A managed services partner (MSP) should work alongside you to manage and assume responsibility for elements of your IT, which can range from strategy and implementation through to service and support. You decide which elements you manage in-house and which elements your MSP will handle.

Choosing the right partner is critical, and with so many MSPs out there, with varying degrees of ability, here are our tips for success.

Infrastructure – a gold level MSP will control its own infrastructure, and continuously invest in high capacity communications and ISO27001-certified data centres equipped with business continuity and workspace recovery facilities. MSPs using platforms such as Google Cloud are simply brokers and if they delist the MSP as a reseller or experience support issues, where does that leave you - how much control or influence would you or your MSP really have when issues occur?

Level of expertise – can they prove they have the right depth and range of expertise? Do they work at a strategic level and with clients across a variety of sectors? Ask about their staff, is their team of consultants and engineers made up of high calibre, industry-certified experts in a cross-section of technical disciplines? One advantage of working with an MSP is you do not need to maintain a high level knowledge base in-house, as they bear the cost of that on your behalf. Capability and cost effectiveness is increased as the expensive overheads are being spread across multiple clients.

Accountability – be clear about what your service level agreement looks like, how it will be measured and what the financial penalties for non-delivery will be. A good MSP will offer service level agreements covering single and multiple platforms, all tailored to your business needs.

Relationships – while your MSP should have strong relationships with vendors they should also be able to create a vendor-agnostic solution using the right hardware, software, systems and applications for your needs. Look for a concrete commitment to take responsibility when issues arise, to avoid situations where individual vendors debate where the fault lies and how to remedy it.

Flexibility – one size definitely does not fit all, and your MSP should be able to demonstrate how they have tailored solutions specific to each client's needs. Look for evidence that they have the knowledge and

expertise to deliver an end to end service so you maintain control of your choice of support elements, in a solution that will flex alongside your business.

Reputation – do not just take the MSP's word on this, do your own research. How long have they been in business, what is their client retention rate, do they have a good name in the region? Visit their data centres to see for yourself, and talk to some of their managed service clients. Take up references - this may seem like simple advice but it is surprising how few companies do this.

Costs – one of the benefits of using an MSP is predictable costs, and no need for large investments if you need to scale up your service level. Go through the fine detail of the costings so you understand the commitment you are making.

Unfortunately some MSP's drive potential clients to focus only on cost, seducing them in the main to the savings they can make. Reduced cost of operation is of course a powerful driver, but maintain your focus on value. If cost is the only driver bear in mind that you can buy cheap, but you may also end up having to buy twice.

The right MSP is out there somewhere, qualified, experienced and ready to be your IT conscience, keeping things running smoothly by taking a cost-effective, high-productivity approach, and bringing insight and new ideas to the table that will boost performance and ROI. All you need to do is make sure you choose the right partner.

To access our other advice articles on the managed IT services theme, please visit our website at www.itps.co.uk, or for more information call 0191 442 8300 or email us at contact@itps.co.uk



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NEW COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR FOR THE DIAMOND GROUP



Following their recent rapid growth thanks to the assistance of the regional Let's Grow Fund, The Diamond Group are now in a position to employ a Commercial Director.

Recently appointed, Andrew Pickersgill has taken up the top job at Diamond following a lengthy interview period in order to get the right person for the position.

With a wealth of experience of both working for large corporations as well as owning and operating his own businesses, Andrew, 38 comes highly recommended as the person that can take the business to the next level.

The single father of two boys from Whitley Bay is excited about his latest challenge and tells us what he plans to bring to the Diamond table: "As well as overseeing the sales department and looking at ways to increase our client base I'll also be working hard to ensure we recruit the right staff into the right departments at the right time to cope with the increase in workloads. On average we're currently resolving customer queries within 11 hours which is amazing, it will be my job to ensure that any growth the business achieves doesn't impact on our customers."

Managing Director John Burns told us: "The Diamond group is celebrating 25 years in business this year so it seems fitting that the first



Andrew Pickersgill

Commercial Director within the group happens within this year too. It took us a long time to find a suitable person to fill this position, so Andrew impressed us enough with his knowledge of what we were looking for and his previous experience which made him the perfect candidate for the job."

As Diamond plans to merge their IT and Communications departments from June this year to become ICT, Andrew will be ensuring that the

internal procedures are all in place to ensure that all clients are aware of this positive move for the business and customers alike.

Andrew, previously the owner of a Sandler Training franchise, will also be responsible for creating and implementing the strategy to take the business from its current £2M turnover to £5M within the next three years.

"I will be using a process driven structure in trying to achieve this, along with standardising procedures and utilising new CRM software.

"We plan to commercialise the sales process whilst ensuring that the customer journey is as smooth as it has ever been. The great thing about working for a business like Diamond is that everyone sings from the same song sheet, you can see how passionately everyone cares about the company, something that I do whether I am working for myself or for someone else."

John Burns concluded: "All the directors at Diamond are looking forward to seeing the positive changes that Andrew plans for us and although we have set the bar high, we have high expectations that he will be a great addition to the team."

For more information on The Diamond Group's services, call 0191 519 3700 or send an enquiry via their website on: www.diamond-group.net



Karen Nelson (right) says the future is bright for Calibre

MOVE SHOWS CALIBRE OF IT FIRM

A move to larger premises in North Shields opens another exciting chapter for Calibre Secured Networks Ltd, which has ambitious plans for growth on the back of demand for its particular brand of IT expertise and services.

A glance at Calibre's new offices in Howard Street and it's not hard to see why Karen Nelson and her husband and business partner Steve are brimming with confidence about the future - it's the latest step in a journey that's seen the expanding team evolve as one of the most dynamic, skilled and sought after in the IT education sector.

The firm, which recently welcomed Matt Bulmer to its new business development team, has carved out an enviable reputation for the quality of the cloud-based enterprise grade networks and supporting services it provides to a host of schools, both in the public and private sector.

"We're delighted to be in North Shields as the Calibre story continues to unfold," said Karen. "The move gives us the space for growth at an important time in our development. Not only are we seeing strong local demand but increasingly, schools in other parts of the country are switching on to the benefits of our services."

For instance, the London School of Theology has placed its faith in Calibre, which is working in partnership with Ethical IT, to design and install a new network at the school's Northwood campus

in the London Borough of Hillingdon that will improve connectivity and eLearning resources.

"We are investing significantly in a move to new premises to boost Calibre's operational capacity and ability to improve client services even more," added Karen. "It comes at a time when we're also introducing new talent to help us move to the next level and support expansion plans."

The boost will help to push Calibre's sales into seven figures by 2018 and comes on the back of a strong performance for the firm as a supplier of Cisco systems as well as Apple consultants - several members of the team are accredited partners, enabling them to advise on equipment and installations built around the technology giants' network systems and popular devices.

Extra capacity will continue to reap greater integration of the sales, marketing and technical support functions, explained Karen, who added: "The future is evolving rapidly and exciting for us, and we are busier than ever before. We have the foundations in place to move forward over the next few years and clients will benefit from the strong investments we are making."

She added that the directors are committed to supporting the current team through training and skills development while looking to nurture a new crop of young, highly skilled and adept people who will be based at the new office but also working onsite at clients' premises. Joe Davies, the firm's IT apprentice, is an example of this in practice and shows how apprenticeships are one of the best ways for young people to get that all important first-step on the employment ladder to learn the IT skills the sector requires.

"There's no better way to get ahead in this industry than through an apprenticeship," enthused Karen. "Having people like Joe and Matt on board is a cost-effective way for nimble-footed firms like us to train the workforce to a high standard to be even more competitive. The skills set required at Calibre is highly specialised, so it's imperative that we continue to invest in the future."

Calibre provides IT solutions, working across the UK and Europe with clients building long-term strategic relationships to deliver added value solutions, which provide lasting user benefits.

More at www.calibre-secured.net

REACTING TO WORLD EVENTS

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster, Durham School

I'm writing this column in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Manchester and London. Appalling attacks such as these are frightening for us all and our sympathies go to all of those caught up in them. In addition, those events provide a challenge for teachers and parents in helping children cope with what can be unsettling experiences for them even if they are far away from the events.

Children react to world events in a huge variety of ways. Some are blissfully unaware of news events; their world is much more local and immediate, with friends and family vastly more real to them than distant figures or events on the television. Some children though, especially older or more mature ones, can surprise you with how much they do pick up from TV or the internet; even children of primary age can have a grasp of who political figures are, if not the subtleties of their political powers or beliefs.

The recent attacks therefore can produce anxiety or outright fear in youngsters and we as teachers and parents need to help them through that. This can be a challenge; children are amazingly perceptive to mood, and any anxiety or stress that we as adults feel can be transmitted unconsciously to our children. This can even be something as simple as our reactions when we are watching the news. As ever, the pernicious effect of social media can make this more difficult for us. Children can often run into



reports of terrorism or, worse, hysterical reactions to world events in the most unlikely of places, and this can serve to stoke their fears more. Our job as parents is to keep a watchful eye on what children are doing and, as with many other aspects of internet use, making sure that avoid any inappropriate material.

The best way I believe to help youngsters, and I'm talking really about those below the teenage years, is to be as honest and as matter of fact as you can. Ask them about what they have understood of the attack and how they feel about it. Once you can understand their fears, it becomes more

straightforward to deal with them. Shocking and disturbing though these events are, they are still mercifully rare – not something children find easy to understand. It is also important to emphasise how many people there are to help in that situation, and the excellent work that the emergency services did in recent events is something that we need to make sure our children realise. Ultimately, what they are looking for is reassurance and our presence, calmness and general sense of "adulthood" is invaluable in assuaging their fears.

With older children, the challenges can be different. Events such as these produce strong reactions in us all, and teenagers who are coming to terms with the world's problems can find them hard to deal with. Anger, disbelief and horror are all natural emotions to feel when we learn of such atrocities and we as parents need to help our children talk through the feelings they may have. Once again, social media can be a breeding ground for hatred and intolerance, and it is a responsibility that falls on us to guide our pupils through this minefield. Radicalisation – of opinions if not to terrorism – is a real threat for our children and we need to guard against it.

Ultimately the message to our children is the same as the message for us all; we need to demonstrate to an even greater extent the traits the terrorist would wish to destroy: respect, tolerance and unity in standing up for our values.

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 386 4783, email admissions@durhamschool.co.uk or visit www.durhamschool.co.uk

DOES CLASS SIZE MATTER?

By Ken James, Headmaster, Red House School

Class size is a hotly debated topic and one which political parties comment upon as they strive to gain ground. Pledges to cap school classes at 30 have been around for years but is this 'tagline' accurate and will it lead to greater pupil attainment?

There is certainly 'evidence' which is rolled out to support the view that class size is fundamentally important to the attainment of pupils. Research by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development) indicated that highly regarded education systems in some countries have large class sizes. However, like most statistics, the background of the research is so important and just because there is correlation – large class sizes and impressive academic outcomes – does not mean there's causation. Have the class sizes resulted in the high levels of attainment or are there other reasons why children in these countries, for example a number in Asia, have out-performed children in the UK? Peter Blatchford, writing in the Guardian, listed high levels of parental support, cultural factors favouring education and the prevalence of private tutoring as three reasons which may account for the higher levels of attainment.

Whilst I believe research is important and must be taken into consideration, let me make my position clear: it's ridiculous to believe class size has no bearing on the attainment of pupils in the UK. Where do I



get my evidence? It's limited, I admit, but 20 years in the classroom teaching Maths - I continue to teach as a headmaster - has convinced me that class size is a very important factor. It's not the only factor but to demote its importance is to downplay the importance of the interaction between a pupil and the teacher, which I would never wish to do.

As is always the case, we must take into account the needs of the children in the classroom. High achieving children can usually be taught in larger classes. The children offer each other a greater quality of peer support and they can guide each other through

difficult work. They can cope with a more didactic style of teaching where less intervention on an individual basis by the teacher is required. However, are these being academically stretched? Are the individual needs of high achievers being addressed or is a one lesson fits all model being used? Where there is a wider range of abilities and when there are children with specific educational needs, it is obvious that the amount of individual attention a child can receive is important.

There are, of course, exceptions. In games lessons and interactive subjects – for example, the creative arts – a larger class can lead to a greater creative input and therefore, a more impressive output. However, this is the exception.

We're fortunate in the independent sector to have such small classes. Whilst our more academically able pupils might find themselves in a class of 20, I've just been working with a class of 4 who needed more support and structure to realise their potential. Quote as many pieces of research as you like but I know those pupils benefitted greatly from being in a class of that size. So, as is always the case, the answer to the question, quite rightly, depends on the individuals in front of you. Thankfully, if there are fewer individuals you will know them better and be able to address their specific needs. Let's listen to those doing the job not those researching those doing the job!

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NEWCASTLE IN THE SKY'S LATEST CHEF HAS THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS



Newcastle in the Sky 2017 is set to get a taste of the fast lane after the announcement of the latest chef to take on the skytable.

Red's True BBQ Newcastle this week finalised the deal which will see Head Chef Anthony Hepburn serve the American style BBQ - which has helped Red's establish itself as a Tyneside favourite - 100ft in the air.

For Anthony however who's 15 years of experience in the restaurant business includes designing menus for celebrities including Olympians, this won't be his first adrenaline fuelled experience. He's previously dished up delicacies for a Formula One team. He explained: "I've done a little bit of everything since I started in the restaurant world, but one thing that sticks out is when I worked in Formula one.

"It was such a brilliant experience being around the cars and the personalities from drivers to the behind the scenes staff. Seeing how everyone worked together, it really reminded me of a kitchen in a way - fast and furious"

Anthony continued: "When I heard about Newcastle in the Sky and the opportunity to add to the list of experiences I was more than happy to get involved. It's not every day you can do what you love suspended 100ft above Gateshead Quays so I'm really looking forward to it."

Red's True BBQ only opened in late November last year however has wasted no time at all in attracting a following. Anthony says it's down to the efforts of everyone who is part of the Eldon Square operation.

"At Red's we've tried to offer something completely different to the restaurant scene. I know whenever I prepare the dishes, I do so with the same passion shared by everyone who is part of Red's and I think it shows.

"We get a lot of people coming back and remarking how good the whole experience has been, so I would say it's definitely paying off."

Anthony is set to take to the skytable as part of Newcastle in the Sky 2017 on August 27th, 28th and 29th from 3.30-4.00 and 4.30-5.00.

Tickets for the event are limited but are still available. For more information or to book your spot on the skytable see www.eventsinthesky.co.uk

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POWER GENERATOR

If you like your muscle cars to be technically straight forward with none of that turbo or supercharged carry on, then you will love the Aston Martin Vanquish S, but, make the most of it because this will be the last of the normally aspirated V12s from Aston. From now on, you'll be getting engines with a turbo, or two, bolted on.

The Vanquish is a stunning looking car. This latest model has been given a few styling tweaks which make it even more aggressive yet actually improves the aerodynamic features of the car. The suspension has been revised to not only sharpen handling but also to improve the ride. Bearing in mind that this is a 200mph, 0-60 in 3.5 seconds, super car, the ride is uncannily smooth. Even at town speeds you're not at risk of losing any fillings. You can adjust the dampers to 'sport mode' which tightens the handling but, unless you are either heading for a racetrack or aiming for a bit of fun on the twisty stuff, the car is extremely refined left in normal mode.

As with all Aston Martins, the soundtrack from the engine and exhaust is an absolute joy. This latest V12 595bhp has the most glorious burble at tickover. Suddenly, waiting at traffic lights becomes something to look forward to. Firing-up the Vanquish S is not subtle. You'll waken the slumbering residents in a neighbouring county. Press D on the centre console (no levers for the 8-speed auto...just buttons), drop the handbrake (yes, it's a manual parking brake) and head off for an adventure.

When you get onto the open road, the Vanquish settles into a relaxed cruise. It is the ideal GT, Grand Tourer car. However, floor the throttle and the car hurls itself at the horizon. The noise and acceleration are outstanding. Roadholding levels are staggering. Put it this way, your courage



will run out long before the car's ability to hang on does. You'll need to be doing something incredibly stupid to get into trouble.

The interior is a work of art. It has spider's web stitching all over the place...it looks wonderful. Okay, some of the electronics like the sat nav screen look a bit dated, but everything else is utterly gorgeous.

As for running costs and price, needless to say that with a 6.0 litre V12 engine earning its keep under the bonnet, it will suck juice at a rate of knots. Aston Martin reckon the Vanquish S will do a shade over 21mpg. Hmmmm....you'll be lucky. However, with a starting price of £199,950, we suspect that you might be able to stretch to filling the tank.

The Vanquish S is arguably one of the most handsome Aston Martins and is certainly one of the most accomplished. It may be the end of the line for 'traditional' Astons in that cars like the DB11 are the future for Aston Martin, but it is still a remarkable, wonderful piece of machinery and art.



For further details contact Aston Martin Newcastle on Cobalt Park Way, Silverlink, Wallsend or call them on 0191 691 0333 or send an email to enquiries@astonmartinnewcastle.co.uk

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CUSTOMERS OPT FOR AWARD-WINNING ALL-NEW NIRO AT JENNINGS KIA



Franchise manager, Steven Flack with the award-winning Niro hybrid crossover available at Jennings Kia in Stockton.

It's official – Kia's all-new Niro model is simply the best after topping the hybrid category in the joint Diesel Car and Eco Car 2017 awards.

Officially launched in August 2016, Kia's all-new Niro hybrid crossover is on display and available to test drive at Jennings Motor Group's Kia dealerships located on Concorde Way in Stockton and Parsons Road in Washington, where customers can also take advantage of the entire model range.

The award-winning Niro model, Kia's very first dedicated hybrid, presents customers with the high efficiency and low running costs of a petrol-electric car with the style, practicality and desirability of a compact crossover. The judges awarded the model with an overall place of 38 and were impressed by the vehicle's efficiency and customer-friendly styling and practicality.

Ian Robertson, Editor and Publisher of Diesel Car and Eco Car commented; "Some hybrids have often come under fire for being awkwardly styled, but not so the Kia Niro, which embraces the booming crossover trend, but still offers wallet-friendly running costs. It might be high-tech, but its comprehensive seven-year warranty will reassure owners that this family-sized Kia is built to last."

With CO2 emissions as low as 88g/km and a fuel economy of up to 74.3mpg, more environmentally

aware customers are opting for this particular model at Jennings Kia.

Steven Flack, franchise manager at Jennings Kia in Stockton, said; "When a customer purchases a car, it's not just about the quality and affordability of the particular model, CO2 emissions are also playing an important role in the car purchasing process.

"We know that drivers are keen to see a model with high fuel efficiency and low CO2 emissions and the all-new Niro delivers just that."

With its crossover design, the all-new Niro is anything but a run-of-the-mill hybrid.

Available in a four model line-up badged '1', '2', '3' and 'First Edition', each version has a Lane Keeping Assistant System, Hill-Start Assist Control, Cruise Control and a Speed Limiter. DAB radio, Bluetooth smartphone connectivity and music streaming also come as standard.

The Niro includes the latest connectivity and active safety technologies, such as Kia Connected Services featuring TomTom®, wireless smartphone charging, autonomous emergency braking, smart cruise control and lane-keeping, blind spot and rear

cross traffic warning systems. Additional features include Android Auto – a first for Kia – which links Android Smartphones to Google Maps navigation, Google Play music, hands-free calls and texts and voice recognition via pre-downloaded apps.

In keeping with every Kia model, the award-winning all-new Niro comes with the manufacturer's unique seven-year or 100,000-mile warranty, subject to wear and tear conditions. The warranty – the best on any hybrid available in Britain – is fully transferable should the car be sold before the time or mileage limits have been reached.

In addition to the all-new Niro scooping Best Hybrid in the 2017 Diesel Car Awards, the Kia Sportage claimed third position out of the top 50 highly rated vehicles available in the UK, and the cee'd rated at number 40.

Jennings Kia dealerships are also Motability accredited for those customers who are eligible to a new car through the popular programme, which allows them to take advantage of a three-year leasing contract available across a wide range of models.

Aftersales facilities including service, MOT and parts are also available at both dealerships.

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Kia, customers can contact Stockton on 01642 632299, Washington on 0191 5525810, or visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk



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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the all-new Mazda CX-5: Urban 35.8 (7.9) - 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 50.4 (5.6) - 61.4 (4.6), Combined 44.1 (6.4) - 56.5 (5.0). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 152 - 132.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing. These are provided for comparability purposes only and may not reflect your actual driving results.

Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating dealers only on vehicles registered between 01.06.17 and 30.09.17. T&C apply. ~0% APR Mazda Conditional Sale available on all all-new Mazda CX-5 models. Finance subject to status, 18s or over. Guarantee may be required. Mazda Financial Services RHI ISR. Model shown: All-new Mazda CX-5 150ps 2WD Sport Nav Diesel, OTR from £28,695. Model shown features optional Soul Red Crystal Metallic paint (£800). OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, first registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. *Test drives subject to applicant status and availability. Details correct at time of going to print. Not available in conjunction with any other offer unless specified.

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PARKERS INVESTS £1.5 MILLION IN EXECUTIVE COACHES



In the driver's seat Simon Rudd with his father Brian.

Having built the highly respected Parkers Executive Chauffeurs, father and son team, Brian and Simon Rudd, has invested over £1.5 million to meet demand for its expanding fleet of 'Superior Class' and 'President Class' luxury coaches, with growing sales across the UK and Ireland.

The company has provided executive chauffeur car travel since 1997, representing clients such as Akzo Nobel, British Airways, Komatsu, KLM and Newcastle University, but in 2016 spotted a gap in the executive coaches market and made the decision to diversify into the inbound touring sector.

Operating as a separate, but sister company, Parkers Executive Coaches Ltd, has six vehicles of varying sizes from 16 to 55 seaters, the most recent arrivals being two 53-seater executive touring coaches. The top specification fleet includes both high end executive 'Superior Class' vehicles, as well as the even more luxurious 'President Class' MAN Neoplan Tourliners.

The coaches, in continual use across the UK, Ireland and the continent, are designed to the highest specification and features include individually

controlled air conditioning, mood lighting, kitchen area and servery, washroom, tables, seats with luxurious leather upholstery and an entertainment package that includes TV/DVD/CD/Radio/Wi Fi and PA system.

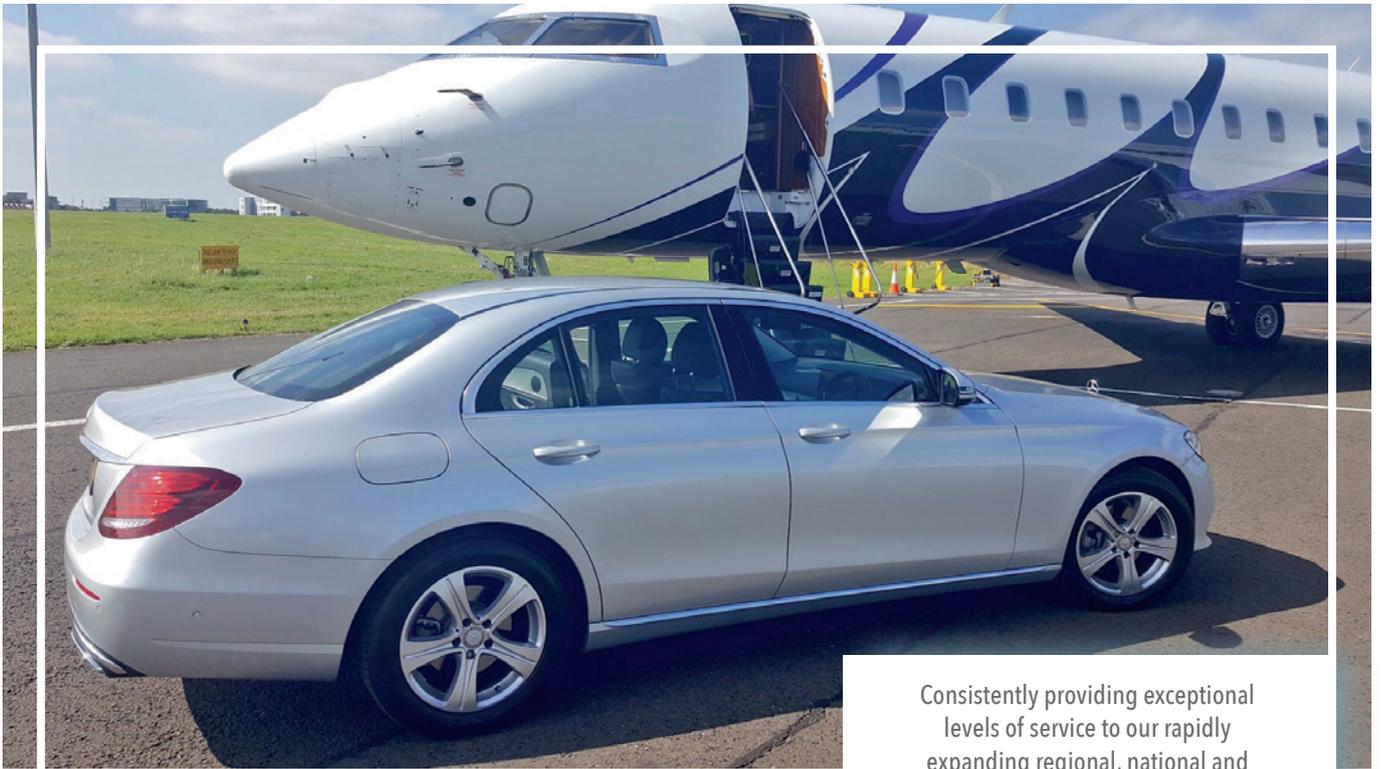
Managing Director, Simon Rudd, said: "The majority of people who go into this market start with older, second hand coaches for fear of losing their investment if it does not work. This was never an option for us, so we made the biggest financial investment and personal commitment we have ever made as a business, being convinced we had come up with the right formula for success.

"This was a calculated risk but we had absolute faith that if we continued to provide customers with the same top quality experience and attention to detail we put in to our chauffeur business, we would succeed. So far we have won some fabulous

contracts – including one that is dedicated purely to the Asian market, generally recognised as a high growth sector."

The company, which operates out of Newcastle and Teesside, employs 12 staff and is currently looking to recruit more drivers to meet exceptional demand for its executive coach business.

Simon added: "Everything we do at Parkers is about duty of care to our customers, it has been bred in to our employees and is at the heart of our business. Diversifying into executive coaches is all part of our plan to make luxury travel more accessible to a wider audience. The £1.5 million investment is just the beginning and now we have a strong foothold nationally, our sights are set firmly on the European market."



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FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR NEW TAKE THAT MUSICAL 'THE BAND'



Here come the girls! The full cast has been announced for *The Band* which is set to take the Newcastle Theatre Royal stage by storm when the fast-selling musical comes to the North East in Spring 2018.

The winners of BBC's *Let It Shine* - AJ Bentley, Nick Carsberg, Curtis T Johns, Yazdan Qafouri and Sario Solomon, known collectively known as *Five to Five* - play *The Band* and the previously announced Rachel Lumberg as Rachel and Faye Christall as Young Rachel will be joined by Emily Joyce as Heather, Alison Fitzjohn as Claire, Jayne McKenna

as Zoe, Katy Clayton as Young Heather, Sarah Kate Howarth as Young Claire, Lauren Jacobs as Young Zoe, Rachele Diedericks as Debbie, Martin Miller as Jeff and Andy Williams as Dave.

Playing Tue 3 – Sat 14 Apr '18, *The Band* has already taken more than £10 million at the advance box office nationwide and is one of the fastest selling musicals in Newcastle Theatre Royal history.

Written by Olivier Award-winning writer Tim Firth, *The Band* is a new musical about what it's like to grow up with a boyband. For five 16 year-old

friends in 1992, 'the band' is everything. Twenty-five years on, we are reunited with the group of friends, now 40-something women, as they try once more to fulfil their dream of meeting their heroes.

Produced by David Pugh & Dafydd Rogers and Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Mark Owen, Robbie Williams, *The Band* will be directed by Kim Gavin and Jack Ryder, designed by Jon Bausor and choreographed by Kim Gavin, with lighting design by Patrick Woodroffe, video design by Luke Halls and sound design by Terry Jardine and Nick Lidster.

PURPLE RAIN FORECAST FOR SUNDERLAND EMPIRE

Purple Rain is a spectacular new theatrical event celebrating the music of Prince. Directed by Gary Lloyd, director of hit production *Thriller Live*, *Purple Rain* will feature stunning choreography and will be an exhilarating journey through Prince's entire career. Presented by West End producers, Adam Spiegel and Mark Goucher, with Claire-Bridget Kenwright, *Purple Rain* will tour the UK from February 2018, with a date at Sunderland Empire for one week only from Monday 2 – 7 July 2018.

Prince revolutionised the music world with his inimitable funk and soul driven style. He exploded the boundaries of music and created some of the most iconic songs of the 20th century including *Raspberry Beret*, *Kiss*, *When Doves Cry*, *Little Red Corvette*, 1999, *Purple Rain*, *Alphabet Street*, *U Got The*

Look and many more!

A 26-strong group of supremely talented musicians, singers and dancers will bring Prince's music to life for an unforgettable evening that showcases his songwriting genius and pays homage to his imagination and showmanship. *Purple Rain* is a fitting, fresh and vibrant night of pure celebration.

Director Gary Lloyd said "Prince's music and constant reinvention is legendary, so to get the opportunity to bring that and all his colourful characters to the theatrical stage is a dream. There is also a real appetite for live music shows that showcase the musicians as part of the performance. Prince was all about this. Prince was a consummate, theatrical artist, but in our show his music is the star."





KATY PERRY ANNOUNCES 2018 "WITNESS" TOUR

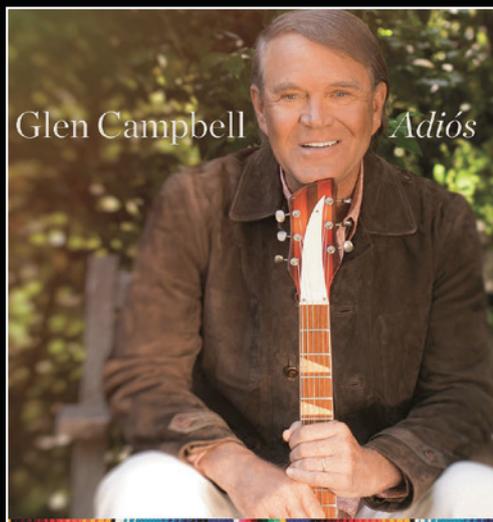
With *Witness*, Katy finds liberation, in the changes in her own life and in the world around her, delivering songs that inspire both thought and movement. The singles released thus far – the Platinum-certified "Chained to the Rhythm" featuring Skip Marley, and the new singles, "Bon Appétit" featuring Migos and "Swish Swish" featuring Nicki Minaj – hint at the breadth of the musical and thematic elements found on *Witness*.

In the wake of the US tour's blockbuster sales and added concerts, Katy Perry announces the UK & European leg of *WITNESS: The Tour*. Produced by AEG Presents, the British and European tour will arrive in Newcastle at the Metro Radio Arena on Monday 25th June 2018.

WITNESS: The Tour is Katy's first run since the sold-out, 151-date Prismatic World Tour, which concluded in 2015 and was hailed by Rolling Stone as "a show to damage retinas and blow minds."

RECORD OF THE MONTH - GLEN CAMPBELL 'ADIÓS'

The country legend bids farewell with this his 64th and final album. Having been diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2011, the iconic musician has been in ailing health but one thing that does remain is his rich, sparkling vocals. *Adios* features 12 songs long-loved by Campbell though never actually recorded. The album is wistful, contemplative and very poignant in tone. First up, is a cover of Harry Nilsson's *Everybody's Talkin'* which is especially moving given the nature of Campbell's condition. Other highlights include a cover of Bob Dylan's *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right* and the title track penned by Jimmy Webb – the man behind megahits such as *Galveston* and *Wichita Lineman*. *Adios* also features a series of duets, most notably with Willie Nelson on *Funny How Time Slips Away* and with Vince Gill on *Am I All Alone (Or Is It Only Me)*. All in all, this is a final gift of an album from one of the greatest voices of all time.



WHAT'S ON THIS JULY?

Jayne Eyre
July 3-8

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Blink 182
July 9

Metro Radio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

Thoroughly Modern Millie
July 10-15

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

The Bootleg Beatles
July 11

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com

An Evening with Will Hoge
July 11

Live Theatre Newcastle T: (0191) 232 1232
www.live.org.uk

Mercury Rev
July 12

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com

No Miracles Here
July 13-14

Northern Stage T: (0191) 230 5151
www.northernstage.co.uk

The Ladykillers
July 18-22

The People's Theatre T: (0191) 265 5020
www.peopletheatre.co.uk

Cinderella
July 20-22

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234
www.customshouse.co.uk

Project A – Road
July 25-28

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

The Wizard of Oz
July 25-29

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

The Carpenters Story
July 29

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020
www.atgtickets.com

Joe McDerry
July 30

Newcastle City Hall T: (0844) 8112 121
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WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND



Ailsa Oliver, the new General Manager of the Metro Radio Arena talks to Jackie Marston from JAM Marketing about her recent promotion, the changes she plans to bring to the Arena and why she's gone full circle in her career with SMG.

The Arena has been operating in our region now for 21 years and although it has an extremely low staff turnover rate, one lady has done an about-turn and has returned recently to the venue as General Manager after starting her career as Marketing Assistant. The irony of me writing up this interview is that Ailsa actually worked for me when I was employed at the venue as Marketing Executive under the guidance of Paul Tappenden who was the Marketing Manager at the time!

Although we've kept in touch during all these years, it's great to see the hard work that Ailsa has put her heart and soul into with SMG has paid off and she now holds the top job at the 10,000 seater venue.

Ailsa told us how her career has panned out since she joined Ogden Entertainment (the former operators of the Arena) since she started working for them in 1995.

"I worked as the marketing assistant and I was responsible for making sure that the events that were appearing at the arena were advertised on as many platforms as possible. Back then there was no internet available to us or social media, so everything was faxed, and typed up on a typewriter and the only way of letting the general public know about what was appearing was traditional marketing methods like leaflet distribution, post, radio and if the budgets allowed; TV."

Although the arena was successful at marketing their events and attracted worldwide artists, Ailsa had her eye on becoming an event manager so in 1997, when a vacancy became available in that department, she applied and got the position.

"I loved the buzz of the events and as I am a very organised person, this job suited my skill set and I thrived on the challenges that the position brought me."

Ailsa was recognised for her superb organisational skills as well as the energy that the job required and after SMG took over the venue in 2001 not long after, she was then appointed as the Theatre Director of the Tyne Theatre following SMG's successful tender to manage this facility.

There's no doubting Ailsa's commitment to SMG and when she was again asked to move to the Whitley Bay Playhouse, which SMG had again successfully won the competition to manage on behalf of North Tyneside Council.

"I was getting a bit of a reputation within SMG as the 'go-to' person as SMG win tenders of other venues, so it was a great honour for me when, after just three years in this position, I was appointed as the assistant General Manager of the First Direct Arena Leeds which SMG manage and operate on behalf of Leeds Council.

"Although commuting was a challenge, my heart was in the North East, so this was my only option, so many days I would be working up to 20 hours a day," she told us.

Ailsa, who has been married to Graeme, a manager at Nissan for 20 years commuted for five years between the First Direct Arena and their home in Washington, so when asked if she fancied returning 'home' on a trial basis as General Manager, she jumped at the chance.

"It was strange walking back after all the years away, however there was also something very comforting about it. Many of the staff that were there when I was first time around, were still employed and I was taking over the GM position from my old boss!

"It didn't take me long to settle in though and I am proud to say that I was officially promoted into the General Manager's position in January 2017."

Responsible for 24 staff, up to 350 contractors and casual staff as well as ensuring that the turnover and profit are heading in the right direction, Ailsa is also responsible in ensuring everyone's safety, hence she runs a very tight ship when it comes to the security in the building.

So what changes can we expect from Ailsa taking over the GM position?

"Well we've just had a new Flown Draping System installed which allows us to achieve a lower bowl configuration stage which means that we can basically maximise the flexibility of the seating area from 1,000 to 11,000 patrons.

"We've also re-branded our hospitality packages to create more opportunities for sponsorships etc., making them more attractive to both companies and individuals to invest in."

Ailsa has her work cut out in ensuring that the venue is at the top of its game, which is one of the reasons why they have recently refurbished a suite of rooms on the ground floor allowing easy access for events.

Ailsa has five managers within the arena reporting to her and although she has still got a lot of work to do, the initial figures released from SMG has seen that 2017 is already set to see an increase of 28% on events from 2016, with a huge 33% increase in exhibitions alone.

Ailsa concluded: "I've always loved a challenge, so I am up for whatever the Metro Radio Arena can throw at me. At least I don't have to commute for three hours a day to get to work with this venue, which means I can have a few later mornings in bed, well that's the theory, but in practice, I'll still arrive early!"

STROKE OF GENIUS LEADS TO BRUSH WITH FAME

Drawing and art in general is one of those things we all wish we could do. But much like playing an instrument, it's also something many of us will never be able to.

But, for one North East graphic designer, his artistic flair has not only led to forming his own business - it's also seen him encounter the celebrity world.

Steve Myers, a qualified user experience designer and owner of North Tyneside based PaperVoice has been illustrating and drawing since a young age – even selling canvasses of his works. It was an interest that extended to his education where he enrolled on a design course at college.

Now, Steve's lifelong passion appears to be attracting the eyes of the famous.

Steve's work has been used by celebrities across social media platforms by big names in showbiz, including Scrubs star Zach Braff, BBC Radio Six presenters Chris Hawkins and fellow north east native Lauren Laverne as profile pictures and headers.

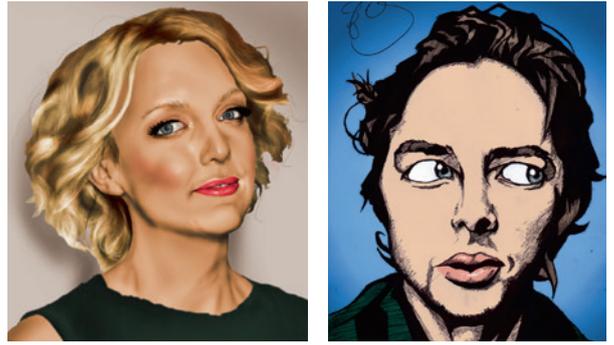
"It's always great to see your creations being noticed by anyone, and to see some big names with big followings on Twitter is fantastic from a personal point of view", Steve said.

"It was especially amazing to see Zach Braff using it. With him being such a big star in America, it was a bit weird to see him using something I'd designed in the north east. It was weird, but it made it even better once I got my head around it."

As well as Steve's illustrations gaining a following, his graphic design and web design business is also flourishing, having worked with blue chip companies like Siemens, Costa Coffee and Subway restaurants. Now, he's currently on the brink of announcing a major new client.

It's not finalised yet, but Steve says it's big news for PaperVoice, which opened its doors for business in 2014.

"I can't tell you who the client is yet, but it's one of the biggest we'll have worked with. All I can say is keep your eyes peeled for more details."



Paper voice specialises in web, graphic and user experience design. For more information on them, or to see what they can do for you, visit www.papervoice.co.uk, call 07515 68 44 11, or drop them an email to info@papervoice.co.uk

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AN INTERVIEW WITH AN ARTIST

Commission an Artist recently interviewed one of our long standing artists, Daniel.

Here is what he had to say:

Cheryl: Who are you and what do you do?

Daniel: I'm Daniel and I'm an artist. Actually I have been the owner of my own driving school in West London for over fifteen years now, though art in various guises has always been a large and very important part of my life, throughout school, college, university and – touch wood – I've been relatively successful since, simply in terms of regular work and commissions.

Cheryl: What's integral to the work of an artist?

Daniel: Inspiration and a love for what you're currently working on. Lose that and really, you've lost that piece of work.

Cheryl: What's the best piece of advice you've been given?

Daniel: Actually the best piece of advice was from my old drum teacher. I was struggling to work out some rhythms and I was getting all frustrated. He said, "Right, stop. Cup of tea time!" We had a cup of tea and a chat for about ten minutes, went back into the studio and it clicked straight away.

The lesson is you can't force it if it's not happening. Step away, come back later with fresh eyes, ears, mind and things will flow easier. I always try to do this with my art (unless I happen to have an

extremely tight deadline, in which case I just have to be more disciplined).

Cheryl: What memorable responses have you had to your work?

Daniel: The most memorable and most humbling was from a client who had commissioned me to paint a portrait of his wife, who had not long since passed away after a fight with cancer. It was a particularly poignant piece for me at the time as my wife was also at the same time, undergoing treatment for breast cancer. I absolutely put my heart and soul into that piece. I received an email from him afterwards saying that for him it was perfect and that he was writing said email through his tears. Now of course, I wasn't glad it had brought him to tears, but to know that he felt the painting helped him in some important way was quite touching.

Cheryl: What do you like about your work?

Daniel: That it doesn't feel like 'work'? Something I always do try and strive for in my work however, is the illusion of light. For me, this really makes or breaks a piece.

Cheryl: What research do you do?

Daniel: For some of the landscape/architectural drawings of places in central London, I went there

for research purposes and took plenty of photos from a variety of perspectives. There are some decent generic stock photos online but you can't always get a clear idea of the finer details and it's nice to see how something actually works/fits together in actuality (i.e. the intricate detailing of Paddington station roof).

Cheryl: What's your favourite thing you've ever created?

Daniel: Well sounds like a bit of an odd one, but I've always been quite proud of a very small section of one of my drawings. Specifically, the light on the trunk of a tree (a London Plane I believe) on the far left side of my drawing of the Houses of Parliament from the South Bank. I think it's one of my greatest achievements, though with the Houses of Parliament being the main focus, no one probably ever notices that poor tree Ha Ha!

Daniel's previous commissions are available online, the nature of his works may just be the inspiration you're looking for.

**Commission
an artist**

Commission an Artist are professional and experienced project managers, so to get them involved visit www.commissionanartist.co.uk

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Our personal travel expert Angela Carruthers travelled to Bali with luxury holiday company Kuoni. To find out more about holidays in Bali call Travel Bureau on 0191 285 9321 or send an email to holidays@travelb.co.uk or angela@travelb.co.uk. Visit www.travelb.co.uk



BLISSFUL BALI - A NATURAL PARADISE

Bali, a volcanic island in Indonesia famous for its lush, green landscapes, has become one of the world's most popular holiday destinations in recent years. With a host of diverse attractions, it's no wonder holiday-makers are flocking to this exotic location.

Bali ticks a lot of boxes; laid back beach resorts and vibrant hubs of lively night life can be found along its coastline, offering a fun yet relaxed atmosphere. However, its tranquil temples and yoga retreats in secluded jungle hideaways and trekking adventures through verdant valleys are what attract many to this natural island paradise.

The island's accommodation makes the most of its stunning natural environment, whether it's a villa on the beachfront, an infinity pool looking over one of Bali's lush valleys, or a spa set amid fragrant tropical gardens. If you're interested in getting up, close and personal with Bali's iconic landscapes, a visit to the country's famous paddy fields should be high on your to-do list. Not only are the views phenomenal but it's also an amazing cultural experience allowing tourists to see a traditional way of life for the local Balinese people.

For many heading inland, Ubud is the cultural heart of the island. Renowned for traditional Balinese crafts and dance, Ubud is located in the uplands of Bali surrounded by densely forested, plunging valleys and rice terraces. The town of Ubud itself is

an artistic hub with plenty of good cafes and 'Rumah Makan', small restaurants that serve traditional Balinese cuisine. Shopping in Ubud is a brilliant experience; see the locals making wood carvings and painting eggs while you pick up great souvenirs from shops and markets selling locally-produced artisanal goods.

Ubud is surrounded by ancient Hindu temples and shrines deep in the jungle. One of the most fantastic sites to explore in this enchanting region is the Ubud Monkey Forest. The sacred monkey forest, with its moss-covered ancient temple is a mystical place, made even more magical by the presence of long-tailed grey monkeys.

If it's temples you're after, Bali will not disappoint: a pura is a Balinese Hindu temple and the island is full of these beautiful structures which are a sight not to be missed. To the East the Pura Besakih temple is steeped in the rituals of Balinese culture and Hindu Religion; the practices occur daily and there are at least 70 festivals held amongst the shrines each year. On the other side of the island, the Tanah Lot temple sits perched atop a rock in the waters off Bali's west coast.

At the heart of the island is the ancient temple of Ulun Danu Bratan, which seems to hover above the breathlessly still Lake Bratan. The temple's intricate detail is as stunning as the fiery lagoon surrounding it when flooded with the blazing orange light of a Balinese sunset. Boats are available for hire so visitors can fully immerse themselves in the beauty and tranquillity of this extraordinary place.

Far removed from the cities, towns and countryside of the UK, Bali offers travellers from the North East a real chance to experience another world entirely. Daily Emirates flights from Newcastle (via Dubai) means its easily accessible and its tropical climate, with two distinctive seasons - rainy October to March (although never that excessive) and dry April to September (great for a summer holiday further afield) make it a great year-round holiday destination.

This spectacular island destination is really all about nature and culture and no attraction can compare to simply drinking in Bali's incredible scenery and immersing yourself in Balinese life.

OUT & ABOUT - DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY



On the way to Glasgow I stopped over one night in Dumfries, a Scottish town which is a suitable day trip from the North-East, or a stopover for a short break.

I enjoyed a sunny morning crossing the Tyne Valley line to Carlisle, where the station is undergoing a major roof refurbishment. I joined the slow train to Glasgow which entered Scotland at Gretna Green and arrived in Dumfries in time for lunch.

On the recommendation of Fiona Forsythe, Community Rail Officer for the Newcastle to Carlisle line, I went to "The Usual Place", a friendly community café which provides training for people with learning difficulties. There were many fillings for rolls, sandwiches, jacket potatoes and, being in Scotland, I plumped for sugar-free Irn Bru and haggis. I thought that might be a bit dry, so I opted for brie and cranberry with haggis which raised not an eyebrow and proved very tasty.

After lunch I went for a walk on the disused railway line that used to go to Stranraer (now you have to go up to Kilmarnock and then south), and enjoyed the fine network of footpaths that run through the town. I ended up at the Old Bridge House Museum on the south side of the Devorgilla Bridge, then the Robert Burns Centre and the town museum, all free. The latter includes a Camera Obscura for which there is a charge of £3.20. I climbed to the top of the tower for a demonstration for just three of us



and saw Dumfries laid out – in colour of course – on a giant white saucer.

Back to the hotel to check in at the Station Hotel. I asked very nicely if I could get up inside the lantern which tops the building but was politely refused. A shame, since I am sure many people would enjoy the view. But not of the camera obscura, which was obscured by trees. I had to content myself with the view over the station from the third floor, room 43, a pleasant double in the roof eaves. Amazingly I never managed to bump my head!

As it happened I had arrived in the midst of the Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival so there was plenty of available entertainment. I was tempted

by the ghost walk starting at St. Michael's Church, where the mausoleum of Robbie Burns is. But on a summer night at 19.00 it didn't seem particularly spooky and I went to the film theatre instead. But I could have gone to the Theatre Royal or the single screen Odeon cinema. I was under the impression that there were no one screen Odeons left, and this one shares a building with the Gala bingo which uses the former stalls, and the cinema uses the former circle.

Robert Burns is never far away in Dumfries, and I even discovered a volume of his English verses which are easier on the southern ear. The house where he died in 1796 at the age of 37 is still standing and can be visited, also for free. This simple red sandstone house gives a fascinating view of how the poet and his family lived and is now a place of pilgrimage for Burns enthusiasts from around the world.

Dumfries town centre is mostly pedestrianised and easy to walk around. The river occasionally bursts its banks and the buses have to move stops above the flood plain, but the railway line is on higher ground and is always a reliable way to reach this interesting town.

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EDEN MILL AT DURHAM COUNTY CRICKET CLUB



Durham County Cricket Club is delighted to announce a brand new sponsorship deal with Eden Mill St. Andrews, a premium Scottish gin company. From the beating heart of golf county, Eden Mill St. Andrews are heading south to share their passion for their hand-crafted gin, each one infused with locally-foraged botanicals and made on-site in Guardbridge.

As part of the one-year partnership, Eden Mill's branding will be showcased around Emirates Riverside including a prime position on the club's iconic scoreboard.

Eden Mill will be supporting many of the Emirates Riverside's international matches with their fantastic Mixology Project cocktails as well as classic gin and tonics, and will even be present for both the Rod Stewart and Little mix concerts this summer.

Durham Cricket Club Chairman, Sir Ian Botham said: "We are delighted to welcome Eden Mill to our growing family of sponsors.

"Durham supporters are more passionate than ever before and we're excited about the direction that the club is moving into. New partnerships, like this one, confirms the progress we're making and

helps us enhance the range of drinks we can offer to cricket and music fans during an enjoyable day at Emirates Riverside. "We look forward to working with such an exciting, ambitious and exuberant company like Eden Mill over the next year."

The partnership will also include interaction on the DCCC's social media platforms in particular an Eden Mill St. Andrews Player of the Month competition that will run throughout the season. The winner will earn themselves one of Eden Mill's premium Scottish gins that showcase the talent of their hard-working distillers.

TONY HADLEY TO HEAD OYSTER FESTIVAL LINE UP

One of the most iconic singers of the 1980s will lead a "Gold" line up this autumn at the 14th annual North East Oyster Festival.

Tony Hadley, formerly of Spandau Ballet, is heading to Hardwick Hall Hotel to perform at one of the biggest events on the region's social calendar.

The unmistakable voice behind a string of the decade's biggest pop hits including True, Gold, Highly Strung and Through the Barricades, will be heading to the Sedgfield hotel on Friday 22nd September.

Having released five solo albums since Spandau Ballet disbanded in 1990, Tony Hadley is still hugely popular around the world, and will arrive in County Durham fresh from a tour of the United States. He will be joined by comedy entertainer Steve Rawlings, who will be bringing his unique blend of humour and juggling prowess, along with The Wild Murphys, 'purveyors of fine Irish music and quality hangovers'.

Once again, North East comedian Steve Walls will comper the event which will also feature the return of Irish folk favourites, the JJ Galway Band.

The North East Oyster Festival is organised annually by Ramside Estates, and supports Butterwick Hospice Care. The charity operates hospices in Stockton and Bishop Auckland which care for people of all ages with progressive life-limiting illnesses.

John Adamson, Director of Ramside Estates said: "The North East Oyster Festival has evolved into one of the region's biggest social events, and we are delighted to announce Tony Hadley as our headline artist this year.



NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT REACHES 2M PASSENGERS IN 2017

Two months after welcoming one million passengers for 2017, Newcastle Airport continues to fly high, after passenger number two million travelled through the terminal.

The North-East's largest airport, recently named the world's most punctual for on-time performance, reached the latest landmark as passengers checked in for Thomas Cook's new service to Hurgada.

To mark the occasion, staff were on hand to greet Audrey Ferry, the airport's two millionth visitor this calendar year, with £100 worth of World Duty Free Vouchers.

Audrey and husband Michael were flying with children Rebecca and Roland and had travelled down from Fife to catch their mid-morning flight.

Audrey said: "We've been to Sharm el Sheikh six times before and love Egypt. We thought we'd try something different and booked up for this holiday to Hurgada just last Thursday!"

Leon McQuaid, Aviation Development Manager at Newcastle International Airport, said: "We are delighted to have now welcomed two million passengers in 2017 and it was great to share the celebrations with the Ferry family.



"The Airport has now seen six years of positive year on year growth and we shall continue to invest to help ensure we match the needs of all our passengers whether travelling for business or leisure."



COLONEL PORTER'S BRINGS SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE TO NEWCASTLE

A unique, quirky bar which brings to life the glorious age of Victorian explorers and adventurers has now opened its doors in Newcastle.

Colonel Porter's Tavern, Botanical Garden and Rum Bar – named after the creator of Newcastle Brown Ale, Colonel J Porter – will take drinkers and diners on a magical journey to the past.

The bar in Milburn House on Dean Street, has been transformed and is now packed with everything from a giant flowering tree to stuffed

animal heads and a roll of honour featuring numerous well-known North East names.

Settings in the bar range from a Victorian-style drawing room to a secret rum bar hidden behind a bookcase which leads to Archie's lab which will be used for private functions.

Along with a range of cask ales, the bar will offer more than 100 rums and a full programme of unusual events including 'tipsy teas' and talks by politicians, explorers and entrepreneurs.

NORTH EAST VENUE CROWNED SPA OF THE YEAR

A city-centre oasis in Newcastle has won an international award after customers voted it the best small spa in the UK.

Mineral House, based in Crowne Plaza Newcastle - Stephenson Quarter, picked up the accolade from worldwide beauty brand Germaine de Capuccini.

The Newcastle city-centre spa is just two years old, but beat three other shortlisted venues in the Beauty and Spa Awards 2017 in a category for venues that have fewer than five treatment rooms.

The award was presented at a glitzy ceremony in Madrid, Spain, where the award sponsor has its global headquarters.

Susie Hall, Spa Manager at Mineral House, said: "It's lovely that Mineral House has been recognised as one of the UK's top spas – I'm very proud of the service we offer.

Since opening in 2015 Mineral House has proved a popular pampering venue with its 10-metre pool, spa, steam room and gym.



ONLY 3 UNITS REMAIN AT MATFEN ESTATES NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT



When Matfen Estates, owner of Matfen Hall Hotel, launched Standing Stone Farm, an 8000sq ft. rural courtyard office development close to Matfen Village, Northumberland late last year, it created a huge amount of interest.

Now, only 3 of the 12 self-contained units are still available to let. Prospective businesses can expect all the advantages of an eco-friendly development in a beautiful, yet accessible location, but with the same levels of digital connectivity you would find in a city centre office.

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TIGER TIGER'S BRIGHT SPARK ROARS INTO ACTION FOLLOWING PROMOTION



Newcastle may well be known as one of the biggest party venues in the UK, if not the world, but for the team behind one of the city's biggest hotspots, it's party time for another reason after going from the outhouse to the penthouse.

And for one member of the Tiger Tiger Newcastle team, the transformation from worst to first is yet another achievement in a stellar career. Tania Woodhouse, Tiger Tiger Newcastle's General Manager was promoted earlier this year.

Now it might only be a matter of months since Tania took the reigns as GM of Tiger, but already, the Tyneside location has gone from the lowest performing venue of the double-barrelled entertainment group stable to the highest, with an increase of over £500K in 12 months - for Tania, and those who know her, the turnaround comes as no surprise however.

Having been in the industry for almost her whole working life, Tania has made it something of a habit turning around the fortunes of other companies including Label and Blu Bambu, before it was sold.

Always standing out as a bright spark, Tania says there is one key to consistent results – and it starts and ends with others.

"If you have a strong team around you then you've already won half the battle.

"At Tiger Tiger we have an unbelievable team of people. Everyone has their own jobs to do and really brings their own personalities to the table. But what makes us special, and what I feel is the most important thing, is that we also work together."

With a number of new bars cropping up in and



around the city centre, Tania, along with the 120 strong workforce at Tiger Tiger Newcastle certainly have their work cut out to stay on top of their game – and top of the charts - but strong leadership has always been a hallmark of Tania's throughout her career.

Kevin Walker, Tiger Tiger's Regional Operation's Manager has worked with Tania before, and says her determination is second to none.

"I'm not surprised at all that Tania is succeeding already in her role as General Manager. She's a strong person, can rally a team and isn't afraid to take the difficult decisions where needed – she's a fantastic businesswoman.

"Above all though, the role hasn't gone to her head at all. Tania is still the same approachable, grounded person that I've known for years. I think, knowing that, people are more likely to want to do well for her, and so far it's definitely being shown."

Tania arrived at Tiger Tiger, initially on a six month to a year temporary contract after a brief break from the industry. After bringing the team together and almost instantly seeing results, there was absolutely no hesitation in anyone's minds that Tania was the right person for the General Manager role.

Now, having increased the profit and sales made by the Gate-based venue from last year in a matter of months, Kevin says he has a sneaking suspicion as to where the successful turnaround has come from.

"Tania really galvanised the team. She has amazing leadership attributes and keeps delivering results. She's built this team up with trust, developing others as she goes and has created an amazing workplace atmosphere – no one leaves Tania.

"When she takes such an interest in your development and improves your skills, I think anyone would be mad to leave."

Tiger Tiger Newcastle is based at the Gate in Newcastle. To find out about their full range of events from nights out to formal meals, and to see Tania's good work in action, call 0191 235 7065 or visit www.tigertiger.co.uk/newcastle

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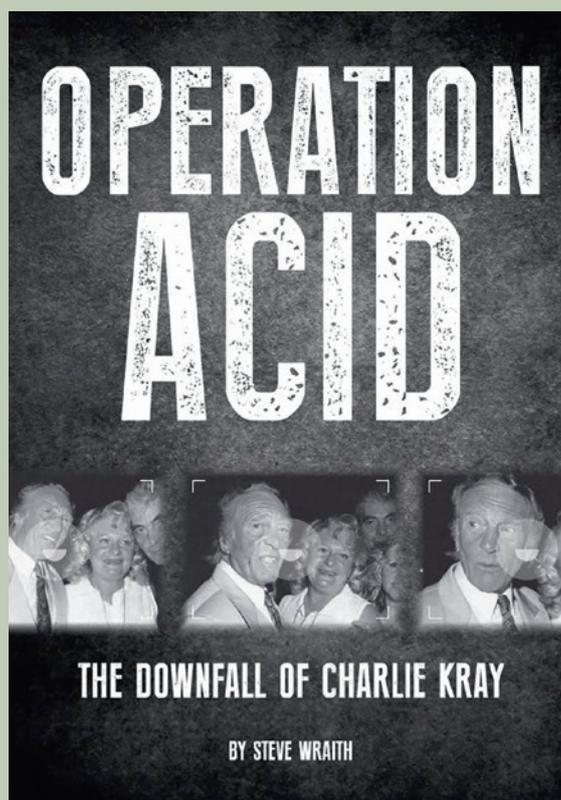


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OPERATION ACID

The truth about Charlie Kray, that investigation, and the Geordie Connection.



During the fifties and sixties the twins, Reggie and Ronnie, ruled East London and their story is as publicised as they come.

Fast forward three decades and a young Steve Wraith, doing his GCSE's at school aged 16, picks up a copy of John Pearson's A Profession of Violence, and lives change.

Wraith became a close friend and confidante to the twins during their final years of imprisonment but the one thing which goes unmentioned is the impact of the twins' elder sibling, Charlie Kray and his involvement in the 'family business.'

On July 15th, writer Steve Wraith brings to light the tale of 'Operation Acid,' and the investigation by Northumbria and the Metropolitan Police into Charlie and the cocaine 'sting' which he fell for in 1996 affording a surprise ending to the Kray story.

Over the past fifteen years, Steve has released several books regarding the phenomenon, his first, the Krays: the Geordie Connection, was released in 2002 and updated as The Krays: Behind Bars, two years ago as well as, in 2013, The Krays: From the Cradle to the Grave. There was also a Freddie Foreman Photo Album added for good measure.

In 'Operation Acid' though Wraith brings Charlie Kray to the forefront. It is something that has been sat on for over two decades but for Steve, the relationship with the elder Kray was different to that with the twins, after all, Charlie was a free man.

Speaking to Steve about his impending release



of 'Operation Acid' he said: "My relationship and subsequent friendship with Charlie was different, unique to that of the twins as he was a free man.

"This book will be the story of Charlie and the latter part of his life but, like other Kray books, the stage has to be set with the story of the twins and of how I got to know them.

"The main focus though will see unpublished transcripts and photographs relating to the undercover operation (which pinned the final Kray) and provides an interesting insight into how the police worked back then."

The question has always remained when talking about Charlie Kray as to whether he was a victim of his surname or if he was a villain and mastermind behind operations like this – the book is the first time the public will be able to form their own opinion.

In Steve, and others like him, the name continues in a better light than it did in their heyday and, in 2005, that 'Geordie Connection' was strengthened when Terry Moran was badly burnt in a bonfire that year, one of several high profile events attended by them. The Newcastle Chronicle headline read 'Krays Plan Bash With A Difference.'

Nearly £3,000 was raised that night alone and showed the heart and love that was there. This with unseen material, newspaper clippings, personal letters and the original transcripts affords much interest.

"It's something I always intended on doing," Steve added.

"It seems the right time to do it with it being the anniversary, and there being very little about Charlie on the market.

"The foreword has been kindly provided by John Corbett which came when Neil (Jackson) and I took a road-trip to Berkshire for he is the one person that should have been involved."

Published through David McCaffrey and Britain's Next Bestseller, 'Operation Acid: The Downfall of Charlie Kray' is available from www.thesayers.bigcartel.com/ priced at £12.99 or £15.99 signed



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SUMMER IN THE CITY

By Stephen Patterson, Director of Communications at NE1 Ltd



Newcastle is a city for all seasons but in summer it shows itself off in its best light with a packed programme of events and activities that draws people in and allows them to enjoy the space and all that the city has to offer.

Creating a destination with lots of events and activities is one of NE1's priorities for the summer months. One attraction that has really made its mark since its introduction six years ago is the Thomas Cook Airlines Quayside Seaside. The pop up beach returns annually to the banks of the Tyne signalling the start of summer and is always well received by visitors and the people of Newcastle alike.

Each year, the beach's return is heralded with a fanfare of tweets and social media posts from people who flock to its deckchairs to enjoy the sand, the views and the beach huts and has gained national and international recognition for the city. The beach is a welcome and much loved attraction which this year we brought back earlier than ever before. Come rain or shine – people come to the beach to take a break, play on the sand or watch the world go by.

Events and activities in and around other areas of the city help give Newcastle its unique identity and cement its place as a modern European regional capital city. It is these events that create a sense of community and provide people with shared experiences that bring the city to life and put Newcastle on the map. They also provide a major hook attracting visitors from across the UK and internationally.

This year we have no shortage of events. In May

we enjoyed the return of Rugby League's Magic Weekend, one of the liveliest tournaments in the Super League calendar. 12 teams and a myriad of fans from all over the UK descended on the city to enjoy the carnival style atmosphere that the games create. This year was the 3rd successive year Newcastle has hosted the Games and recorded one of the top three highest attendance figures ever, the other two record years were also those held in Newcastle.

The dust has hardly settled on Magic Weekend and we are already gearing up for the next major milestone in the city's event calendar, The NE1 Newcastle Motor Show. This year, the event will be staged on the 8 and 9 July, delivered in association with DFDS. The show has grown in stature year on year and is now one of the largest open air city centre based motorshows in the UK. This year, it will be over 200% bigger with more exhibits and zones extending to new parts of the city.

Over 30% of Newcastle city centre is public realm. At NE1 we are committed to ensuring that these public spaces are used to best effect and enhance the city centre offer for residents and visitors alike.

A key to our work is to help make areas of the city economically sustainable now and into the future. Unlocking Heritage Lottery Funding and encouraging public and private sector investment in the Bigg Market is currently one of NE1's major

projects. When completed next year, it will have a transformational effect on the area and the city. The public realm work, scheduled for completion next Spring, aims to restore the historic significance of the Bigg Market as well as securing the area and its heritage for years to come.

The restoration runs a lot deeper than the bricks and mortar rejuvenation, a programme of events and activities are planned to revive and animate the space, keeping it active and creating a welcome space for the public to use. Markets, local history tours, arts programmes and work with the city's Universities, schools and colleges will all bring the space to life and ensure it attracts new visitors and groups who would otherwise not use it. We want people to reconnect with the Bigg Market and the surrounding area.

Northumberland Street is another crucial area that has demanded our attention. Led by the City Council who have commissioned architects Faulkner Brown alongside commercial real estate experts Cushman & Wakefield, we are currently developing plans that will breathe new life into the city, creating a retail destination to rival any other European regional capital city.

As a city it is crucial we get the management and investment in our public realm right, it represents a huge opportunity that just can't be missed.

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VIP LAUNCH PARTY

Boutique hotel Malmaison celebrated the completed refurbishment of the luxurious Chez Mal bar with a spectacular VIP launch party, reaffirming its status as one of the go-to destinations on Newcastle's quayside.

Revellers were greeted with a red-carpet champagne reception and invited upstairs to experience the ambient and intimate new look bar. Guests celebrated by sampling BrewDog beer, signature Malchemy cocktails, blind wine tasting and selected food from the new a la carte menu while they enjoyed stripped back, acoustic live music.

Chez Mal is now open to the public serving the Malchemy cocktail menu, eclectic craft beers and delicious Mal bar snacks.





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SCOUSE MUSIC MAVERICKS THE CORAL TO HEADLINE CHASE PARK FESTIVAL @ SALTWELL

Chase Park Festival @ Saltwell has confirmed a stellar line-up for this year's August gathering with Liverpool's seminal indie rock gods The Coral set to roll into town.

Organisers of the North East's "festival for everyone" last week confirmed that it would return for an 8th year, taking place this summer at Saltwell Park on Saturday 26th August.

In what is a genuine coup for one of the region's blossoming festivals, music fans will be delighted to hear that The Coral will be making a welcome return to the region and will be joined by other ground-breaking acts for a full day of family fun and musical wonder.

Newcastle's much-loved indie outfit Little Comets have also been confirmed to perform at this year's event along with Sunderland's Boy Jumps Ship and Teesside's folk indie popsters Cattle and Cane, still fresh from their sell-out show at the Sage Gateshead.

Speaking ahead of today's line-up announcement - which will see yet more great bands added to the bill in the coming weeks - Chase Park Festival @ Saltwell's organiser, Alistair McDonald, said: "We're delighted to secure The Coral as our headline act and I think it shows we are growing as a festival.

"We're all massive fans of The Coral and they're a

brilliant live act. We wanted a lineup that was going to make people sit up and take notice and I think we've done that. Part of the ethos of the event is to provide an event that is accessible to all and to create a unique atmosphere, you only do that if you have a great line up that will appeal to people from all walks of life. We also want to give local emerging disabled artists a platform to develop their audiences, so it's really important that the line up will bring in the crowds.

"I am really pleased to have a strong bill of established and emerging talent this year. We have got the amazing Little Comets just before The Coral, which I think it is brilliant.

"They are local boys who have made a mark nationally and internationally. We also have Cattle and Cane and Boy Jumps Ship who first played Chase Park in 2012, since then both bands have gone onto bigger and better things, it's great to have them back and continue to share our history."

The Coral, formed in Merseyside by brothers James and Ian James Skelly, were hailed as the first English band of the 21st century's "guitar group revival"

and have a string of chart-topping hits including 'Dreaming of You', 'Pass it On' and 'In the Morning'.

Their eponymous debut album *The Coral*, released in 2002, reached number five on the UK Albums Chart and was nominated for the Mercury Prize the day after its release.

Since then, the band have gone on to release seven studio albums, including their latest critically acclaimed release, *Distance In Between* which confirmed that they're one of the UK's most influential and iconic bands of modern times.

Steve Davis, of SSD Concerts, who are responsible for spearheading Chase Park's programme of music this year, added: "The Coral are one of our favourite bands and it's great to see them coming to Gateshead. We have had a lot of successful shows with them over the years so brilliant to be bringing them back. They're one of the great British sing-along indie bands and are perfect act to headline this year's event."

General admission is £12.50, £7 for people with disability (carers go free), under 16s £7 and a family ticket (2 Adults / 2 Children) is £33.

For more information visit chaseparkfestival.co.uk.

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ALISON WALKLETT

The Coquetvale Hotel,
Rothbury, Northumberland

Whilst growing up did you envisage yourself working within the hospitality industry?

Upon leaving school I had a fascination with the excitement of Airports and travel, so initially envisaged a job based around that.

Can you briefly outline for the readers your career path to date?

I started my career with Swallow Hotels, when they were at their peak. Commencing as a trainee manager at the Newcastle property on Newgate Street (which sadly is no more) gaining experience of the different hotel departments, but decided that Front office was the area that excited me the most, so spent my first years there learning my trade, progressing to Reception Manager before my next move.

The majority of my career has been in and around the North East area, working at some fantastic hotels, Front Office Manager at the George Washington Hotel and golf course, followed by Linden Hall, then into sales and revenue roles, at Slaley Hall and Redworth Hall, and then Derwent Manor before a brief spell out of the area in Bradford and returning to the Holiday Inn, Washington as Deputy Manager.

Then finally last August a chance to break away from the corporate scene, when as a family concern we embarked upon a project taking on the Coquetvale Hotel in Rothbury which I now manage.

Is there a mantra you always aspire to do business by?

In hospitality it's all about our customers – so in whatever role I've undertaken I always listen to our customers and strive to deliver what they expect and more. Coupled with the philosophy that you are only as good as your team- so train and treat them well.

We imagine that working in hotels can be exciting and varied. Is it really true that each day offers something different?

Very much so, that's the buzz that keeps me loving the job. You never quite know what's in store each day. It's never been more true than with our new exciting project at The Coquetvale, Rothbury.

What do you feel is The Coquetvales greatest asset?

I think we have many. With any hotel it has to be its team, and that's definitely true here. When customers arrive at our small rural hotel, our team go out of their way to make them feel special. We're currently getting some great reviews on Trip Advisor, which is always pleasing. Shouldn't say that as I'll probably jinx it now!



It's totally refreshing for me, having worked in larger properties most of my career, to enjoy and see the team enjoy and having the time to get to know our customers better, unlike the pace that often is associated in a larger corporate hotel.

We've got a great team of Chefs on board so our food offering is superb. Coupled with the fact that we are set in the heart of this beautiful county of Northumberland - the setting couldn't be more perfect. So I'm proud to say - many assets.

Can you summarize some of your greatest achievements to date?

I think for me, this last 9 months have been challenging yet given me a huge sense of achievement.

The challenge of project managing major building works within our second month here, when ceilings collapsed and completely devastated 2 bedrooms with the task being to get everything back to how it should be in readiness for a brides very special day 4 weeks later.

Having achieved the deadline, the bride and groom had a wonderful wedding, with the end product being 2 fabulous showcase superior bedrooms. This gave the family and myself a wonderful sense of achievement.

Which ideas are you currently working on?

So many wonderful things are unfolding at The Coquetvale. The plan is to continue with the refurbishment programme, upgrading all of our 14

bedrooms to make us a notable boutique hotel in mid Northumberland.

As I said a great kitchen team on board, and under our new Head Chef we are creating some wonderful dishes using mainly local produce. We are lucky to have so many suppliers on our doorstep.

Having not been open to the public in the middle of the day we are just about to launch afternoon teas, with all items produced in house, so can't wait for the buzz that this will bring to the hotel. Sunday Jazz lunches, fish 'n' chip Fridays and steak nights are all new to the calendar, as are an authentic taste of India night and an Italian themed evening.

One of my personal challenges is to grow our wedding trade, spreading the word of what a wonderful venue we are for small, exclusive weddings. The team here love hosting wedding parties, the month of April was a treat for us all, a wedding each weekend, and 4 very happy couples.

How do you relax after hours?

With any new project it's time consuming so haven't had many free hours of late. But those I have had I've enjoyed re exploring this wonderful area. I knew how beautiful it was but didn't realise quite how much it has to offer. In the guise of market research I had to sample food and drink at many local eateries...this is also a great area for producing its own Gin, with both Hepple and Alnwick brands being on our very doorstep.



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TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

Michael Grahamslaw checks into the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham



Being Lisa's birthday, I decided to really pull out all of the stops. Durham - "not too far, but far enough" has long been a favourite haunt of ours and now has added sentimental value being the chosen university destination of our daughter Holly.

The Radisson Blu boasts 207 bedrooms and occupies an immensely desirable location overlooking the River Wear. Being part of such a stable, consistent brand, quality is always assured which is immediately evident from one look at the hotel's expansive, open-plan reception area.

Another guaranteed plus is the sterling level of service displayed by each member of staff who really do go above and beyond. A case in point, upon learning of Lisa's birthday, we were swiftly upgraded to a superior room and even offered a complimentary drink of choice in their business lounge. Now that is what I call a check-in.

Our room proved a picture in contemporary style and after a quick unpacking of our belongings, we reasoned that some further neckoil was in order. The beauty of the Radisson is that you're only a short walk away from anywhere and when I say anywhere I'm pertaining to the numerous bars, pubs and restaurants which make up a vibrant city centre. Well, it was a glorious sunny day and we were intent on sucking the marrow out of life!

After a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, we decided to continue the celebrations back at the hotel. New for 2017, the Hotel's in-house

eatery has been repositioned. "Collage" – is the hotel's own unique twist on the classic British brasserie which serves up an array of traditional British dishes with various modern inflections. The restaurant draws upon only the finest local ingredients and presents them with classy Radisson style and panache. Indeed, the aim is to provide the diner with a memorable visual experience both on the plate and off it.

This all sounded marvellous and we couldn't wait to begin. Lisa got the show on the road with the pan-fried scallops with pea puree and pancetta whilst I opted for the crushed avocado on toasted rye which I have developed a real taste for. This was garnished with ripe tomatoes and packed extra punch thanks to some devilish little chilli flakes which woke me up after our afternoon's guzzle.

For mains, Lisa chose the rump of lamb with black cabbage, puy lentils and creamy mash whilst yes – I confess – I once more fell victim to the peppered steak with chunky chips. I admit I'm risking readers, but when they're cooked as well as this one was, it is difficult!

To give you a flavour, other eye-catching meals included the "Full Monty" all day breakfast, the

beer-battered cod & chips, eggs benedict with a tin of "indulgent" fries and of course, the "Blighty" beef burger topped with oodles of smoked cheese, relish and streaky back bacon. Wowza. The menu really offers superb choice and this is a kooky concept which definitely merits a look – regardless of whether or not you're a hotel guest. Lisa then toasted her birthday with an epic sticky toffee pudding before we collapsed into bed for a long and peaceful night's sleep.

The following morning, Lisa headed for the Limehouse spa whilst I decided that a brief MOT in the fitness suite was in order. This is extraordinarily well-equipped and offers the cutting-edge in both cardio and weight-training equipment. Named "PACE" it aims to offer a premium fitness experience though I'm sure they'll revise that title following a certain someone's sluggish start to the day!

Add to the mix a comprehensive range of business and conference facilities, this is a multi-faceted hotel which has much to offer the region. All being well, if Holly gets her grades, we'll be back in Durham sooner rather than later – and we'll definitely be staying at the Radisson.

For more information visit www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-durham



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MAGNIFICENT MADEIRA

The volcanic island of Madeira is located in the Atlantic some 400 miles off the coast of Morocco and has been part of Portugal since 1420. Renowned as a tourist destination, Madeira has found even greater fame as a producer of a unique style of wine – also known as Madeira.

The island is 35 miles long from west to east and 14 miles wide at its widest point. The centre of the island is dominated by a long mountain ridge that reaches over 6,000 ft at its highest point. From this central spine the rugged terrain tumbles down to the sea, often ending with dramatic cliffs falling into the Atlantic. The central region is generally inaccessible and most of the centres of population are on the coasts and in the valleys leading to the sea. With such difficult geography finding suitable sites for vineyards is difficult and the majority of the island's vineyards are on terraced steps cut into the hillsides. Difficult and labour intensive both to work and maintain.

Madeira's location meant that it was an important stopping off point for early explorers and later on settlements in both the Americas and the East Indies meant increased traffic with the port of Funchal, on the southern coast, becoming a major victualling place for ships heading both east and west.

The early wines of Madeira were never of great quality being rather harsh and acidic but heavy barrels full of wine made good ballast for sailing

ships. It became the habit to add a bucket or two of brandy to fortify the wine for its long journey and to load a few barrels into the ships holds to take out to the distant colonies. These long sea voyages were to be the secret of Madeira's success. One crossing of the equator by sea would ruin most ordinary wine but it was found to mellow Madeira wonderfully and a double equator crossing made for an even better result. The gentle warming and rocking of the wine as it was carried halfway across the globe transformed the hard and austere tasting wine into a lovely, gentle elixir. In the early days the wines arriving at their destination were often bottled and labelled with the name of the ship that had made the voyage.

Today this process is reproduced without the wine having to leave the island. The wine is stored in heated warehouses known as estufagens where it is gently heated to about 45°C for at least 3 months and then allowed to cool. This gives the distinctive "cooked" flavour of Madeira.

An alternative, and arguably better, process is the canteiro method usually reserved for the finest wines. Here, rather than heating the wine artificially, it is allowed to age in rooms heated only

by the warmth of the sun. This slow and gentle ageing can in some cases take years and decades before the wine is considered ready for bottling.

Madeira ranges from very dry, aperitif, to rich, sweet, dessert styles. The simplest wines tend to be labelled as per their style eg "Special Dry", "Medium Rich" etc and these are generally made from a single, "workhorse" grape variety, the Tinta Negra Mole. The finest wines on the other hand are named after the grape variety from which they are made usually with an indication of age (10 years, 15 years etc) and occasionally by their vintage date. There are 4 "noble" grape varieties used in Madeira; Sercial produces the driest Madeira and is grown on the island's highest vineyard sites. The Verdelho grape gives softer, slightly richer styles with fresh, balancing acidity. Bual is light and sweeter with a hint of smoky flavour that balances the sweetness. Finally there is the most famous of them all, the Malmsey or Malvasia that produces dark brown wines with a wonderful honeyed fragrance and a sweet and rounded flavour.

Whatever the occasion, whatever the dish, there is a Madeira to match.

Further information about the aforementioned wine can be found at www.richardgrangerwines.co.uk or in store at Richard Granger Fine Wine Merchants, West Jesmond Station, Lyndhurst Avenue, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 3HH



SOUS CHEF SHUFFLE LEADS TO PEACE AND LOAF PROMOTIONS



If you've been to Peace and Loaf recently, you might have noticed a couple of familiar faces in new places.

For those of you who are regular visitors to the Jesmond restaurant, you'll know Chef de Partie's Simon Whitehead and Hugo Embleton-Black have been part of the Peace and Loaf family for over a year.

Now though, after excelling in their roles over the last 12 months, both Simon and Hugo have taken a step up the career ladder with the pair of culinary magicians securing promotions to Junior Sous Chefs.

Peace and Loaf's Director Geeta Ral says the two more than deserve the accolades.

"Simon and Hugo have been nothing short of exceptional since they started with us and I know Head Chef Dave Coulson is impressed by them too. They've more than earned their new positions as Junior Sous Chefs."

Simon and Hugo, who have years of experience already under their belts, recently celebrated their new jobs by taking part in the inaugural 'Experimental Diner' event in Newcastle's historic Alderman Fenwick's house last month.

Geeta says that the two, who, between them have worked in restaurants, pubs and even on yachts, can handle the increased heat of the Peace and Loaf Kitchen, without being burned.

"They're great chefs, but maybe more than that they are really great people and fantastic ambassadors for Peace and Loaf. They're always smiling, enjoying what they do and I think a lot of people notice. They're definitely going places, although hopefully it'll be with us."

The promotion also means two new positions are open. Geeta says that if the replacements are even half as good, then the award-winning restaurant will be in safe hands.

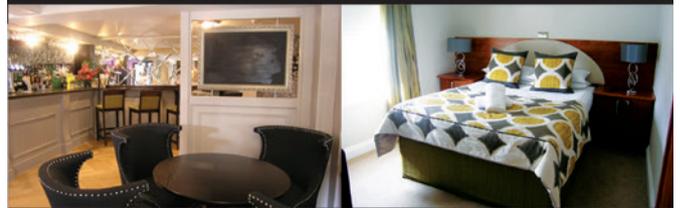
"They'll be a tough act to follow, but I know that whoever replaces them will be more than up to the task. We like to promote from within where possible so who knows – in a couple of years, they could be replacing Hugo and Simon after another round of promotions."

You can find out more about Peace and Loaf, or book a table and see the newly promoted Simon and Hugo in action yourself by visiting www.peaceandloaf.co.uk, or by calling 0191 281 5222.



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THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

Nestled in the heart of Newcastle City Centre lies The County Hotel, known as the jewel in the crown. With its 5 star service guests can unwind after a busy day exploring what this iconic city has to offer.

Only a stone's throw away from Central Station the Hotel boasts 114 bedrooms, ten function rooms, a private dining area and a brand new bar and restaurant called The Hudson which is launching later this month.

Having recently been taken over by the lifestyle company Gainford who also brought you The Vermont, Livello and Aveika, the Hotel is currently undergoing an 8 million pound renovation restoring it to its former glory.

Whilst retaining the Hotel's original character they are also introducing vibrant new concepts which will offer some of the best facilities within the city.

The County Suite which was first to be refurbished is a particularly striking room with high vaulted ceilings and original stain glass windows. The Mozart Suite, which overlooks Central Station can accommodate over 200 guests and encompasses grandeur, charm and everything that you would hope to find in a Grade II listed Building.

With a new drive behind The County Hotel you can expect to find a whole host of new and exciting events within the coming months, from the highly



anticipated VIP Hudson Launch, to Fashion Shows and the ever-popular Murder Mystery Event.

The Hotel also has an extensive range of special Christmas events planned for this year. From Private Dining to magnificent late night feasts, you'll be whisked down the red carpet and dazzled by magicians in what is set to be a December to remember for this Hotel.



COUNTY HOTEL
NEWCASTLE

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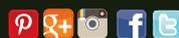


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In 1988 the Washington Hospital first opened as an Independent British Hospital, before becoming Spire Washington Hospital in 2007. This year it celebrates ten years of being part of Spire Healthcare – the country's second largest private hospital group.

The decade anniversary marks many achievements for the hospital, including a new theatre and ward, over £2 million investment into on-site MRI and CT scanners as well as a full refurbishment of patient and consulting rooms.

During this time, Spire Washington has also introduced bariatric surgery to its services and its endoscopy unit became the first hospital outside of the NHS to be JAG accredited.

Fast forward to today and the hospital, which now has 35 in-patient beds – 23 with en-suite facilities – the rest of which make up a day case ward, provides high levels of medical treatment and personal care to patients from across the North East and beyond.

This includes a wide range of procedures and treatments from diagnostic imaging including X-Ray, MRI, CT and Ultrasound, to surgery performed across three theatre suites and an



endoscopy unit, including orthopaedic, cosmetic, urology, gynaecology and general surgical procedures. There are 10 consultant rooms and two

treatment rooms as well as an on-site pathology lab, physiotherapy suite, pharmacy and wellness centre.

Spire Washington Hospital has a 300 strong team of highly trained clinical and admin staff, and currently has more than 175 consultants from over 25 different specialities.

Patient wellbeing is the overriding priority and services are available to everyone – whether you are covered with private medical insurance or paying for your own treatment, for which the hospital offers one-off private treatments with a fixed price agreed in advance. Only recently, Spire Healthcare formed a partnership with April UK to create inSpire – an innovative health insurance plan that combines high quality healthcare with exceptional value for money. Certain specialities can also be accessed via the NHS choose and book system.

To find out more information about Spire Washington Hospital or to book an appointment, call 0191 448 9645 or visit www.spirewashington.com.
For a free quote or more details on inSpire private medical insurance, call 07540 111 139.



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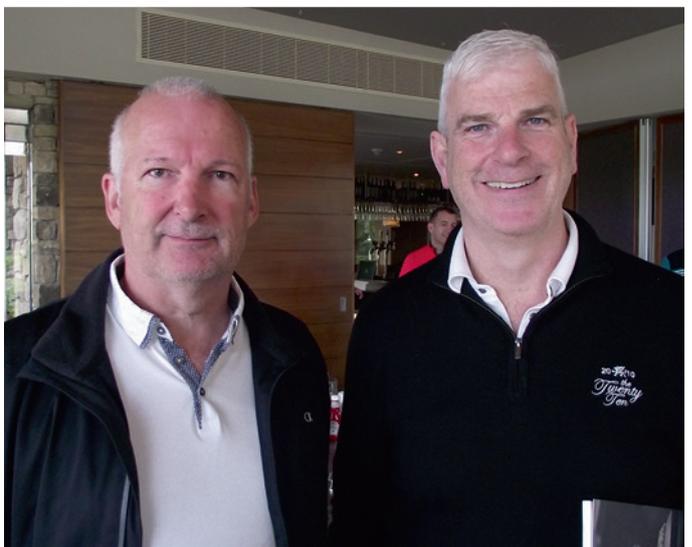


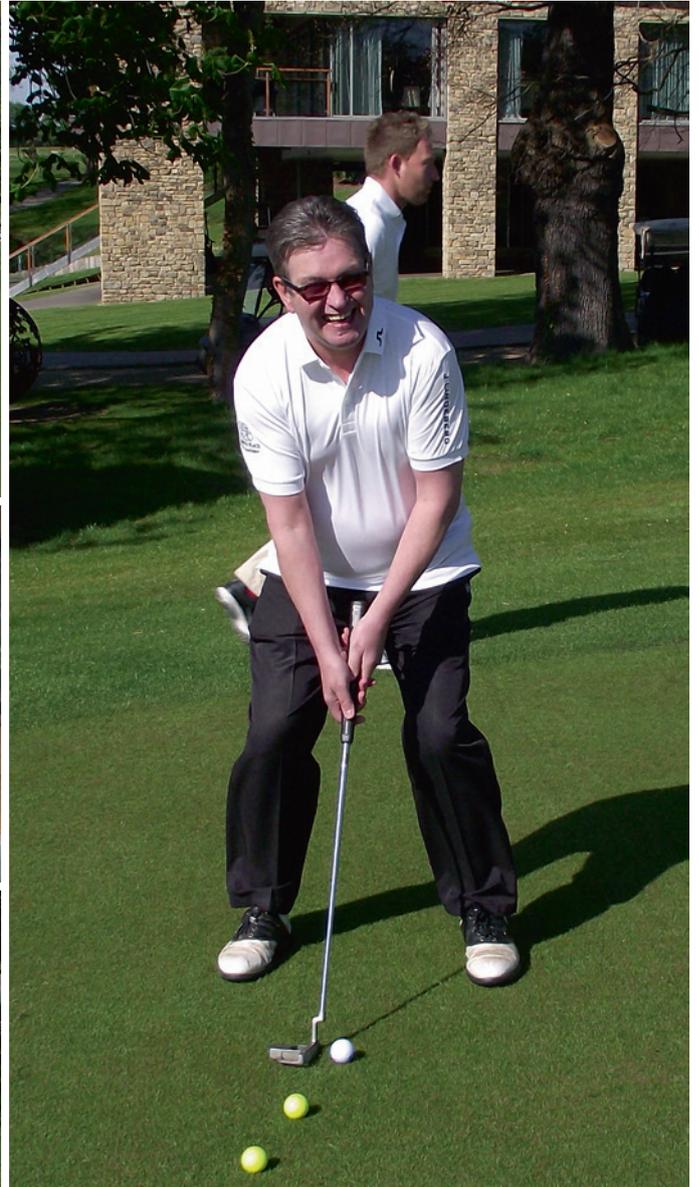
CORPORATE GOLF DAY

Senior Partner of St. James's Place Wealth Management, Patrick McLaughlin, hosted a corporate led golf day at Close House.

With existing, new and prospective clients attending, the venue for the British Masters later in the year was a perfect and stunning setting.

Those attending not only enjoyed some very competitive golf over the Filly course, but an overall excellent day's hospitality, engagement with St. James's Place and new contacts from the Ryder Cup style event.





The Partner represents only St. James's Place Wealth Management plc (which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority) for the purpose of advising solely on the Group's wealth management products and services, more details of which are set out on the Group's website www.sjp.co.uk/products. The title 'Partner' is a marketing term used to describe St. James's Place representatives.

MY WEEKEND

We find out what
PAUL BRIGGS
Managing Director of
Watergate Flood Solutions
gets up to on a typical weekend.



Do you ever have to work weekends?

Due to the nature of the business I have to be available 24-7. I do try and work remotely however.

Are most weekends the same?

The only thing that is the same every weekend is going to watch my eight year old boy playing football (He is a goalkeeper for Hedworth whites).

Do you find it hard to switch off?

Yes I am often on the phone with colleagues over the weekend as things pop into my mind.

What do you do at a weekend which you can't fit in through the week?

I like to catch up with family and friends.

Morning exercise or a recovery lie in?

Definitely a lie in.

Big night out or a night in the house?

I like to go out on an afternoon for a meal and drinks because we have our son with us and I prefer the atmosphere on an afternoon.

Do you watch or play sport at a weekend?

Children's football on a Saturday morning.

Where do you like to eat out at a weekend?

I like to eat out both Saturday and Sunday, a curry or pizza on a Saturday then a Sunday lunch at a country pub.

How important is the weekend to you?

Very important for me to spend quality time with my wife and son.

What's the best thing about weekends?

I have been known to enjoy a couple of pints on a weekend.

Of a weekend, you'll usually find me...

With extended family in a restaurant or a nice pub after football, 10 pin bowling, beach etc.

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