

NORTHERN

# INSIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2017

1762  
BREWIN DOLPHIN

BREWIN DOLPHIN'S WILLIAM BAKER BAKER REFLECTS  
ON THE CHANGES IN WEALTH MANAGEMENT

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issue 27

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## FOREWORD

**Welcome to the September edition of Northern Insight**

With Summer drawing to a close we are delighted to bring you another bumper edition full of fantastic features, event photography and great reviews. Our cover star is William Baker Baker, Head of Brewin Dolphin North East who reflects on changes within Wealth Management.

Look out for regular columnist Bryony Gibson in our popular Your Eye on the Region slot discussing why the North East is such a great place to work and live.

We also visit the wonderful Jesmond Dene House Hotel to sample one of the best Business Lunches we've had in a long while.

All in all some great reading to enjoy as the nights shorten and Autumn approaches.

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

**Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher**



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## CREDITS

**Managing Director** - Michael Grahamslaw

**Design & Web** - Louise O'Rourke, Ruairi McGuinness

**Lead Photography** - Crest Photography

**Additional Photography** - Gordon Taylor

**Editorial Contributors** - Jack Grahamslaw, Graham Courtney, Holly Grahamslaw, Gordon Taylor, Alex Nelson, Clarke Kennedy

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# HUGE RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY FAIR



Hundreds of jobs were up for grabs at a Retail and Hospitality Fair organised by NE1 Ltd and The Skills Hub, a project by Newcastle City Council. The one-day event, held recently at the Old Assembly Rooms in Newcastle, attracted nearly 400 people from across the North East.

Over 30 stands were in place during the event to represent the North East businesses and services. Many companies that took part were actively looking to fill vacancies and hire people to fill full and part time roles in new hotels and restaurants across the city, as well as for temporary Christmas employment. The businesses had hundreds of

vacancies to fill and were actively recruiting during the day.

Virgin Money and Starbucks were among the companies in attendance. TK Maxx also had a big presence. With over 30 Christmas vacancies to fill, the team organised interviews for candidates spotted during the event.

Mock interview sessions were held during the morning, providing candidates with advice and interview skills practice which many went on to use during the afternoon jobs fair.

Louise Liddle, Business Network Manager at NE1

Ltd, said: "It was great to see so many of our business members involved and to meet hundreds of young people eager to get into work. The event provided a rare opportunity for young people to meet and talk to potential employers on neutral ground, as much for them to make choices on the type of business and employer they would like to work for."

Kourtney Gibson, 19 from Hebburn, is keen to start her career in retail. She said: "I had two practice interviews with TK Maxx and Game. I got some great feedback that I can take on board in readiness for a real interview. The Job Fair was brilliant."

## INTERN ADDS NEW STRING TO EDUCATION BOW

JB Skills Training, in partnership with Sunderland University, has expanded its standing in the world of education by introducing a new intern scheme for graduates.

The first to join the company under the scheme is Lynsey Surtees. The 22-year-old from South Shields has landed herself the coveted position of marketing intern. The position will last for 12 months, and unlike many other intern schemes, is salaried.

Having graduated in Business Management, Lynsey has a strong interest in marketing and social media and brings with her six months experience working for the business school at the university.

During her internship, Lynsey will be working closely with the whole marketing team. Her first challenge is to look at a rebrand and new website.

Lynsey said: "I am really excited to get this opportunity with JB Skills. I am really keen to have a career in the creative industry and this gives me a good chance at having that in my future."

Managing Director Dave Macmillan said: "We offer functional skills, apprenticeships and bespoke packages for both companies and individuals, so adding internships into the mix made perfect sense. Lynsey is challenged with some good marketing tasks and we are looking forward to seeing how she responds."



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## TINY LIVES FUNDS POSITIONING AID DEVELOPMENT

North East charity Tiny Lives has funded the development and production of a bespoke Developmental Nest for premature babies at the RVI in Newcastle.

Tiny Lives gives £27,500 a year to provide "Claire's Nests" to babies on the Neonatal Unit at the hospital. Claire's Nests are named after Sister Claire Ellerby, who has been a sister on the ward for over 15 years. These soft, cosy nests provide boundaries similar to those provided by the womb and can help to support proper positioning and physiological stability for premature and sick newborn babies.

Now with support from Cuski and Tiny Lives, Claire's Nest has evolved to provide a more bespoke design for the babies, the Claire's Deluxe Nest. Modifications added allow the sides to fold down to accommodate tubes and wires and to allow access to the baby with minimal disturbance. In addition to this, Tiny Lives funds a full time Neonatal Physiotherapist to work on the unit.

Sister Claire said: "We are so grateful for the support we get from the charity to help us provide the best care possible for babies and their families. I am really proud of the work the whole team does and it is a real honour to have my name associated with these nests."

The charity aims to raise at least £250,000 every year to support a range of facilities for babies, parents and their family, as well as offer opportunities for staff to embark on further training to provide the highest level of care.



## FROM FIELD TO FLOUR!

Local farmer Stephen Craggs, of East Close Farm Sedgefield, has gone against the odds to produce spelt flour that will be used by home bakers, bakeries and large-scale food producers across the UK.

Stephen decided to diversify a large percentage of his 2,000 acre farm to grow the ancient grain, spelt in 2015. Since then, he launched the company Craggs & Co to turn the grain into the UK finest spelt flour.

Stephen explained: "We first stumbled across this ancient grain a couple of years ago when a local chef asked us to grow a small amount to supply to her gastro pub and bakery. Then, purely through word of mouth, we were inundated with requests from other local businesses."

Craggs & Co have recently launched their online store at the same time as unveiling the branding and packaging of their bags of flour. Flour can be purchased in either 1kg bags for the home baker or 10kg bags for those serious bakers out there.



## WESCOTT TO FLY THE COATINGS FLAG AT OFFSHORE EUROPE

Jarrow-based Wescott Coatings will this month be promoting their offshore coatings expertise at the huge Offshore Europe exhibition in Aberdeen.

Held biannually in Aberdeen since 1973, Offshore Europe is the largest offshore exhibition and conference held outside North America, attracting over 50,000 attendees to almost 1,000 industry stands and conference sessions.

Matt Doyle, Commercial Director of Wescott Coatings, commented: "Whilst the exhibition is primarily aimed at Oil Exploration and Production, it's a fantastic opportunity for ourselves to fly the flag for the offshore coatings industry, the often-forgotten vital factor in offshore asset maintenance. It's a potentially huge market and we're looking forward to meeting many of our existing and potential clients."

Established in 2010, Wescott Coatings work primarily in the Offshore, Transport Infrastructure and Industrial Facilities sectors, enjoying an annual turnover of over £5m and employing around 50 full time managerial, supervisory and multi discipline operatives.

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# BREWING



## DOLPHIN

## MAKING IT PERSONAL

The Head of Brewin Dolphin's Newcastle Office, William Baker Baker has been with the firm for 30 years and seen incredible changes in that time - both within the business and the region as a whole.

Looking back on the evolution of how 'managing money' has changed over the years, William discusses the 'life event' approach and the new technologies that are reshaping the sector.

"I joined what was then Wise Speke, in 1987 and back then the job was very different. There were many large companies in the region that issued share-options to their workers and so there we were, doing these execution only trades. Every so often, employees would come through the doors and ask to sell their shares through us."

"That was very much the stereotypical stockbroker approach, and over these last three decades there's been a transformation in what we do, how we do it, and who we do it for.

"Today, there are very few people who want to just buy or sell shares, and being aware of that, Brewin Dolphin has evolved into a full wealth management service, and looks after individuals and families right throughout all life stages, and with far more understanding."

Brewin Dolphin now carries out much more discussion about what sort of outcomes the client wants to achieve, and places a lot more focus on how investment management works hand-in-hand with robust financial planning.

This isn't coincidental. It is the result of a shift in Brewin Dolphin's client profile and some factors unique to the North East.

William explains; "We are the only region that exports more than we import and there is a considerable amount of entrepreneurialism in the region. This is reflected in the changing client profile, and the way we work.

"Years ago, we'd deal with what people might think of as 'old money', but now, we're seeing new clients are increasingly business owners and executives. We help these clients by stressing the importance of good quality

financial planning, and expert advice. The fact that we are specialists in doing that is showing its value now more than ever, with other firms that offered wealth management as an add-on, not their core business, really beginning to struggle."

Brewin Dolphin values involvement with the local business community. They have recently developed ties with the Institute of Directors, and have longstanding and strong relationships with the North East England Chamber of Commerce and the Entrepreneurs Forum. The Charity and Institutional Team in Newcastle is among the most active across the group, and was instrumental in the creation of the North East Charity Awards, which celebrates the successes of the sector.

Baker Baker says that the way the Newcastle office works is the key to making them so successful, and to providing clients with the best overall service available.

"The team here benefits greatly from having access all the briefings and research that Brewin Dolphin carry out nationally, as well as being able to draw on the experience of some of the best sector experts and analysts around.

"Because these analysts are employed by Brewin Dolphin, they get to develop their own unconstrained and autonomous insights, which our Investment Managers draw on to best manage our clients's wealth. We have also made a very deliberate choice to have no in-house funds or products, giving full independence and never being hostage to a specific solution."

"It's the kind of approach you get when you deal with firms for which Wealth Management is their main (or only) activity. We don't do current accounts, or credit cards. All our efforts are focused on providing really personalised advice, and developing a real understanding of a clients' needs right now, for their retirement, for their children."

Many Brewin Dolphin clients and their families have been with the firm for generations and many of the investment managers, financial planners and other team members have a long-standing association with the office in Newcastle. This all contributes to a sense of continuity that clients profit from and enjoy.

Baker Baker thinks that keeping the personal touch, while being at the leading edge of new technologies helps to deliver a competitive advantage over other firms.

"The most important thing, over all of this and throughout my career, is making sure the client has great service. Even though I'm running the office, I make time for clients. If I don't fully understand their situation, how can I be sure I'm helping them as best I can?

"There is no doubt technology is becoming more important, especially with reporting. We've developed a superb platform where clients can see all their investments clearly, interact with graphs and charts, and contact us, all on their computer or smart device; we even have an Apple Watch app now.

But this technology supports and reinforces the relationship clients have with their investment manager and financial planner. It enhances the personal touch, but can't replace it. Clients put their trust in people, and trust is earned - it can't be bought with technology alone."

Baker Baker has made it a priority to hire financial planners for the office over the years to ensure that financial "goals and objectives" are the key element of every process.

"I think 'Investing in the relationship' may sound an old-fashioned approach to business, but for me it has never gone out of fashion. There are no shortcuts, and even with today's technological advantages, we believe that the best way to understand what people need is to invest time with them, so that's what we do."

To enquire about how Brewin Dolphin could assist you with investing your money; pensions and retirement; protecting or passing on your money, and any other issue, call 0191 230 7155 or email [Newcastle@brewin.co.uk](mailto:Newcastle@brewin.co.uk)

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## MOODY TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY BALL.

Family run Moody Transport and Logistics celebrated its platinum anniversary in style with a ball at the Marriott Gosforth Park Hotel in aid of the Great North Children's Hospital. Customers and suppliers who have worked with the company over the past 70 years joined the Moody family at the black-tie event where they enjoyed a drinks reception, four-course meal, live band and disco.

The ball also served as a fundraiser with a tombola, auction and raffle raising an amazing £20,000 for its charity of the year.





# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

## ANDREW SILVER

Owner, 360 Growth Partners

[www.360growthpartners.co.uk](http://www.360growthpartners.co.uk)

### What were your career ambitions growing up?

Actually I wanted to go into the forestry commission due to a love of the great outdoors which has stayed with me ever since. Having finished studying law and doing a post grad in management I became an avid reader of management theory but with a focus on simple application. Sir John Harvey Jones was also on the TV in 'troubleshooter' and I read most of his books. I knew that at some point I wanted to do something similar. It has taken me a while to get there and it has been an interesting journey but setting up '360 Growth Partners' and finding solutions for growing SMEs is the realisation of a long-term goal.

### What has been your career path so far?

I started work at Vaux Plc in their hotel division, (Swallow Hotels) in a sales and marketing capacity but realized early on that the large corporate wasn't for me but I had a good 7 years which gave me a solid foundation for my future career. Managing a central reservations office at 24 was a steep learning curve! I then joined Virgin, who had a hotel business, as Director of Sales and Marketing and loved the Virgin world who had a fantastic culture combined with a very entrepreneurial spirit. I also became head of Virgin Incentives which aggregated the Virgin portfolio services to incentivize and reward company employees so I got an insight into many of the Virgin businesses. Much of my learning and ways of working come from my time with Virgin (I went back at a later stage in my career to work as part of a team developing a range of dotcom businesses.) I only left because Richard Branson sold his hotel interests to enter the mobile phone arena! After a few twists and turns I joined a PE backed fledgling hotel development and operating company who had a UK master franchise to build and operate hotels under the Golden Tulip brand. I was there from the start and eventually became MD. It was a fantastic experience and in 2007 we sold 15 hotels to Whitbread (perfect timing and planned of course!) but not for a price that meant I could retire! Between 2008 and 2011 I supported other growing hotel companies in a Commercial Director/Business Development Director capacity and even tried to set up my own hotel business.

The hotel world meant I travelled extensively and had some great times but it takes its toll and I was concerned that I was in danger of missing my children grow up and my wife divorcing me! In 2011 I came back to work in the North East as MD for a healthcare business which confirmed my suspicion that I could transfer my 'business growth' skills to other sectors. I have worked in numerous businesses in many different settings but a common thread has been unlocking people and business potential and I am now in the fortunate position of doing what I

enjoy with people who share the same mindset and a hunger for learning or growth.

### What are your companies defining qualities?

We are a bunch of down to earth, honest people who have a passion for doing business the right way and using our collective skills and experience to identify, coordinate and make the adjustments businesses need to accelerate their growth. We have all been working within businesses most of our careers, are driven by results and making a discernable difference. I believe that there is a valuable role we can play as 'business partners' to help 'time and resource poor' SME owners achieve their growth aspirations.

### What is the greatest challenge you have faced so far?

When we sold the PE backed hotel company I had to make the whole central team redundant after spending nearly 5 years building it. I told the senior management team in the offices of a law firm in London - it was a painful process and something that I have never forgotten but I stayed with the buyer for whole integration process to ensure that those staying or leaving were treated fairly.

### What is your proudest achievement to date?

How the same team reacted to me as the MD throughout the sale and the positive comments made by the buyer about the team, the culture and business they were buying. We spent considerable time creating a business that challenged the norm, celebrated being different and built on putting the customer first, second and third! On a personal level completing the end to end Coniston water open water swim (5.25 miles) and raising £1500 for Cancer research in the process. Oh and of course my wedding day and birth of our two sons!

### Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

Virgin had a clear management philosophy - "look after your staff who will look after the customer and profit will follow" - I have continued to adopt this philosophy wherever I have been.

'Everyone has an opinion - make time to listen' - you might be surprised what you uncover! and 'What gets measured gets done' but make sure you are measuring the right things!

### Who are your heroes in and out of business?

Richard Branson - for his determination to succeed, learning from his mistakes, creating a fantastic brand and for lasting the test of time. Jessica Ennis-Hill and Jonny Wilkinson - both are consummate professionals, never lost their humility and who can forget that drop goal in the Rugby world cup final!

### How do you like to unwind?

I have always been addicted to fitness, in many different forms - currently swimming and feel a different person after exercise. We have a barn in the Yorkshire Dales and we try to go there as often as possible to go walking and generally chill out! Training a young golden retriever is a distraction if not always relaxing!

### Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

To have established 360 Growth Partners as the 'go to' place for making a measureable difference to growing SMEs in the North of England. Having a well-established network of partners who share the same passion.

### How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who delivered value and made a genuine difference to growing businesses. As a support and mentor to business owners and their teams. Most of all someone who got results but always treated people fairly and with respect.



# DELOITTE CFO SURVEY: POST-ELECTION DIP IN BUSINESS CONFIDENCE



Optimism among UK businesses has fallen and concerns about the impact of Brexit have risen, according to Deloitte's latest CFO Survey.

122 CFOs of FTSE 350 and other large private companies participated in the Q2 2017 CFO Survey. The combined market capitalisation of the 92 listed companies who participated is £509bn, approximately 20% of the UK quoted equity market.

The survey ran from 12th to 27th June, capturing the immediate business reaction to the 2017 General Election result.

## Optimism and risk appetite dented

42% of CFOs say they are less optimistic about the prospects for their company than they were three months ago, up from 17% last quarter. 18% of CFOs say they are more optimistic, down from 31% in Q1.

43% of CFOs say that the level of uncertainty facing their business is high or very high, up from 34% last quarter, and 22% say now is a good time to take risk onto their balance sheets, down from 26% in Q1.

However sentiment and activity indicators from this quarter's survey are higher than they were in the immediate aftermath of the referendum.

## CFOs sharpen focus on defensive strategies

Among defensive balance sheet measures, 36% of CFOs say that increasing cash flow is a strong

priority for the coming 12 months, up from 34% in Q1, while 46% say they will focus on cost control, up from 42%.

On expansionary measures, 17% say they plan to increase capital expenditure, down from 22% in Q1 and 42% plan to introduce new products and services, up from 41%.

Looking across the corporate sector as a whole, 43% of CFOs say they expect hiring to decrease in the next 12 months, up from 28% in Q1, while 32% expect a slowdown in capital spending, up from 22%, and 55% expect discretionary spending to slow, up from 38%.

## CFOs more downbeat on Brexit

72% of CFOs say the business environment will be worse when the UK leaves the EU, up from 60% in the previous quarter and the highest level since the referendum. Just 8% say the business environment will be better as a result of Brexit, the lowest level recorded.

This quarter's survey also saw increases in the proportion of CFOs saying Brexit will have a negative effect on their own corporate spending. 38% say Brexit will negatively impact hiring, up from 30% in Q1, while 33% say it will slow capital expenditure, up from 26%.

Concerns about domestic risks have also risen up the agenda for CFOs, with worries about geopolitics and global growth reducing.

Brexit remains the biggest risk CFOs say their business faces, followed by weak demand in the UK.

Stephen Hall, Office Senior Partner at Deloitte in the North East, said: "Business sentiment has been on a rollercoaster in the last 18 months, slumping in the aftermath of the referendum, staging a strong recovery and then falling again in the wake of the general election.

"This latest dip likely reflects the surprise outcome of the election, so a drop in confidence is understandable. CFOs are also more focused on the prospect of slower UK growth. What is striking from this survey is that concerns around geopolitics and weak global growth, which dominated CFOs' concerns in 2015 and 2016, have eased significantly.

"This survey ran at a point of high political uncertainty and it is worth noting that sentiment and risk appetite are still well above the levels seen last summer. Favourable financial conditions and an improving global backdrop are also helping to support business at a time of rising domestic uncertainties."



*The Coastal Accountants*

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## MEET THE GRADUATES: UNW LLP



UNW's graduate programme is the perfect platform to launch a career in professional services, aiding personal development and enabling the right people to gain experiences that will stay with them throughout their working lives.

Over the course of three years, graduates will receive structured training and a thorough overview of what it takes to become a qualified and trusted business advisor.

We recently caught up with three of our audit trainees about their transition from university to being fully-fledged chartered accountants and business advisors.

Emma Woodward, Ben Hair and Peter Sym are at various levels of the training programme.

### Could you give us a little bit of information about your background before you joined UNW?

**EW:** I come from a science background, having completed a PhD in Dermatology, so not quite the classic route into professional services! I was very interested in accountancy, and managed to get a week's work experience at UNW. I absolutely loved it, and secured a full-time position after being interviewed!

**BH:** I was working full-time in a pub when I decided to apply for the Accounting and Finance course at Newcastle University. I loved it there, and found out about UNW during a lecture. After attending their annual graduate evening, I decided it was the place I wanted to work when I left university.

**PS:** It was a little different from me, as I had no idea whatsoever what I wanted to do when I left university! After working in France as a ski instructor for a year, I came back and did work experience in law, chartered surveying and accountancy, before

realising accountancy was the career for me!

### What level are you at in your training contract, and what have your main day-to-day responsibilities been so far?

**EW:** I am a first-year trainee (ACA Level 1), but the great thing is that when I'm not at college, I'll be onsite doing audits, which usually last one to two weeks. I started off mainly testing cash, fixed assets and payroll, and have more recently moved on to testing creditors. It's great to get such valuable experience at such an early stage of my career.

**BH:** As a second-year trainee, an audit team usually consists of myself, a first-year and an in-charge. My normal day often varies from planning an audit from the UNW office or conducting on-site testing at a client's premises right through to the completion of an audit back at the UNW office.

**PS:** I've been part of UNW's graduate programme for three years, working in audit has given me great insight into how different organisations operate. From week to week, we can go from working with a small charity or law firm, to large manufacturing companies. It really does give you a great understanding of the business world.

### Could you describe your exam training in a little more detail?

**PS:** It's been very challenging, but also very rewarding. A difficult aspect is undoubtedly working during the day as well as studying at evenings and weekends, but in my experience as a

third-year, this has only been for short periods at a time. Plus, the rewards are significant when you put the work in. The senior staff at UNW have always been extremely approachable, and if you are ever having problems with any aspect of the job, they are extremely supportive and helpful.

### What are the main positive aspects about your job?

**EW:** Going to meet different clients and working with a wide range of people has been a very positive experience for me! We also get the chance to cover all the areas of audit testing at such an early stage of the training programme, and if we want to try a new area, then there is freedom there to do so.

**BH:** Working in audit, there's also a lot of room for progression, and you are given a lot of responsibility at an early stage of your career, which has definitely helped my development.

### Could you describe one thing you particularly enjoy about working at UNW?

**EW:** The best thing about UNW is the people, and the support they offer you! Everybody is so friendly, approachable and willing to help whether it be on something you are stuck on at college or a test you are carrying out on an audit.

**PS:** It's also very socially active as a firm, whether it be raising money for charity by doing an 80-mile bike ride, or attending social evenings with quizzes and drinks, there's always plenty going on!

Applications for UNW's 2018 graduate programme will open in October 2017.  
For further information and details on how to apply, please visit [www.unw.co.uk/graduates](http://www.unw.co.uk/graduates)

# 3 MONTHS RENT FREE OFFER FROZEN AS PHASE TWO COMES TO COMPLETION

Developer Rewards Entrepreneurialism with  
Free Office Space



As a new, established or growing company, finding affordable office accommodation right in the city centre is a huge challenge, so one company is stepping forward to offer office space for free.

The management team at Commerce House in Middlesbrough has decided that as a tranche of their office space is due to be completed in the next few weeks that they will offer up free opportunities to a limited number of companies to support entrepreneurialism in the area. This is partly to stop talented people and businesses moving elsewhere.

And as the offer is proving so popular they have decided to freeze it until phase two is complete in the middle of September.

Commerce House is a stunning Grade 2 listed building in the heart of Middlesbrough, which is undergoing a transformation into a business community complete with boardroom, meeting rooms, office space, hot desking and virtual office membership.

Current tenants and service users include some impressive names like North East England Chamber of Commerce, DTI, STO Consulting, Middlesbrough City Council and more. Christine Huntington, Facilities Manager on site explained:

"We are keen to support business in the area, and this is part of our commitment to the local community. It is important that business grows and survives in Teesside and we want to show support to those determined to succeed! Our offer of three months rent free for new tenants has been frozen, so more companies can benefit."

Although terms and conditions will apply, you don't have to be a new business to qualify. You just need to show determination to succeed. Office space is available from two desks up to rooms that hold fourteen desks.

More information is available at [www.commerce-house.co.uk](http://www.commerce-house.co.uk)

In the first instance, as we expect enquiries to be busy, please email Christine on [Christine@commercechambers.co.uk](mailto:Christine@commercechambers.co.uk), with your name, company details, size and contact number. She will then phone back to move onto the next stage of the process.



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## DEVELOPER AWARDED PLANNING ON LANDMARK NEWCASTLE BUILDING

The developer planning to renovate and extend a famous historic building in the west end of Newcastle is delighted announce that, after extensive consultation, plans have been given the green light.

Following the planning approval being awarded, Pendower Hall Limited will now be breathing life back into the Grade II listed building, with works anticipated to start on site this Autumn.

The former home of the Pease family, which boasts extensive grounds, has stood empty for a decade.

It will now be transformed into a range of state of the art office accommodation with onsite finance and technology support along with an historical exhibition and a Grand Hall conference and event venue for up to 450 people.

David Redhead, project manager for Pendower Hall Limited, said: "It has been a long 23 month plus journey to get this far, so you can imagine how delighted all the team involved in Pendower Hall are to have been awarded planning.

"We are really looking forward to getting on site.

"Our vision to refurbish and adapt Pendower Hall is finally going to come to fruition. It will soon be a business community that creates jobs and inward investment alongside offering itself as a major venue for large events of up to 450 people, be they weddings or conferences."

The works on site are also benefiting adjacent Hadrian Special School, with the school already expanding its facilities the developers will be providing additional car parking and re-designed grounds to help with the expansion.

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 interpretation for visitors, schools and those working on the site.

More information is on the Facebook page for Pendower Hall.



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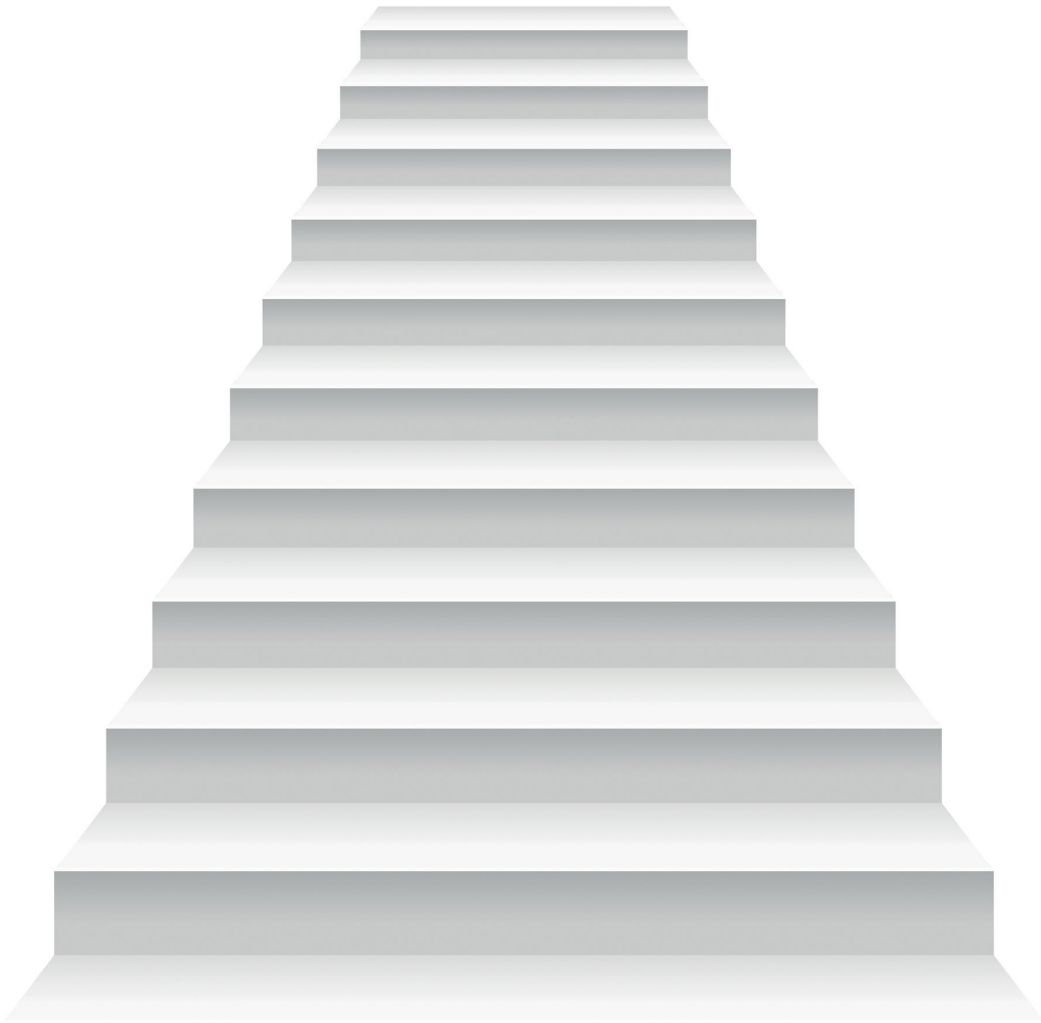
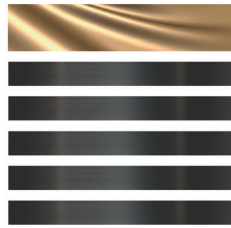
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## COMFORTABLY ON TOP OF THINGS

## A FAMILY (INVESTMENT COMPANY) AFFAIR

Jeremy and Jemima were contemplating their Inheritance Tax potential. They called in their adviser to discuss their options.

Jeremy stated, "We would like to reduce the IHT liability and keep control of our money in case we need it. We don't want to spoil the kids either. I am sure Jeremy junior would waste it if we gave him cash now."

Jemima continued, "We have a substantial amount of cash available after selling the business and need to do something."

The adviser discussed various options. "You could consider trusts but, generally, you cannot maintain control over the money unless you use a discretionary trust and that would limit you to gifting your nil rate band allowance only, unless you want to pay some IHT now. Further, you cannot benefit from the trust."

"Well that's no use" huffed Jeremy.

The adviser continued, "We could look at a Family Investment Company."

Jeremy and Jemima looked at each other quizzically.

"A FIC can be set up very cheaply and you can gift or lend money to it. If it is a loan you can have it returned when you need it, or take the dividend income the FIC receives as loan repayments, tax free."

"You could gift the kids non-voting shares and you retain voting shares and become the company directors, that way you maintain control. You could provide them with growth shares whilst you retain income bearing shares."

"An added advantage is that company tax rates



are very attractive compared with personal tax rates. Corporation tax is 19% and falling to 17% by 2020."

Jemima sparkled with excitement. "That sounds really interesting and seems to be exactly what we want."

The adviser added, "The investment company approach has its attractions but it is important to get the share structure just how you want it. Consequently, we need to work with your solicitor and accountant. Of course, the good news is that you are used to a company structure."

"Do we have to publish accounts?" frowned Jeremy.

"Not necessarily. You could choose to be an unlimited company and there should be no drawback in that as long as you are not borrowing money to gear up your investments," responded the adviser.

"Would we have to give the kids seats on the Board?" Jeremy interjected. He broke into a broad grin when he was told "No." "Excellent. I was hoping

you would say that." He rubbed his hands gleefully thinking of how frustrating "Junior" would find that.

"Why have we not heard of this things before?" asked Jemima. Jeremy added, "I haven't read anything about them either."

The adviser thought for a moment, "I assume because they are not a product that advisers get paid to set up via insurance companies and because they have only really become an option in the last two or three years. They are popular in London and the South East but no one is really talking about them up here."

He continued, "They are not a mainstream solution and you need to be able to invest a decent sum of money to make them worthwhile, but they certainly need to be considered for people in your position. As an independent financial adviser, I can talk about such structures to you whereas a company representative, or "partner" may not."

"Great stuff," said Jeremy. "Where do we go from here?"

**Peter Rutherford is a Director at Rutherford Hughes Ltd. He can be contacted on 0191 229 9600 [peter.rutherford@rutherfordhughes.com](mailto:peter.rutherford@rutherfordhughes.com)**

The above example is intended to illustrate general principals and must not be construed as advice. Rutherford Hughes Ltd. is an appointed representative of TenetConnect Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Rutherford Hughes Ltd company registration no: 10431722. Country of registration: England. Office & Registered Office address: Collingwood Buildings, 38 Collingwood Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1JF.

# BALDWINS

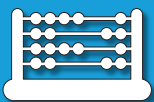
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## KPSPOTLIGHT ON...ANDREW POTTS

Think of taxation and accountancy and what goes through your mind? If it's endless spreadsheets, numbers and dull grey suits, then you aren't alone.

But thanks to one Jarrow-based accountant, that opinion is being challenged. Introducing KP Simpson's Business owner and head honcho Andrew Potts.

Andrew started the company almost a decade ago, and has built a small but exceptional team of people – each of whom are just as dedicated to the cause as the gaffer is – truly leading from the front.

"I feel that if you show a good example, staff are more likely to buy in to what you're trying to achieve. I couldn't sit back and just lead with directions; it's just not how I work. I think it's important to get in there and as involved as possible" says Andrew.

"The whole team are fantastic at what they do and don't really need to be told what to do as such. I feel like more a part of the team than the boss at times and I think that's the perfect situation for everyone."

Born in South Shields, Andrew is proudly

the smiling, friendly face at the top of KP Simpson. But don't go thinking it goes to his head – Andy is somewhat of the dream boss, happily mucking in as part of the team. It's something which a number of clients remark on that really sets KP Simpson apart from the competition.

Always keen to ensure that no client is ever treated badly, and that everyone receives a tailored service no matter their tax or accountancy needs, Andrew is also good at wielding a cricket bat – something he's very fond of; Andy's a keen cricketer and regularly turns out for Whiteleas and Harton Welfare CC.

Tax doesn't have to be taxing and with KP Simpson, it needn't be stereotypical either. Although Andrew's team are young, they certainly know their stuff, and are always just a phone call away to answer every one of the questions you may have with honest advice and ample personality.

So if your taxation or accountancy needs hitting for six, don't be caught out – get in touch with KP Simpson and see what they can do for you and your business. We promise you won't be stumped.



Visit [www.KPSimpson.co.uk](http://www.KPSimpson.co.uk) for more details, call them on 0191 420 0550 or drop them an email to [info@kpsimpson.co.uk](mailto:info@kpsimpson.co.uk).

## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR NORTH EAST TECH BUSINESS



The North East of England has long been associated with heavy industry such as mining and shipbuilding. While this was a prosperous past, the competition for these services has seen this all but wiped out in this part of the world.

After years of decline, the North East has found a new niche in the modern world. Technology is taking hold across the region and this part of the world is fast becoming an international leader. This looks great but we also must consider how to support your North East tech business as we look to the future.

From the developments at Teesside University to

the hotspots in Sunderland and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, the tech future looks bright for the North East. Teesside University supports local business to get the most from the strong tech markets such as –

Software development

Website and app development

Computer animation for websites and games

All of this is about bringing a vision into reality. And the development in these areas can cost a fair amount of money. Even the infrastructure can be a large investment. With such large sums involved, you must think about how to support your North East tech business to grow in this environment. Investment can be a tricky part of the tech industry.

### How to support your North East tech business

The future for the North East looks to be bright. Moving into modern industries and away from the reliance on heavy industry of the past is a smart move and should be bolstered by the developments of the Northern powerhouse such as greater investment and developed transport links. This means that the North East is being seen as a potential innovation hotspot where business can inspire each other to greater things.

In terms of how to support your North East tech business there are a few questions that need to

be answered. There isn't unlimited finance, so a startup tech business needs to be lean in order to succeed. One fantastic way to make the most of your investment is through R&D tax credits. This is a government scheme set up to reward those that spend their money developing new ideas and processes.

### What are R&D tax credits and how can they help me?

Many people think that R&D tax is only relevant to scientists and researchers, but that simply isn't the case. Software development is a prime area for R&D tax credits, as are new apps. In fact, there are many different areas of the tech industry that are eligible for R&D tax credits. They are easy to apply for if you know how and the money can be in your bank within 4 to 6 weeks.

At Harlands we have supported North East tech businesses to reclaim their tax via this scheme. We get to know your business and let you know if you have an eligible claim at no cost to you. Our free no-obligation consultation allows us to assess your potential claim. You don't pay us a penny until you feel the financial benefit of your claim. This is a great solution to the problem 'how to support your North East tech business' and can deliver a cash injection to your business that you maybe hadn't planned for.

[www.harlandsaccountants.co.uk](http://www.harlandsaccountants.co.uk)

## RYECROFT GLENTON APPOINT FORMER P&G INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTANT

Ryecroft Glenton Corporate Finance (RGCF) has appointed Adam Cassidy, to join the growing team as Corporate Finance Executive.

Adam, 26, has five years' experience working as an international accountant for 8 of Proctor & Gamble's overseas entities, with a combined profit of \$40 million.

Originally from Halifax, West Yorkshire, Adam studied at Lancaster University Management School before securing a Financial and Accounting Internship at Proctor and Gamble. He progressed through various roles at the company, before becoming an International Accountant in 2015.

As Corporate Finance Executive, Adam will help to support Ryecroft Glenton's existing corporate finance capability, whilst contributing to the development of the firm's strategic advisory services, which help its clients to deliver growth strategies and increase shareholder value.



Ryecroft Glenton welcomes new Corporate Finance Executive to the North East. Left to right: Peter Glenton, Partner, Adam Cassidy, Corporate Finance Executive and Carl Swansbury, Partner.

## BUSINESS LEADER STEPS DOWN TO EXPLORE NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The head of a successful North East-based industrial services business has announced his departure to pursue new business investment and involvement opportunities.

After 15 years as managing director of the Pyeroy Group and overseeing its transition to Wood Group Industrial Services following the sale of the business in 2013, Hugh Pelham has announced that he is leaving the company.

An Oxford University engineering graduate with over 30 years of experience with building, civil engineering and industrial service contracts, Hugh joined Pyeroy in 2002 and remained with the business after it was taken over by John Wood plc in 2013.

Hugh has now established Dark Blue (Holdings) Ltd as a corporate investment vehicle and is looking to identify potential new funding and growth opportunities among the region's business community.



## CHRIS RUSHWORTH APPOINTED AS GREAT NORTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AMBASSADOR

Durham cricketer, Chris Rushworth has been chosen as ambassador for the Great North Children's Hospital (GNCH).

The 31-year-old fast-bowler, who was named as the PCA's Player of the Year in 2015, will be participating in this year's Great North Run to help raise funds for the hospital's foundation and will be wearing GNCH branded apparel.

The Great North Children's Hospital, based at the RVI in Newcastle, is one of 4 largest children's medical centres in the UK. They provide a full range of children's health services, all tailored to each and every child.

Rushworth, who boasts the record for the most wickets taken for Durham in a single First-Class fixture, will offer his support to the hospital's community initiatives and projects.

## BOOST FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY TEAM AT MINCOFFS



Newcastle Law Firm Mincoffs has appointed Associate Solicitor Rebecca Dawson to its Commercial Property team.

Rebecca graduated from Northumbria University with a BSc (Hons) in Building Management and went on to complete her RICS exams in building surveying. She later qualified as a solicitor in 2003 with a prominent Newcastle law firm where she spent 4 years in the commercial property team before moving to an in-house legal role for a North East developer. She then spent 2 years in the commercial property team at another North East firm before joining Mincoffs in July.

Rebecca has extensive experience of dealing with all types of commercial property transactions but her particular interest is in development and regeneration, planning and construction.

# GOOD EMPLOYERS HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR – EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES SCRAPPED



Nanette Brimble

Since July 2013, workers have been required to pay a fee of up to £1,200 to bring an employment tribunal claim. This led to a 70 per cent reduction in claims and meant employers could take a more robust management stance in the knowledge that a claim was less likely.

The abolition of fees will undoubtedly lead to a rise in claims. However, the requirement to conciliate via ACAS and the two year continuous service rule for unfair dismissal rights means it is unlikely to rise to pre-July 2013 levels.

## The Supreme Court's decision

Employment tribunal fees were originally introduced, in part, to transfer the cost of the tribunal service from the taxpayer to users of the system and to discourage baseless claims.

Unison, who brought the case before the Supreme Court, argued that employment tribunal fees created an access barrier to justice as vulnerable workers with genuine employment claims were not able to pursue them because they could not afford to pay the fee. Unison also argued that these fees disproportionately affected women when compared to men and were therefore discriminatory.

The Supreme Court agreed with Unison and decided the fees were unlawful from the date they were introduced. The decision led to them being immediately withdrawn and the Government committing to repaying an estimated £32m of fees paid by claimants since they were introduced in 2013. However, the repayment of these fees may not be as easy as it sounds. For example, claimants who won their claims may have recovered the

employment tribunal fee they paid from their employer. In those cases, the government should ensure the employer is reimbursed and not the claimant.

## Could employment tribunal fees make a return?

Very possibly. The Supreme Court did not say that fees in principle were unlawful; it was the level they were set at that was unlawful. The Government has announced it will consult over what it will do next with these fees so it is possible that they could return but at a lower level. It will be interesting to see if the Government takes into consideration the Supreme Court's comments that the responsibility for the cost of the Tribunal service should be shared by workers and employers. This could mean that employers may in future be required to pay a fee to defend a claim.

## The implication for employers

The removal of employment tribunal fees will make it easier for disgruntled workers to bring a claim. ACAS early conciliation will continue to stem the tide of claims to a degree but the increased risk of a claim means employers will need to exercise more care when managing their workforce. Following best practice, applying HR policies and procedures and acting reasonably should minimise that risk. Dismissal decisions will require closer scrutiny

to ensure a fair process is followed and that the decision to dismiss is a reasonable one in the circumstances.

Employers may want to reconsider their strategies on how to both minimise the risk of complaints and deal with them effectively. One option may be to encourage workers to openly speak about issues and ensure there is an easily accessible and informal system in place to facilitate resolution.

It is possible that employers could face a raft of historic claims from the past four years. Usually, there is a three month time limit to bring a claim in the employment tribunal which means that most of these claims cannot be considered because they are out of time. However, as there are exceptions to this rule that mean this time limit can be extended, it is possible that some workers will argue their claims should be considered because the fees prevented them from bringing their claims within the usual three month time limit. How the employment tribunal will deal with this argument is unknown but we expect it won't be long before a test case is brought.



For more information on how this may impact employers or advice on best practice on this matter please contact Nanette Brimble at [nanette.brimble@rsmuk.com](mailto:nanette.brimble@rsmuk.com) or your usual RSM contact.

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## RAILTOWN COFFEE BREWS UP MOVE TO BIGGER PREMISES

A County Durham-based purveyor of artisan coffee is aiming to roast the competition after moving into new larger premises.

**Railtown Coffee is an independent supplier which supplies high-quality, freshly-roasted coffee to a range of customers right across the UK.**

The business was founded in Darlington in 2013 by Andrew Henley, who had worked in the restaurant sector for 25 years and who saw an opportunity to improve on the standards of customer service that he had received from the coffee suppliers with which he'd worked.

Since then, it has built a wide-ranging customer base ranging from small cafes and farm shops through to large hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants, including The Raby Hunt at Summerhouse and the Star Inn at Harome.

And now, as part of plans to turn Railtown into the North East's premier coffee supplier, the company has moved into new premises on the Aycliffe Trading Estate which are twice as large as its previous office, and which it hopes will help the company build on the 30% growth in turnover it has recorded in the last year.

The new premises include a training room, as well as space for a pop up cafe in which customers can try any of the dozen different blends that Railtown supplies, the composition of all of which are controlled and specified by Andrew.

As well as supplying coffee, Railtown also supplies the equipment customers to make their coffee, and provides training to ensure drinks are being made in precisely the right way. It also employs a dedicated engineer to service and maintain customer equipment as required.

Railtown Coffee has worked with RMT Accountants and Business Advisors around all aspects of the move into its new premises and the business's continuing development.

Andrew Henley says: "Having worked in the hospitality industry for many years, I was regularly disappointed with the standard of service we received from the companies that supplied our coffees, and I felt there was a real opportunity to do things better.

"Railtown's focus is on backing up the high quality coffees we supply with the service standards that I would expect myself, and we've been successful as a result of sticking to these principles.

"Moving into larger premises gives us the space we need to develop all aspects of the business, and to move more quickly towards realising our goal of becoming the North East's premier coffee supplier.

"We're feeling the benefit of the financial and commercial expertise that the RMT team provides, and their involvement is helping us take the next step up in our business's development."

Michael McGee, client services manager at RMT Accountants and Business Advisors, adds: "Andrew's passion for coffee, his commitment to customer service and his knowledge of the hospitality industries makes for a very potent combination, and the support we're providing is designed to help him take best advantage of the many opportunities that are coming his way."

# DIVORCING COUPLES - WHAT TO DO NEXT



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

At Innovate Mortgages and Loans, we receive a large proportion of our business from third party introducer referrals.

One area where we can help solicitor and accountancy partners is for clients who are seeking a divorce. We would be interested in talking to any firms where we can strike up an ongoing business partnership.

It's obvious that getting divorced can be a stressful time, and what to do with the existing marital property and the outstanding mortgage, especially if children are involved, can be tricky. Independent mortgage advice ensures that all potential avenues are explored with the principal options usually as follows;

## Option 1 - One party retains the property

One partner buys out the other person's share - to do this, we need to be able to satisfy a lender's affordability calculator to prove that it is affordable by one party, both the existing mortgage and any new borrowing to buy out the other party. This also frees up the other partner to buy a new property (with the same assumptions regarding affordability as above).

## Option 2 - Sell the property

This is sometimes the best option as both parties start afresh. If children are involved it may however cause further disruption.

## Option 3 - One partner remains in the property and another pays the mortgage

This is usually agreed as part of any divorce settlement. For the partner agreeing to continue paying the costs, they should be aware the impact that this may have on their ability to borrow again to purchase a new property for themselves.

## Option 4 - Continue with no change

There are some occasions, for example, children shortly leaving home or not long remaining on a fixed rate before redemption penalties expire, where it may make sense to keep the status quo for a period of time. This may only work in an amicable situation!

Whatever the decision, assuming the original mortgage was in joint names, then both parties remain liable for the mortgage payments. Non-payment can result in an impact on someone's credit file - they are not excused from the commitment even if they have moved out and no longer live there.

As always lenders have differing policies on how much they will lend divorcing couples, so don't despair if your Bank or Building Society says no, there could be a solution elsewhere in the market.

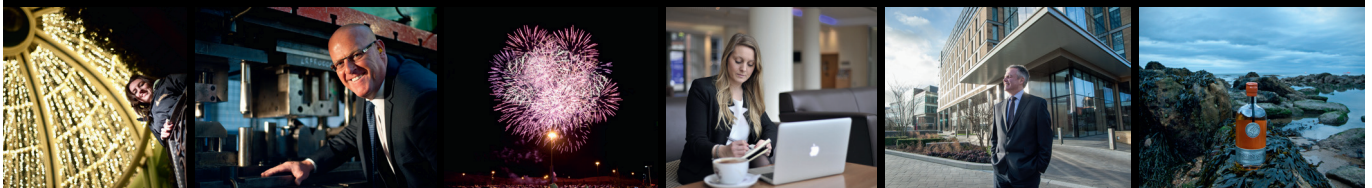
Local, face to face, independent mortgage advice can smooth the whole process and we would be delighted to help.

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](mailto:paul@innovateml.co.uk) or [tony@innovateml.co.uk](mailto:tony@innovateml.co.uk) or call 0191 223 3514.

*Think carefully before securing other debts against your home. Your home is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loan secured on it.*



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# THE IMPACT OF BREXIT ON M&A!



Domestic M&A remains strong and the Fastflow deal is a good example of that.

The UK's vote for Brexit in 2016 has led to a high degree of uncertainty, and many businesses both regionally and nationally are rethinking their M&A strategy in light of the referendum decision.

**The big question at the moment is what impact Brexit will have on the M&A market overall with both opportunities and challenges being presented.**

A significant trend that has emerged is the increase in cross border transactions as UK targets have become far more attractive to overseas buyers due to the decline in the value of sterling since the referendum vote. For example, there has been huge interest in UK assets from US buyers. Jimmy Choo being acquired by US fashion brand Michael Kors for £896 million, Worldpay Group, the UK's leading payments processor, agreed a £9.1 billion deal to be acquired by US rival Vantiv.

Sterling has also eroded against the Japanese Yen, leading to interest from Japanese based companies, the most notable example being the acquisition of Arm Holdings by SoftBank for \$32 billion.

Equally there has been weakening of trading of some UK businesses that are exposed to currency movements as well as more general uncertainties

of trading in the post referendum period. Those uncertainties need to be planned for and dealt with in the context of planning any transaction.

We have also seen some transaction processes taking longer than usual, as deal makers seek to establish how the trading environment will look both pre and post Brexit and to ensure they optimise the timing of an exit for Vendors. Vendors and their adviser will be considering both how to maximise value and protect value with these uncertainties adding to the challenges of M&A.

Finally we should also remember that at times of higher uncertainty and volatility in markets this can be an opportunity, with buyers ready to take advantage of good deals.

Despite the uncertainties created by Brexit the M&A market has continued to be robust. Deals are still being done, with attractive, strategic and synergetic transactions still taking place at premium valuations. Trade buyers, both domestic and overseas, and Private Equity buyers remain

extremely active. There remains a high level of domestic only M&A including acquisitions of UK businesses by private equity funds.

Whilst Brexit is having some impact on the M&A market its overall impact remains unclear and M&A professionals must assess each deal on a case by case basis to consider its impact and plan accordingly to get the best results for their clients.

At Cavu Corporate Finance, we have been involved in some of the biggest deals in the region including the acquisition of Fastflow Group by Elysian Capital and management (CEO Neil Armstrong above with Shawn Bone) and the £25m private equity investment into Fairstone by Synova Capital. The North East has also recently seen O'Briens sold to Biffa in a £35m deal and Baird Capital invest in CAV Advanced Technologies.

This signifies that both trade and private equity funds remain keen to invest in good quality assets despite the background and challenges presented by Brexit.

# DON'T LOOK BACK IN ANGER... THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, 10 YEARS ON

In the same year which has seen the first anniversary of Brexit and the 15th anniversary of the launch of the Euro, 2017 is also the year which marks the 10th anniversary of the start of the financial crisis.

Caused by a domino effect of banks being reckless with who they loaned money to and a string of irresponsible deals to sell and re-finance debt, the aftermath of the financial crisis between 2007 and 2008 has been likened in severity to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

With the FTSE 100 index down 30 per cent and stocks and share prices plummeting, some banks, including North East high-street favourite, Northern Rock, completely went to ground, leaving investors who held shares in these particular companies hugely out of pocket.

Ten years on and although the markets have since re-stabilised and grown, many people in the UK are still feeling the effects of the crisis. It has become increasingly difficult for businesses to secure commercial loans, people who typically relied on interest from their savings accounts have struggled due to low interest rates and many retirees have suffered due to poor annuity income deals and losses from their pension pots.

The public-sector budget cuts in recent years are also a direct result of the financial crisis. In an attempt to keep the economy afloat during the crisis, the government introduced quantitative easing which substantially increased the UK's debt balance from £0.6 trillion in 2008, to £1.73 trillion in 2017 and now, the government is trying to claw its way back into the black.

At Explore Wealth Management, we have done our very best to support our clients and protect their investments during these years of uncertainty.

Many clients who were brave enough to invest in the market just after the crash have seen their portfolios more than double in the last ten years. We have also managed to help some of our clients who were looking to retire around the time of the crash to go ahead with their plans by helping them to recover their pension pots more quickly.

An example of this was a gentleman client whose pension pot depreciated by over 30 per cent after the crash. By actively managing his account, we not only enabled him to go ahead with his retirement plans, we recovered his pension pot sufficiently so that he could live on the same income he would have received pre-crash.

As an independent financial adviser, Explore Wealth Management can make recommendations from across the entire market to help you make the most of your money. Specialising in retirement planning and pension advice, if you've found your finances in a tricky spot following the financial crisis, contact us today for a free, no-obligation consultation.



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# THE 14th ANNUAL NORTH EAST ENTREPRENEURIAL AWARDS



Each year the North East Entrepreneurial Awards celebrate the successes and achievements of the people behind the region's most innovative high-growth businesses. These businesses are the driving force behind the North East's economic growth and rising rates of employment.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum, which organises the awards in partnership with the North East LEP, has unveiled the shortlist for 2017. Five winners will be honoured with awards for Emerging Talent, Scale-up, Entrepreneur of the Year, Mentor of the Year and Lifetime Achievement.

## EMERGING TALENT

Sponsored by O'Brien Waste Recycling Solutions, the nominees include Andy Stephenson (Weekend Box), Steven Rawlingson (Samuel Knight), Michaela Reaney (Gradvert) and Stephen Black and Ian McElroy (Tier One Capital). In past years the Emerging Talent award has been handed to high achieving entrepreneurs John Savage of Flame Heating Spares, Alice Hall of Pink Boutique and David Lynch of Lynch Healthcare.

## SCALE-UP AWARD

Sponsored by NBS and new for 2017, the inclusion of this award highlights the importance of scale-up businesses to the region's economy. Recognising business owners who have led their company to achieve 20 per cent plus annualised growth in either turnover, profit or employee numbers for the past three years, the shortlist includes Ben Ridgway and Jamie Cooke (Intelligent Services Group), Nigel Begg (Aspire Technology Solutions) and Sara Davies (Crafter's Companion).

## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

In 2016, the Entrepreneur of the Year, sponsored by Ward Hadaway, was awarded to John Waterworth of Parkdean Resorts, and in 2015 it was presented to Geoff Thompson of Utilitywise. This year the honour will go to one of a shortlist made up of John Hays (Hays Travel), Roger Peart (Oil NRG), David Harrison (True Potential) and Julie Drummond (Drummond Central).

## MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Malhotra Group, this award is announced on the night and recognises the important role altruistic peer-to-peer mentoring plays in business growth. In 2016 and 2015 the Mentor of the Year award was presented to James Robson MBE and Alastair Waite respectively.

Mentoring is one of the primary ways the Entrepreneurs' Forum supports its members, matching the owners of growing businesses with experience entrepreneurs. This takes the form of regular mentoring events and introductions between potential mentors and mentees, as well as drop-in 'surgeries'.

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Sponsored by Corporate Traveller, the recipient of

the Lifetime Achievement award is kept a closely guarded secret until the evening of the dinner, when this year's winner will join such respected names as Sir Peter Vardy, Sir John Hall and John Fenwick, who have previously been presented with the accolade.

This spectacular black-tie event, will take place at The Boiler Shop at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Friday 29th September, and will be hosted by champion rally driver Penny Mallory OBE, the first woman in the World to compete in a World Rally Car. 400 of the region's leading business figures will be present, at the prestigious events venue which was once part of Robert Stephenson's locomotive works.

This year the awards have been inundated with entries, proving that the North East's entrepreneurial community is thriving. Entrepreneurs build the businesses that people rely on for jobs and economic growth and this region contains some stand-out individuals who are driving the North East forward.

The North East Entrepreneurial Awards are open to all business owners, not just Entrepreneurs' Forum members, and are presented not only to recognise success, but to thank the entrepreneurs who take risks and help others to build their businesses.

By working together and sharing the benefits of our collective experience, we can continue to make business a force for social good in the North East.

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](http://www.entrepreneursforum.net)

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Colin McClymont 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](http://www.entrepreneursforum.net)

# COLIN McCLYMONT

Managing Director, The PEN Shop

## Tell me a bit about your background

I've been in retail all of my working life, starting out at John Lewis as a management trainee. I moved from there to Beales, a chain of department stores based in Bournemouth, where I became store director for the Walton-on-Thames branch. From there I moved to Next, they were in the process of acquiring a number of department stores and recruited me and two other people with experience running such outlets. The deal fell through, but I stayed with Next and my skills were put to use looking after some of their larger stores.

Next's largest store was in Newcastle, it was essentially a three floor department store, and I moved to the North East to manage this. This was a great opportunity to learn a different type of retail, which, when combined with my previous experience, was hugely important in building up The Pen Shop.

At around the time George Davies was ousted from Next I was headhunted to run T&G Allan Limited, a chain of stationers with eight stores in the North East. In addition to its eponymous outlets, it also owned the first branch of The Pen Shop. I operated The Pen Shop and the remaining T&G Allan stores on behalf of the Allan family until two years ago, when my wife and I acquired the company in a management buyout.

## What was the company's first business premises?

When the first T&G Allan shop was opened in 1858 it was on Collingwood Street. The first Pen Shop came about in 1946 when the company's Newcastle store on Blackett Street was being refurbished and the pen department was temporarily moved into another premises in the Central Arcade. The customers complained and pens soon returned to the store, but the new shop proved popular and stayed in operation, meaning the UK's first dedicated pen shop was born.

## How has the business grown?

Very shortly after I started working at T&G Allan I visited The Pen Shop. My pen was out of ink and this was a good opportunity to see the shop in action. I immediately saw the opportunity, people were queueing up to buy quality writing instruments, and the staff were working flat out. Unlike in a department store people seemed happy to wait too. They were being looked after by experienced staff, who cared, and had great product knowledge.

By this point there were similar shops in London and a few in Europe, but nothing like The Pen Shop in the rest of the UK. I contracted Colin Wardle of The Design Group, who had led the design of the Metrocentre and later a jewellery shop based there, to redesign The Pen Shop. I wanted our pens to be presented at eye level, like jewellery and watches.

We opened our first new store in Glasgow in 1998, then in Manchester, Sheffield, and by the early 90s Regent Street in London. We now have 17 shops throughout the UK.

## Did the recession have an impact on your business?

It hurt. Everyone in retail found this. We were lucky enough to see a change on the horizon in May 2008 and planned appropriately. We were putting a lot of work into the business's 150th anniversary, and it looked like sales might have slipped while store managers concentrated on this, while in reality we were seeing the beginning of the financial crisis. We made a plan and we stuck to it, and we took it to our bank, who was relieved that at least one of their customers was prepared.

## How have the markets changed over the years?

The growth of The Pen Shop has gone hand in hand with that of a number of luxury brands, and that of e-commerce. We started selling online in 1997 and it's now our biggest outlet by far. Initially we viewed it as an electronic version of mail order, which used to be a big part of the business, and now our website has been through several iterations and it's a state-of-the-art e-commerce platform.

Some people might question the growth of pen sales in the digital age, but they are increasingly a luxury item, which people choose as a fashion statement. People buy them for the same reason they buy watches, even though they can see the time on their mobile phones.

Growing The Pen Shop turned out to be the right strategy, while this area has boomed the stationery and greetings cards markets that sustained T&G Allan has changed completely. Supermarkets now meet the stationery needs of most people, which have changed immeasurably over the last couple of decades. We still have a branch of T&G Allan in Morpeth, which is performing well, but as the others stopped being profitable we closed them.

## What would you say your unique selling points are?

Special writing instruments, especially those from luxury and premium brands. Our biggest seller is Mont Blanc, and we sell other luxury brands from around the world, including Caran d'Ache from Switzerland, Montegrappa from Italy, Parker from the UK, Cross from the United States, and Yard-o-led, which are the only fountain pens made in the UK. Yard-o-led hand-make their pens from silver in a little workshop in Birmingham.

## How do you keep your team motivated?

The best way to keep people motivated is to treat them as individuals, no two are the same. 65% of our staff have received an award for long service, and I say to new recruits that they will either be with us for a long time, or not long at all. I wouldn't want someone to stick around if they were unhappy, that wouldn't be positive for them or for us. This works, two of our branch managers started out as Saturday only staff aged sixteen.

We reward people for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years long service. I take all of those reaching a milestone each year, typically between half-a-dozen and a dozen, out for a nice lunch, and present them with their gifts. These lunches start friendships between employees from different parts of the country and they're often reunited when they reach their next milestone.

## How does your motivation now compare with when you started the firm?

It's very much the same. Retail is all about people, you have to like them to do well in it. I have to spend quite a bit of my time behind a desk but I'm happiest on the shop floor. I might have a fancy title now, but I'm proud to call myself a shopkeeper.

## Did you have a mentor?

I looked up to George Davis when I was at Next; I learnt so many things from him that were useful in my career. I also received a lot of support from a former chairman of this business.

## Do you have big plans for the future?

We do indeed. At a time when a lot of high street shops are going backwards we have been able to grow and we are going to continue this. For us the key to success has been specialisation.

# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

## MICHAELA REANEY

Managing Director, Gradvert

### **What were your career ambitions growing up?**

I always wanted to have my own business, I didn't necessarily understand what this meant at a very young age but felt this was something I wanted to explore.

### **Tell me about your career path so far?**

Although ultimately, I aspired to building a business, I didn't know what area this should be in. I set about gaining experience in different sectors and sized organizations to understand their genetic make-up process and systems. Gaining international experience in two of my positions this allowed me to build greater cultural awareness

### **What are the companies defining qualities?**

Collaborative, entrepreneurial and focused on delivering a high-quality experience.

### **What is the greatest challenge you have faced so far?**

As a small business owner, I would have to say cash flow is something that is constant challenge particularly as we continue to build relationships with corporate customers that have much longer payment terms.

### **What is your greatest achievement to date?**

Building a team of highly professional, exceptionally committed and dynamic people and then getting out of their way!

### **Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?**

Building partnerships with customers, team and suppliers to collaborate across projects and ensure a more sustainable business growth.

### **What is the best piece of business advice you have been given?**

The race is only with yourself, slow down and celebrate successes before moving on to the next thing.

### **Who are your heroes in and out of business?**

My partner's great-grandma, Sally Mathieson, who started a business selling celery on Stockton



market at the turn of the century before women had the right to vote. And built it into a very successful family business incorporating shops and market stalls throughout Teesside

otherwise walking in the hills and countryside near my home in Teesside. Exercise gives me energy and focus away from all technology to take stock.

### **How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?**

When I am in Newcastle, Speedflex in Jesmond and

### **How would you like to be remembered?**

Having a positive impact on people and helping them reach their true potential even if it is just in a small way.

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Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the LEP



## NORTH EAST AMBITION TO BE SKILLS BEACON

Working to improve the skills of the North East's workforce is a big challenge, but one the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Michelle Rainbow relishes.

**The pressing need for more skilled workers to fill specialised jobs, tackling a skills mismatch between academic courses and available employment and addressing high levels of worklessness.**

All issues the North East economy has long wrestled with and crucial in addressing to narrow the productivity gap between the region and the rest of the UK.

An innovative approach to overcoming these decades-old problems is drawing widespread acclaim for Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and her team.

With a number of pioneering skills and employability programmes under way, Michelle's goal is for the North East to become a national exemplar for skills and inclusivity.

She says the North East is making huge strides in raising aspirations and improving social mobility.

"It would be easy to look at the big picture and feel daunted," said Michelle. "But the North East LEP has worked long and hard with a wide range of partners to understand the challenges and put a strategy in place that supports the overriding goal of creating 100,000 quality jobs by 2024.

"Collectively, we are absolutely determined to help those out of work and whose skills face obsolescence.

"Work is underway across five highly targeted work streams, which cover the careers journey from primary school right through to retirement. Each focuses on lifelong learning for everyone so no-one is left behind.

"As well as the university provision available here, there is a large network of private providers offering skills training and many organisations are capitalising on the

strength of our technical education and apprenticeships. It's a positive place to be.

"We are confident what we are doing is right too, not least because the Government's Industrial Strategy reflects our direction of travel and we continue to measure and evaluate progress as we go."

The North East is already pioneering the way after being selected by the Gatsby Foundation to pilot the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks programme in 2015. It improves career guidance within secondary schools by providing a structured framework to follow.

Such is the impact of the career benchmarks in schools, teachers and training providers from Barcelona are due to visit the North East in the autumn keen to learn more and see if its success can be replicated in the Catalan capital.

"The Good Career Guidance Benchmarks have been transformational for North East secondary schools," said Michelle. "We've traditionally experienced low numbers of students choosing STEM subjects for their A levels or further education and up to recently have generally seen a drop off in attainment levels. This is now vastly improving.

"The next step is to work with Government to encourage their roll out more widely here and across the country and to lobby for their introduction in primary schools.

"Research shows that young people start to make life-limiting decisions around the age of seven or eight. We want to halt that and also start to nudge them towards STEM and digital routes because that's where the greatest opportunities lie."

Recognition for Michelle's team has flowed with the success of the programme. Ryan Gibson, the facilitator for the pilot, was awarded the title of Career Educator of

the Year at the recent Career Development Institute UK Career Development Awards.

Michelle's team hopes to engender similar results through a 'retain, retrain and regain' campaign aimed at the over 50s, which is currently in the planning stages.

Work doesn't halt there. Attention is also being given to the four universities within the North East's LEP's patch. Ensuring these are seen as anchor organisations within society forms a clear part of Michelle's vision.

"Our universities are world class and play a key role in supporting the local economy," she said. "The next step is to work with them to support enterprise, retain local graduate talent and help with the latest thinking on knowledge transfer partnerships," she said.

She also wants apprenticeships to be accorded the value and status they deserve: "I'd love nothing more than for high quality apprenticeships to be given the same standing in society as academic attainment and we'll do whatever we can to make that happen."

But it's social mobility where Michelle's passion lies and employability and inclusion sit at the top of her priority list.

"Not leaving anyone behind remains our biggest priority which is why all our careers work is focused on 'all and everyone' and this translates from school right through to our technical, vocational and academic provision," she said.

"What we need to ensure is that all career advice and guidance emphasises the opportunities in the key sectors here such as digital, oil and gas and life sciences. It's in this way we'll support our most successful industries and future-proof our workforce for years to come."



# YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

## BRYONY GIBSON

Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting

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

Whilst the North East has been my home for almost 20 years, I'm really a West Country girl. I was fortunate enough to grow up in Bath, which is a beautiful city I would urge anyone to visit, even if only for a weekend. All of my family still live there, so it's a journey I often make.

### **What do you think it means to be a businessperson in the North East of England?**

Being a businessperson in the North East is about being part of a community. The region is comparatively small, but that's one of its main strengths. It means it's never too difficult to meet or speak to the right person who can help you to move forward.

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

Similar to the South West, the North East is a great place to live. Both have the countryside, beautiful beaches, plenty to see and do, great bars and restaurants and fabulous shopping. The difference here is that everything is so much easier to get to.

Whilst it may not always seem like it, the road and motorway network in the North East means you can decide to go and do pretty much anything and be there in under an hour, which I'm really grateful for.

### **Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?**

There are lots of great places I go to have business meetings, but in recruitment being discreet when people are looking for a new challenge is a necessity so I'm afraid I'm not going to reveal my secret hideouts here!

### **Where do you like to eat out in the region?**

Most of the time when I'm out at a restaurant it's with my family and we love Italian or Chinese food, but we also like a nice cosy pub. The Church Mouse in Chester-le-Street is one of my favourites as they also let us take our dog along.

### **Where do you like to unwind within the North East?**

I don't live too far from Ramside Spa, which never fails to relax me, but the next best thing is either a spot of retail therapy or to head out to the Fells or the Northumberland coast for a long walk with my family and dog.

### **Are the people really friendlier?**

I know people say it all the time, but I think the people of the North East most definitely are friendlier. Apart from the cold weather, that's probably the first real difference I noticed when I moved here all those years ago. There's a huge spirit of togetherness in the region and people are much more helpful towards one another. I know it's a bit of a cliché, but I think it's genuinely true.

### **What do you think is the best view in the North East?**

For me that's simple. I love the view of Tynemouth Long Sands Beach. I love the sun, so it was always going to be at the beach and I used to live in Tynemouth when I first moved to the region, so it holds a special place in my heart.

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

The North East is different to the rest of the UK, so offers its own opportunities in comparison to other parts of the country. Clearly many areas have more businesses than we do, so can offer more job opportunities, but they also have more competition for those openings. I'm a firm believer that you make your own luck in your working life, and with an area that is such a great place to live, there's plenty of opportunity in the North East.

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

Straight out of attending university in Wales, I took a role with Marks & Spencer on their graduate management trainee scheme. I was posted to Oxford, which is a beautiful city, but I never found it a very welcoming place as an outsider; not like the North East. I've also worked in Bath, but with its size and transport links, I don't think it comes anywhere near to offering what the North East does.

# AKZONOBEL'S GOLDEN HIGHWAY TO HEALTH

At AkzoNobel, we pride ourselves on providing good, sustainable jobs for good people within the communities we serve. Although we are in the business of paint, we also endeavour to create a fun and friendly people-focused working environment that our employees enjoy coming to every day.

It's a simple fact that without our people, we wouldn't be able to make our paint, so it is of the utmost importance to us to ensure the mental and physical health and wellbeing of all of our staff across our manufacturing units.

Since we opened the doors of our new facility in Ashington, we have actively promoted healthy living to the staff in a number of different ways, through healthy eating incentives, exercise-led activities and even weight-loss challenges. Our dedication has seen the site recognised by the North East Better Health at Work initiative which awarded us Silver level status in 2016, but this year, we're going for Gold!

As part of our work to achieve Gold status, we devised the 'Highway to Health' campaign which saw employees sign up to take part in a number of individual and team-based challenges throughout the year. As an extension of this, last month, a team of eight staff from AkzoNobel took part in the 'Fell 'em Doon Woodland 10km', a timed fun-run through the Friends of Ashington Community Woods in Northumberland.

AkzoNobel provided water to all 250 runners at the event, which was organised by Ashington Hirst Running Club. This meant they could stay well hydrated on the warm July evening by picking up a bottle of water at the mid-way water station, at the end of the 10km track and another bottle to take home as part of the goodie bag presented to all the runners at the finish line.

Jeff Hope, Head of Manufacturing Unit at AkzoNobel Ashington, said: "We were proud to sponsor the water at this year's Fell 'em Doon Woodland 10km run in Ashington. Health and wellbeing is extremely important to AkzoNobel and we place a great emphasis as an employer on maintaining a safe and engaging



The Fell 'em Doon Woodland 10km team from AkzoNobel at the finish line.

work environment and ensuring that all of our staff are looked out for.

"Engaging employees in activities such as the Woodland 10km is a great way to engage the team in health and wellbeing initiatives whilst also supporting the local community. The Fell 'em Doon Woodland 10km was a great event and I very much look forward to the next one!"

To find out more about AkzoNobel, visit [www.akzonobel.com](http://www.akzonobel.com).

## A SUMMER OF DILIGENCE, HARD WORK AND ACHIEVEMENT AT ONE IT SUPPORT

The summer months can either be a hectic affair or a time to relax and enjoy the sunshine. Unwinding is definitely not an option for specialist IT services and solutions based company, One IT Support as Summer 2017 has seen the company move from strength to strength as the Tynemouth-based firm follows through on expansion and company growth.

Signing new contracts is always compelling and this year has welcomed new contracts from exciting clientele like Harrison Maritime Industries as well as strengthening their existing contracts with companies like Collaborative Portfolio (CoPo). The partnership One IT Support has with CoPo has flourished over the months as both companies are now working closer and doing more frequent business together.

It's no surprise then that they've had to grow the workforce to meet demand. The company has recently welcomed Scott Cassidy from IT performance based company, Aspire Technology Solutions.

A company philosophy One IT Support fully embraces is the provision of friendly and thorough services to all. Through doing so, this means extending the variety of services the company has to offer. Summer has been a time for planning and through deliberating services; One IT Support has offered an updated contract to all clients guaranteeing faster resolution time. Updating assistance to provide the best service is common within the company and stands to be part of the reason as to why One IT Support has successfully managed to renew their largest contract for a third year in a row. Said contract has welcomed a net worth of £75,000 since commencement.

Updating services isn't the only thing One IT staff have been busy with; the team has also cooperated and dedicated time on working with charities. Managing Director, Richard Eyles spoke about the company's charity involvement:



"We have recently been involved within our largest Wi-Fi installation project for a charity in multiple sites around the country. These sites include, North Shields, Middlesbrough, Nottingham and Sheffield.

"It's really rewarding being able to extend One IT Support services to help charities out, we're very happy to lend a hand where we can."

As the company now moves into its seventh year of business, One IT Support are proud to have 100% client retention having never lost a support contract and plan to keep the positive work moving into the winter months.

To find out more about the services provided at One IT Support you can find out more information on the company website at [oneits.co.uk](http://oneits.co.uk).

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### Speaker - Charlie Hoult, MD, Hoult's Yard, Chair - Dynamo

Innovation and fresh ideas are key to keeping a fourth generation family business relevant – and profitable! Charlie returned to the North East in 2010 and has doubled the size of his family property business centred around Hoult's Yard, which now houses 120 firms and over 700 staff. Meanwhile, he has grown an angel-investment portfolio into 100 staff and £16m turnover across three firms in IT, recruitment and insurance. On the side, he founded Dynamo as a network for North East IT firms to collaborate and lobby. So far, Dynamo has initiated £42m investment in public projects.

Charlie will be a hugely interesting and entertaining inaugural speaker.

**Limited places available - contact Linda Hitman to reserve your space, [Linda@exclusivebusiness.net](mailto:Linda@exclusivebusiness.net)**

**Diary Date: Monday 30th October - Speaker Chris Paton of Quirk Solutions Ltd**

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INSPIRING CONVERSATION OVER A FINE LUNCH

# US AMBASSADOR RECEPTION IN NEWCASTLE AND NOT A FERRERO ROCHER IN SIGHT

By Stephen Patterson



There is never a dull moment at NE1 and no two days are ever the same. This summer, the usual high profile NE1 events including the Newcastle Motor Show, NE1 Restaurant Week, Quayside Seaside and Screen on the Green have all taken centre stage in the city attracting tremendous support from the public and businesses alike.

While people recognise and are very familiar with NE1's active events programme, our NE1 Alive after Five initiative and our capital investment projects – behind the scenes we're also involved in a whole raft of work to promote the city internationally, attract inward investment and put the city on the global map and firmly on the radar of potential foreign investors.

In a post Brexit world, international relations are increasingly important for Newcastle's economy. We are not just a modern European regional capital city, we are also a global city that trades with the rest of the world.

To ensure that we do not shift from this position, or lose focus, we have stepped up our efforts on an international plane and are working hard to forge strong global connections for Newcastle and our business community. Newcastle has a long and illustrious history of trading with and across the globe and we want to keep it that way.

Recently our efforts saw us hosting a reception for the acting US ambassador to the UK. Lewis Lukens, the Acting Ambassador visited Newcastle to officially open a public photography exhibition marking the centenary of America's involvement in World War 1.

The exhibition, Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace:

The Doughboys 1917-18, was located outside the Central Station in Newcastle and provided a portrait of the WW1 battlefields. The work by Michael St Maur Sheil is on a global tour and had already attracted over 5 million visitors before arriving in Newcastle.

To capitalise on Acting Ambassador Lukens visit to the city, NE1 organised a formal reception at the city's iconic Castle Keep. An invited audience of 15 of the city's top businesses were in attendance – chosen because they represented some of the North East's key growth sectors from education through to digital, media and marketing.

The Castle Keep provided a fitting historic backdrop for us to set the scene about Newcastle and the North East.

It was the ambassador's first visit to Newcastle and we used the business breakfast to highlight the city's industrial heritage and outline its current and future prospects and business aspirations.

Much is made of the UK's special relations with the United States, in a regional context this is underlined by the fact that 40% of all foreign domestic investment in 2016 came from the US.

In a building steeped in centuries of northern history – the Castle Keep provided a wonderful backdrop for the event and allowed us to sell the

city to potential international business interests and showcase the world-class expertise of the city and city region's business community.

The visit has laid the foundations for high-level, on-going relations with the United States and we hope to follow it up with further visits from the US Embassy's commercial team and the new UK Ambassador, Woody Johnson following his election by the Senate earlier this month.

NE1's international relations have and will continue to extend beyond the US, we have also successfully hosted delegations to the city from the Arab states. Again, the Arab Ambassadors commercial attache visit was designed to showcase Newcastle and the wider region's commercial strengths. In addition to this, NE1 has also attended property investment conferences in France as well as representing the North East at the Business Improvement District European conference in Germany.

Newcastle has always been a city of innovation and one that looks outwards – NE1 is keen to continue this tradition and our efforts in promoting Newcastle internationally aim to ensure that we are 'top of mind' for countries and global companies looking to invest. With an ever-changing political landscape it is crucial that we cast the net wide for investment partnerships and global connections, our economic future depends on it.

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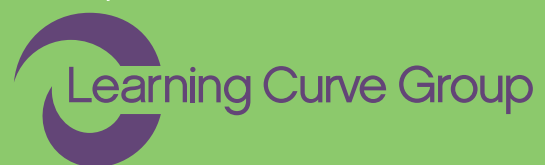
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## LEARN TO EARN



Ammar Mirza pic: Peter Walton 2014

A professional education will earn you a living, but a personal education will make you rich.

Education provides many an interesting debate, whether university degrees are worth it or if higher level apprenticeships really compare, I thought that I would share some of my own experiences. Growing up in Newcastle, I never realised or even appreciated the importance of education. Early on at school I was what can only be described as a swot. Later on I became a bit distracted, what with girls and fast cars, and simply wanting to make money. All of which required me to work.

Although I was introduced to enterprise at a very early age through the family business, I was 12 when I started to work properly with both a Saturday job in a store and delivering papers. After leaving school, I enjoyed holding down a couple of jobs and could only be described as your typical workaholic.

However, it was only later on in life that I began

to really appreciate the importance of lifelong learning and personal development. And for the last 20 years have focused on learning something new every day, reintroducing myself to Higher Education undertaking various post-graduate and vocational training.

The feeling of accomplishment when learning something new or gaining a new qualification is refreshing and encourages you to do more. In fact, it is proven to release endorphins making you feel better, happier and successful. This is the same effect as chocolate but with lifelong learning, it brings you closer to your goals and ambitions rather than worrying how to burn it off!

Employees may feel that there is no incentive to develop themselves further but if we fail to learn, then we fail to grow, and growth is important both personally and professionally. The single biggest factor contributing to career progression is learning.

And for employers, a developing workforce ensures innovation, efficiency and increased productivity. If employees know that you invest in them then they are more invested in you. This is why The BIG Learn has been launched and over the next 5 months over 50,000 individuals will be offered the opportunity to learn a formal, vocational qualification which is fully-funded, flexible and fun.

A broad range of courses are available including Lean Organisation Management, Mental Health Awareness and Principles of Team Leading. Anybody 19+ can sign-up to these courses and learn online at a time to suit them over a 6-8 week period. This great initiative is taking place within the North of England and is an opportunity for employers to demonstrate their commitment to lifelong learning, and for employees to invest in themselves. The key to success is dedication to lifelong learning which will ultimately help everyone to become richer, both personally and professionally.

Ammar Mirza CBE is founder and chairman of Asian Business Connexions, North East LEP Board Member alongside holding various other positions across the public, private and third sectors. Email [ammar@ammarm.com](mailto:ammar@ammarm.com)



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# FOUR REASONS WHY YOU COULD BE LOSING YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES

By James Blackwell, CEO, Ronald James



Holding onto talented staff can be difficult, and the expense of finding and training a replacement is an unwanted strain on your business.

There's many reasons as to why staff move on, personal reasons, other opportunities, etc. However, retaining your best staff starts with understanding why they'd leave in the first place. Here are the top four reasons why you could be losing your best employees:

## 1. Recognition

Praise and acknowledgement for hard work is not only deserved, but can be hugely appreciated by talented employees. So when an organization fails to recognize their staff, it doesn't go unnoticed.

When an organization undermines the importance of its people, the most talented staff typically leave for a more rewarding role. This unfortunately leaves the business with low-rated staff and a bad reputation. Even if you don't have the spare budget to hand out raises or bonuses- recognition can come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. There are plenty of low-cost ways of showing recognition, and a word of appreciation is not only free, but goes a long way. Success obviously comes from a culmination of factors, however without dedicated, talented and

passionate staff, the other factors cease to function.

## 2. Pressure

Unsurprisingly, it's easier than we think to overload our employees with work. Usually, in the seek for recognition it's often the best employees that take on more than they can manage.

To avoid this, it's good for staff to break down their day and prioritize their tasks. You may even want to take five minutes to help each member with this, to ensure their productivity levels are optimized and their motivation levels don't dwindle. For example, in my business I encourage my staff to set out a plan for the day, and each morning report what their three main tasks for the day will be. This approach helps prioritise the 'big rocks' for the day, and reduces the pressure of having too much to complete at once.

## 3. Focus

As I have mentioned in previous articles, ambition is great; it's necessary to run a successful business. However, ambition must be strategized in order to make your aspirations achievable.

Staff can get frustrated and demotivated by a workplace full of ideas and visions, that have no translation into any sort of goals. No talented employee will waste time on an idea that has no clear structure or path to completion. Motivated people strive for results, and it's important that your ambition and visions correlate into structured targets for your team to follow.

## 4. Boredom

Talented staff members will always be searching for new ways to challenge and enhance their skills. Innovative thinkers don't want to be stuck in the same system for their entire career, they want to feel like their professional journey is still moving forward. If your organisation doesn't offer a clear progression route, staff will know they must leave in order to progress. Inability to provide a career ladder with not only de-motivate staff, but they are more likely to be bored, unhappy and less dedicated to the success of the business. By implementing positions and achievements for your staff to aspire to, they will naturally work harder to receive the rewards.

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## SHE'S IN FASHION



"She's in Fashion" was a hit single for a group called Suede. However, both the group and the song could very easily be used to describe a new North East fashion house which is having several hits of its own.

**Samantha Quinn is rapidly making a name for herself as a go-to designer for bespoke women's clothing. She particularly specialises in leather and, yes, suede.**

Everything is made to measure using the finest, London sourced, materials. Samantha creates her own designs, makes her own patterns and works closely with a highly skilled team of expert cutters and tailors who have over 30 years of experience in the fashion industry. Every order is personally made to measure; Samantha Quinn doesn't do off-the-peg.

If you go onto her website, [www.samanthaquinn.co.uk](http://www.samanthaquinn.co.uk) you will find a large selection of her contemporary brand, specialising in quality British tailoring. There is everything ranging from cocktail dresses, skirts and tops to leather trousers, biker jackets and trench coats. There is also leather outerwear for men and children.

You can also check out Samantha's personalised service. There is a vast selection of colours and different materials to choose from. In other words, either select one of Samantha's current designs or arrange a meeting with her so that she can design a one-off, unique garment. Then, find a colour you like and pick the sort of material you'd like to wear. You can even alter some of the designs which Samantha has already created.

She enjoys building relationships with her clients "I offer a true bespoke service in which I like to give my clients a personalised experience. I like to know how they like to dress and what suits their body shape and give the client an input in the design process" says Samantha.

Samantha is a graduate of Newcastle College. She left with BA Hons in Fashion Design and Dressmaking. The course is recognised as one of the best in the UK for anyone who wants to be a success in the fashion industry.

Although working in fashion was always a dream for Samantha, it took a sad turn of events to encourage her to change career. As the saying goes; "Out of adversity comes opportunity." Five years ago, she was widowed. She was left needing to support her family as a working mum. With the support of friends and relatives, she knew that the best way to get recognition was to prove herself with qualifications, hence her decision to take a degree.

Fast forward to early 2016 and Samantha launched her own fashion company and unveiled her first collection. She now has several high profile clients, such as TV presenters and Premier league footballers and their families, who enjoy having the opportunity to either buy from her online collection or speak to her directly to have a one-off creation. Her stunning leather skirts and trench

coats are a huge favourite amongst her followers.

As well as running her own business and looking after her children, Samantha works extensively with the TKO organisation....Training Knowledge & Opportunities. She travels across the UK supporting individuals who are trying to get back into the workplace after a period of unemployment, homelessness or women who have suffered from circumstances such as domestic violence. She uses fashion as the engaging strategy. 'Fashion Works' combines educating learners about the fashion industry with valuable employability skills.

The project also helps the participants gain project management skills as well as building confidence to help host a fashion show in partnership with her Samantha Quinn fashion brand.

Alongside Samantha, GB Olympic Boxer Natasha Jonas works with her to utilise the powers that boxing brings to help raising self-esteem, confidence and motivation and as such has helped to develop a unique and empowering combination between fashion and boxing.

Samantha Quinn has developed a luxury brand combining the highest quality, ethically sourced fabrics. You no longer need to travel to London to enjoy exclusive British manufacturing and innovative design.

Samantha Quinn; she's in fashion.

She's currently working on her latest collection of leather outerwear for Winter 2017/18. However, if you would like to arrange a free consultation with Samantha, the best idea is to get in touch her either via her website, [www.samanthaquinn.co.uk](http://www.samanthaquinn.co.uk) or give her a call on 07973531457 or 0191 9036122. Alternatively, drop her a line on [info@samanthaquinn.co.uk](mailto:info@samanthaquinn.co.uk)

# IS SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTING YOUR JOB PROSPECTS?



Bryony Gibson, Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, shares her thoughts on how you can use social media to help, rather than hinder, your career.

**Social networks are where you go online to chat with friends about things that interest you, but do you ever stop to think about the impact you could be having on your career?**

Despite being called 'social media', research suggests that 93% of employers screen your social footprint before making a job offer.

They examine the nature of photographs, videos and posts, references to drink, drugs, race and gender, the quality of your communication skills, your range of interests and whether your personality fits with their company's culture.

More than half the hiring managers interviewed said when doing this they'd found cause to reject a prospective employee. A third said they decided to employ a candidate after looking at their social profile.

## Facebook

With over 2bn global users Facebook's influence is huge and by allowing jobs to be posted on company pages in the US and Canada, with applicants completing pre-populated application forms, it's only a matter of time before we see job postings in our news feeds.

If you're looking for a new challenge you should update your bio to reflect your career and ambition. You can also add up to five photos here, so pick wisely to highlight your personality and interests positively.

## Twitter

With 52m tweets about job hunting last year, Twitter is a major source of opportunity. Keep up to date by using the best hashtags e.g. #recruiting, #hiring, #NEjobs. Include your company, job title and passions in your bio and regularly tweet about industry related matters.

Retweeting or replying to people of influence can raise your profile, but adding them to Lists is a more effective way to get noticed, especially if it's got a flattering name!

## Instagram

More creative than other networks, commenting is king on Instagram. Keep it clean and be thoughtful to the way you come across. Stay authentic, and try not to pounce on everything someone you admire is saying. Insta Stories are a good way to show off a glimpse of the real you.

## LinkedIn

The most popular dedicated business platform with almost 500m members, LinkedIn is more than a network; it's a source for job vacancies, with more than 10m active job posts live at any time.

Although getting established can be difficult if you've just graduated or don't have industry contacts, a strong online presence is essential to ensure your skills and experience are available for recruiters to see.

Be helpful, engage with Groups and conversations, but remember to stay professional, especially with

your photo. The image you choose has a big impact on a prospective employer's first impression.

## The Social Media Mullet

Whilst I can't claim credit for the analogy, when you're looking for a new job the best way to think of social media is as 'mullet' haircut: business at the front, party at the back.

Make sure all of your profiles focus on your achievements and goals. Include keywords that appear in job descriptions so you resonate with employers; this will also help them to find you easily.

When you start to look for a new role, have a purge of your pictures and posts. Remove bad language and try to lead with positive work related content ahead of your interests.

Rather than simply liking things linked to your job, make a comment or start a meaningful conversation.

If you write blogs, keep them focused on areas of expertise. If you do this well while building a structured group of contacts, then it can really help you to gain respect as an authoritative voice in your industry.

If an employer has a hard choice to make your margin for success can be very fine. Whatever you decide to do socially, staying true to your beliefs is important, just keep in mind that those drunken holiday pictures need to vanish while you're searching for that dream job!

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](http://www.bryonygibson.com), connect on LinkedIn or follow @bryonygibson.

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## JESMOND DENE HOUSE

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## NEW MENU, SAME OLD MAGIC

When an old business croney got in touch after a period of quiet we thought where better to catch up than at Jesmond Dene House?

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The hotel is quite unique in the respect that it possesses the feel of a secluded country home yet is merely 15 minutes away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Newcastle. It's a hidden oasis and can often bring a semblance of calm to a frenetic working day. It's also a haven for foodies and boasts a fine restaurant with a burgeoning culinary reputation.

The bright and airy aspect projects a lovely, serene atmosphere and there's always an eclectic mix of folk. Families, old friends, ladies who lunch, business people and those just generally slacking off (that was us) all contribute to a steady hum about the place.

The restaurant does a fine line in modern British cooking and its new menu is exciting, creative and varied in scope. Being a three AA rosette restaurant this is fine dining at its best; dishes have many inflections and often feature some unique combinations.

To give you a flavour, some eye-catching openers included roast squid, chorizo and piquillo peppers with a chickpea and saffron emulsion, braised pigs cheek with homemade black pudding and pickled plums, and Lindisfarne rock oysters with red wine and shallot vinegar.

My dining companion however chose the crab salad; an opener of much colour and interest. This was a sprightly dish embellished with shards of avocado, fennel and pink grapefruit. See what I mean about those combinations? Clearly Head Chef Michael Penaluna is a real virtuoso in the kitchen and this showcased true flair.

I was in the mood for more simple fayre - which Jesmond Dene also do very well- so I decided on an excellent prawn cocktail which was a similarly fresh and invigorating way to begin.

After a suitable digestive break – not to mention a swift recharging of our glasses – our main courses arrived. My friend went for the red mullet. Two tranches of exquisite fish with tomatoes, courgettes and a smear of smoked aubergine.

I meanwhile plucked one from the lean Dene grilling machine – an epic 200g fillet steak with peppercorn sauce and chunky chips. What really impressed us about the food was its rich appearance. Bold, evocative colours really leap out at you from the plate and clearly demonstrate the freshness of the ingredients. Needless to say they also packed a wondrous depth of flavour.

Sadly being a lunchtime, we couldn't

stomach dessert (where did it all go wrong right?) but I can assure you the calorie king will return again to sample the likes of the rhubarb cheesecake with vanilla ice cream, the toasted almond & peach bavaois and the much-vaunted Dark Chocolate Sphere with peanuts and caramel ice cream which appeared to be a real hit on neighbouring tables.

Of course all of this is set against a backdrop of easy elegance. The conservatory area allows an abundance of natural light and affords some great views over the hotel's sun-dappled lawns and surrounding woodland. The staff are all really cordial and are always happy to recommend wines and sides to chaperone your chosen dishes.

What's also appealing is the flexibility of the place. Diners can enjoy this new A la Carte offering between the hours of 12pm and 21:30pm which makes this a great spot for a late lunch. You aren't tied down to a fixed 12 til 2 sitting which is surely a testament to the daily enduring popularity of the venue.

This updated seasonal menu is brimming with new ideas and is a real must-try for a lunchtime repast.



## DIVORCE AND HOLIDAYS – WHERE DO PARENTS STAND?



Sarah Crilly

What is the situation when it comes to divorced couples and their children's holidays?  
Sarah Crilly takes a look at the issue.

**At Ward Hadaway, we are often asked to advise divorced or separated parents whether they can take their children on holiday abroad or whether they need the permission of the child's other parent.**

If you have a Child Arrangements Order stating that your child lives with you (formerly called a Residence Order) you can take your child on holiday abroad for up to 28 days.

However if no orders are in place, you must obtain the permission of all other persons with parental responsibility for the child.

It is a criminal offence for any parent to take a child out of the UK without the permission of every

person with parental responsibility for the child.

It is therefore important not only before the holiday is booked that you speak to the other parent to check that they will agree to the holiday taking place but it's also a good idea afterwards to provide that parent with all the necessary information relating to the holiday once it has been booked.

Where children are travelling abroad with one parent, or perhaps with grandparents it is advisable to seek legal advice as some countries require a statutory declaration or other official documentation to be signed giving consent for the child to travel. We can assist with the preparation of such documentation.

If a parent will not agree to the holiday, you can make an application to the court for a Specific Issue Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 to enable you to take your child on that specified holiday.

It is advisable if considering such an application that this is made well in advance of the proposed holiday and that no flights or accommodation are booked until the matter has been determined by the court.

In considering the proposed holiday, the child's welfare is paramount and the court will always consider what is in the child's best interests when dealing with the matter.

For more information on the issues raised by this article, please contact [sarah.crilly@wardhadaway.com](mailto:sarah.crilly@wardhadaway.com) or call 0191 204 4463.

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## MINCOFFS & THE FRANCHISE COMPANY JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT FRANCHISE BUSINESSES

The commercial services team at Mincoffs is partnering with the Franchise Company to support franchising businesses here in the North East and further afield. The Franchise Company is one of the longest established franchise consultancy practices in the UK. Director, Ken Rostron, has been involved in the industry for over 30 years and has a wealth of experience including in relation to international development and master franchise arrangements.

Lucy Cook of Mincoffs comments, "Here at Mincoffs we have a wealth of experience of supporting franchise businesses including advising business owners setting up a franchise model. Our experience spans a breadth of industries including hospitality and leisure, retail, telecommunications and technology. The franchising model can bring great opportunities to both franchisee and franchisor, allowing businesses to scale rapidly. Franchising does, however, require specialist advice at an early stage to ensure the development of a successful and enduring relationship between the parties. We are delighted to be working with Ken and the team at the Franchise Company as we know that by bringing together our legal expertise with their operational excellence, we will be able to really add value to our client's businesses not least by helping them to set themselves up for success and minimise the risk of pitfalls at a later date."

Ken Rostron of the Franchise Company added, "Franchising and licensing are potentially two great routes to expanding your business, but of course there is a lot of research to be completed first to ensure the benefits they can deliver are relevant to your business. Managing and controlling the way others use your trade mark, know how and other intellectual property is a key benefit franchise and licence models offer. In some cases, clients have operated both a franchise and a licence model. That's what we helped to achieve for Nova International who organise the Great North Run event, and there are many more interesting examples involving retail businesses and the financial services industry. By joining forces with Mincoffs, we are able to offer a comprehensive service to help you decide whether or not the benefits of franchising and licencing could apply to your expansion plans for the UK and overseas."

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Mincoffs and the Franchise Company are offering complimentary 1-to-1 review sessions for businesses already involved in franchising or those who wish to explore the model further. To book a session or for any further information, please contact Lucy Cook, Associate Solicitor, at Mincoffs Solicitors on 0191 281 6151 or email [lcook@mincoffs.co.uk](mailto:lcook@mincoffs.co.uk)

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## PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS

Paul Collingwood, of Newcastle law firm Sintons, looks at options for business owners.

**As a business owner or shareholder, it is imperative that you protect yourself and your company in the event of your death or loss of capacity to make your own decisions.**

### Business LPA

An injury or unexpected loss of capacity to you can impact significantly on your business. It could result in no-one being authorised to make payments to suppliers, pay wages, or enter into contracts. As a result, your business could be put under a huge amount of strain and, in certain circumstances, go into liquidation.

All business owners (whether a sole trader, partner or company director) should consider putting in place a lasting power of attorney (a "LPA") to enable the business to continue to operate successfully in the event that he or she is not able to make financial decisions personally.

The idea behind the LPA is for you to appoint someone (known as your "attorney") who you know and trust to step in, if you suffer an injury or lose capacity to make decisions, at some point in the future. As a business owner, you will want to choose someone to act on your behalf who is both familiar with the business on a day-to-day basis and is commercially astute. If you are a company director, you will also want to review your company's articles of association and shareholder

agreement to see what happens if you or another director were to lose capacity as the LPA, articles of association and shareholder agreement need to work alongside one another.

The LPA can be tailored towards your business interest only or, alternatively, it can also cover your personal assets should you wish. This would require careful drafting.

If you were to lose capacity without having made a LPA, an application would need to be made to the Court of Protection for someone to be appointed as your deputy. This is a costly and time consuming process and someone who you would not want to act in your place may end up being appointed.

It is natural to hope that you will never need a LPA. However, why take the chance? For a relatively small cost, you can ensure the continued success of the business that you have worked so hard to build up.

### Making a Will

While running a business can be hugely rewarding both on a personal and financial level, one thing that is often neglected is consideration of what will happen to the business on your death.

If appropriate provision has not been made, then disputes can arise over how the business is run on a day to day basis, who makes the decisions and what roles others have or will have in the

business. Usually, there are other people's interests that need to be considered as well as your own. The business' future could be in jeopardy until any such issues are resolved.

The most effective way of protecting your interests and those of your family and business partner is to make a valid will and a shareholder agreement which includes an option for the surviving business partner to buy your interest from your estate.

Not only will doing this ensure that your business interest passes to those people you wish to benefit but it will also enable a smooth transition in the ownership of the business. This will give much needed certainty to both your family and business partner. Furthermore, by having a will in place, you can explore more inheritance tax planning opportunities that are often missed by not having a will.

If you die without a will, certain rules called the intestacy rules dictate who benefits from your estate. Complications for your family and your business partner can arise at what is already a difficult time. Your beneficiaries under the intestacy rules could be under the age of 18 and therefore applications to the Court of Protection may be needed for business decisions to be taken or your business interest could end up passing to someone who is not interested in the business and would be detrimental to the business moving forward.

Paul Collingwood is a specialist Wills and Probate Associate with law firm Sintons. For advice on this or any other matter, contact Paul on [paul.collingwood@sintons.co.uk](mailto:paul.collingwood@sintons.co.uk) or 0191 226 3713.

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# EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES UNLAWFUL



On 26th July 2017 the Supreme Court declared that the introduction of tribunal fees was unlawful, discriminatory and must be quashed with immediate effect.

## Background

The Employment Tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal Fees Order 2013 ("the Fees Order") introduced employment tribunal fees in the UK on 29 July 2013. This meant in order to bring a claim, there was an initial issue fee of up to £250 and a further hearing fee of up to £950 to pay to set the case for trial.

The objectives of the fee regime were to transfer the costs of the tribunals away from taxpayers to service users, to encourage early settlement between the parties and to deter weak or vexatious claims. However, the trade union, Unison, argued that the Fees Order was unlawful on the grounds that it interfered unjustifiably with the right to access to justice and that it was discriminatory.

After a four-year legal battle with the government, Unison has succeeded with its challenge. Agreeing with Unison, the Supreme Court judges unanimously held that the introduction of fees had been unlawful and unconstitutional.

Making its decision, the Supreme Court considered Unison's statistical evidence that since the introduction of the fees, tribunals had seen a dramatic 70% decrease in claims. It agreed that the fall in claims was so sharp, substantial and sustained it demonstrated that the fees were unaffordable and prevented access to justice.

The Supreme Court also held that the Fees Order could not be justified as the fees had been set so high that they "had a deterrent effect upon discrimination claims, among others" and had put off more genuine claims than the vexatious claims that the fees were meant to deter.

Considering the discriminatory aspect of the argument, it was agreed that the fees system of charging higher fees for 'Type B' claims (such as discrimination and unfair dismissal) than 'Type A' claims (such as breach of contract) was indirectly discriminatory against women who are more likely to bring 'Type B' claims.

## What now?

Employment tribunal fees as we have known them are no longer applicable and the online system with the fee requirement removed is now already up and running.

Furthermore, the government is now tasked with the logistical nightmare of refunding an estimated £27 million to the people who have brought claims in the employment tribunals since July 2013.

It may be the case that the government seek to implement a revised fees regime in the future. What such a new regime will look like is unknown at this stage but it will have to be at a lower level so not to restrict access to justice.

## Advice for employers

With the fees now abolished, employers should proceed with extra caution when dealing with employees as there will inevitably be a rise in the number of employment tribunal claims going forward.

However, it is not just new claims that employers should be wary of. Employees who were previously prevented from bringing claims due to the fees and would now be out of time may try to argue that it would be "just and equitable" to allow them to bring the claim now.

## Comment

This is a major victory for Unison on behalf of all employees in the UK and emphasises the importance of access to justice for all.

However, although a rise in employment tribunal claims is anticipated, it is probably unlikely that they will return to the levels seen before the introduction of the fees. All employment disputes are now required to go through the ACAS early conciliation process which is often successful in achieving early settlement before a tribunal claim is submitted. Perhaps employers will now be making more use of this facility in the months ahead.

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# EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES - ABOLISHED!

By Claire Rolston, Solicitor, Director, CLR Law

Last month, the Supreme Court abolished employment tribunal fees.

Fees were introduced 4 years ago and have proved controversial from the outset. Despite a remission scheme for individuals with limited means, the fees were set at such a level that it clearly deterred genuine claims being brought. Since their introduction, there has been a 66-70% reduction in claims.

The apparent intention behind introducing the fees was not to reduce the number of claims per se but to discourage vexatious or unmeritorious claims and to put the cost of the tribunal service in the hands of those who used it.

Undoubtedly, however, the fee regime did discourage claims – particularly those with a relatively small value or which would have been brought to assert or uphold a statutory right rather than for compensation. Even claimants with claims worth a moderate amount will have been discouraged if they didn't meet the requirements for remission.

## What does it mean?

For now, fees are gone. Tribunals immediately stopped taking them and the government now has to sort out how to refund claimants who did have to pay.

There is also the potential for employees and former employees to argue they should now be able to pursue claims they were unable to bring because of fees, despite the claims being out of time (most claims have to be brought within 3 months of the act giving rise to the claim). Tribunals will have to decide if the fee regime meant it was not reasonably practicable for an unfair dismissal claim to be brought in time whilst the fees regime applied or whether it would be just and equitable to allow an out-of-time discrimination claim to proceed.

There is now also an increased likelihood of an individual bringing a claim. Employers will need to ensure that they act fairly when dealing with their employees and, if necessary, that they take advice on difficult employment issues.



Claire Rolston is a Solicitor/Director at CLR Law. Contact her with any queries on employment law matters on 0191 6030061 or [hello@clrlaw.co.uk](mailto:hello@clrlaw.co.uk)

# GDPR IS COMING SOON – BUT ARE YOU PREPARED?

May 2018 will see the implementation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). There has been much hype about the new rules but in our new monthly column Jill Dovey, IT law and data protection specialist, at Muckle LLP - the North East's leading independent commercial law firm, will be providing advice and her top tips on how you can start preparing now.

We've all seen the news. The numerous cyber-attacks and security incidents at organisations around the world have propelled data protection to the top of board agendas everywhere.

GDPR is a result of these incidents but also changes in technology, the way we interact and the vast quantities of data created every second of every day. Existing data protection laws pre-date the internet and just don't relate to our connected world today.

GDPR is focused on data which identifies us as individuals and seeks to protect us. It won't stop covert tracking online, profiling and cold calling, but it will make sure they are done transparently, putting us in control of our information.

Of course, there's always going to be an element of human error, so GDPR won't stop all breaches. It will however help you identify where your businesses might be attacked, highlight improvement opportunities and address

vulnerabilities proactively rather than reactively.

The reality is GDPR will impact all businesses. Whether you are a small trader or large global operator, everyone needs to be prepared. And there are some pretty hefty fines for any businesses that don't comply – up to 20m Euros or 4% of your global annual turnover, whichever is higher.

Earlier this year I spoke alongside the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at GDPR – Making it real, the BCS Chartered Institute for IT's national event, and presented on the legal implications for businesses. The ICO website should be the starting point for information for all businesses on GDPR. It has lots of accessible guides and a blog about GDPR.

Lots of businesses don't know where to start with GDPR compliance.

My top tip? Data mapping.

The first thing that any business should do in preparation for GDPR is map the flow of personal data through its organisation, from collection to destruction. The data map will need to be constantly updated to reflect changes within organisations and all data processes, procedures and policies will be based on this.

While there is much to consider, it is important to remember that GDPR isn't just about protecting data. It is about protecting your business too.



Check out the Information Commissioner's Office website to learn more, or follow me @TechlawyerJill, email [jill.dovey@muckle-llp.com](mailto:jill.dovey@muckle-llp.com) or call 0191 211 7972.

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Libby Kennedy

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING A WILL BEFORE GETTING MARRIED

Wedding season has been in full flow and while many people have been busy celebrating their nuptials they may not realise the effect that it will have on their existing Will.

In fact, getting married revokes any former Wills you have made unless they were drafted in consideration of marriage. Making a Will can be a difficult task and many people do not change their Wills after marriage, which can cause many complications in the future.

Libby Kennedy, paralegal in the Wills, Trusts and Probate team at Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF), discusses the importance of having a valid Will in place and the effect that getting married might have on it.

***'If we don't get married and we haven't made a Will, will everything still pass to my partner?'***

No, if you are not married and you do not make a Will your partner is not automatically entitled to your full estate. The easiest way to protect your partner is to have a Will drafted to ensure your estate passes in accordance with your wishes and

to ensure your partner has a say in important decisions such as funeral arrangements.

***'There's no point in making a Will before I get married as I will have to pay to change it again'***

You can make a Will in contemplation of marriage which means it will not be revoked by the intended marriage. You can state in the Clause that if you do marry the Will is not to be revoked. If you do not make a Will in contemplation of marriage, then it will automatically be revoked by the marriage. You cannot just expect to be married in the future or to marry in general, it must be that you expect to marry a certain person and we often refer to the date or year of marriage intended. It is much safer to make a Will before marriage than avoid making a Will altogether or after you are married.

***'I don't need to make a Will now I'm married as everything will pass to my spouse anyway'***

If you die Intestate (without making a Will) everything will pass to the surviving spouse to a certain level of inheritance. But depending on if you have children, it is not guaranteed to be all. What if you should both die? If you do not make a Will your estate will not necessarily pass to the people you wish for it to. This is especially important if you have estranged family members that you would not necessarily wish to benefit from your estate.

***'Do I need to make a new Will once I get married or will my old Will still be in effect?'***

A Will is automatically revoked by marriage unless you have made it in contemplation of marriage. If you have not made a Will in contemplation of marriage you will have to make a new Will to ensure your estate passes in accordance with your wishes. If you do not make a new Will, your estate will be dealt with in accordance with the Intestacy rules.

For further advice on the impact of marriage on Wills contact GBLF's Wills, Trust and Probate team on T: 0191 388 1778  
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Week2Week Serviced Apartments are a family business based in Newcastle's City Centre. Founded in 2000 we are the original serviced apartment provider in Newcastle upon Tyne. Our apartments are affordable and available 365 days of the year.

The apartments are suitable for any type of traveler needing the comforts of home. We specialise in relocation as well as working with contractors, project workers, legal representatives, loss adjusters, Human Resources, Personal Assistants, Virtual Assistants and more. We provide accommodation for short or long stays with a requirement for apartments or houses on a temporary or longer-term basis.

Clients can enjoy our apartments from as little as 2 nights, and stay as long as they like. Being a smaller firm we are flexible always endeavouring to make the booking process as simple as possible. If you're responsible for making group bookings pass the task onto us, consider it done! We offer help to choose the right apartment based on your specific requirements in your preferred location.

We provide a warm and friendly welcome for our clients upon arrival which is either a personal meet and greet from the Week2Week team or if you are arriving outside office hours a key courier will meet you outside your chosen apartment.

Our teams are guided by values of respect, integrity, team work and empowerment; we employ the highest ethical and quality standards, treating everyone with fairness and dignity. This feeds directly into our service standard to complete our annual quality audit resulting in achieving the Quality Marque set by the Association of Service Apartment Providers. This audit each year provides us with an equivalent of hotels' star grading, we achieved a 4\* equivalent in 2016.

Week2Week Serviced Apartments work with North East and UK alliances to deliver exceptional customer service. Our product is second to none with our company Director recently being shortlisted for The Sunshine Fund's the Glass Slipper Awards, for, 'Best Newcomer'. This is testimony of the great results and quality product provided by the team.



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## 50 YEARS OF THE ROBERTSON GROUP



Construction giant Robertson Group has marked its 50th anniversary of homebuilding by rolling out its residential division – the award-winning Robertson Homes – into the North East, with two sites already underway and further expansion planned.

Robertson Homes has built thousands of family homes in Scotland over the past 50 years, and has used its landmark anniversary to expand homebuilding into England for the first time.

The division is part of Robertson Group, one of the largest independently owned construction, infrastructure and support services companies in the UK, with a strong confirmed order book, diverse income streams and a dedicated, expert workforce.

Robertson Homes is currently building an exclusive enclave of 57 homes in Rothbury, Northumberland, and recently started work on a further 145 homes in Backworth, North Tyneside.

The housebuilder, which was recently awarded the titles of House of the Year and House Builder of the Year at the Scottish Home Awards 2017, is set to develop a number of further sites across the region, covering a geographical area between Alnwick and Yarm, with acquisition plans already underway.

Kirk Thompson, Robertson Homes' Development Director, is overseeing the expansion of the division. He commented "We have built a reputation over 50 years for building family homes of the highest levels of build quality and attention to detail, and it is fantastic that we are bringing that into the North East in such a significant year for the business."

## STRONG GROWTH FOR SINTONS' PLOT SALES TEAM

Law firm Sintons has increased its market share in the region's residential development sector through a series of new client wins, which now sees its specialist team handle plot sales for 12 housebuilders and developers.

The Newcastle-based firm is currently handling hundreds of plot sales for a dozen regional developers, whose projects are spread throughout the North East and Northumberland.

Recent wins include Robertson Homes, for whom Sintons has been appointed to handle their Help to Buy work, in addition to the continuing development of the long-standing relationship with regional housebuilder Cussins Homes.

Sintons has seen significant growth in its residential development team in recent years. In addition to handling plot sales, the team also acts for a number of North East regional and national housebuilders on matters including site acquisition, estate set up, infrastructure development and planning agreements.

Recent instructions for the team include the acquisition of the 335-home Bedewell Court site in Hebburn for housebuilding giant Barratt, alongside numerous new developments for family-owned Cussins, including its latest projects in



Longframlington and Humshaugh.

Led by consultant Alan Harkness - who has more than 30 years' experience in development work and has acted for the Cussins family companies since 1982 - and residential property specialist Catherine Davies, the team is highly esteemed for its work.

Mark Quigley, Managing Partner at Sintons, said: "The residential development team has seen strong and impressive levels of growth through a combination of its ability to win new work while continuing to nurture and develop long-term client relationships."



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## Graham Park Road Gosforth

This outstanding three-storey, semi-detached family home is very well located in one of the most sought after streets within central Gosforth. The property is stylishly presented with many outstanding features and has an extra wide plot providing superb gardens and secure parking.

**Price Guide £1.295 Million**

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## The Limes Front Street, Whitburn

This magnificent, Grade II Listed period family home sits in a site of approximately 0.4 of an acre. The house has the benefit of a stone-built, double-storey former coach house, currently a double garage with further rooms/storage and the building shows obvious conversion potential.

**Price Guide £995,000**

4 4 2



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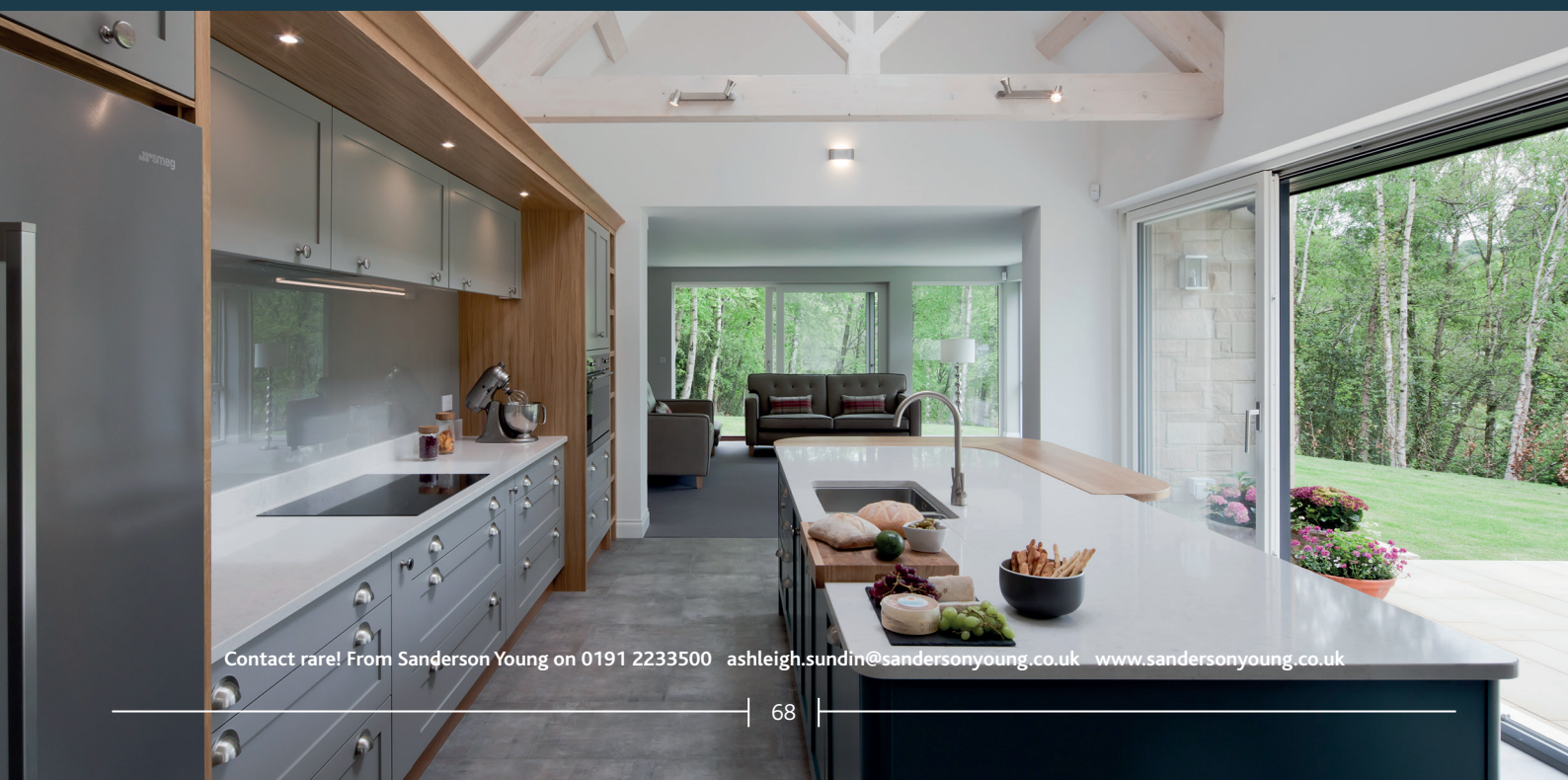


## EAST GLADE, MARCHBURN LANE, RIDING MILL



### PRICE GUIDE: £1.05 MILLION

East Glade is a striking, newly constructed home with tasteful high quality fixtures and fittings. Natural Northumberland stone is beautifully blended with timber cladding, render and reclaimed Welsh slate and the large glass panels provide stunning views, flooding the property with an abundance of natural light. This impressive 5 bedroomed family house stands elevated in attractive gardens and grounds of around an acre, with south facing views; the position is outstanding, being nestled in a central, yet peaceful, location within the desirable village of Riding Mill. East Glade has been carefully designed with modern day living and entertaining in mind and the specification throughout is extremely impressive with oak internal doors, bespoke staircase, stunning kitchen, opulent bathrooms and underfloor heating throughout the ground floor and in the family and master en-suite bathrooms.



Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 2233500 [ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk](mailto:ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk) [www.sandersonyoung.co.uk](http://www.sandersonyoung.co.uk)

## THE GENERATION GAME

Benjamin Franklin might have added a several more certainties to his famous quote "Nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes". "Cyclists will ignore the new cycle lanes on Heaton Road and continue to use the road and pavements just like before" could be one? Another could be "Each new generation is doomed to suffer the sneers and barbs of the generation before".

The sneers usually turn out to be wrong. For my generation, it was mostly "You are not going out of the house dressed like THAT?" Or "You call that music? Pah". Yet we mostly turned out OK. Generation X have not spent their lives under the duvet watching MTV or sleeping, as predicted by a gleeful media around the millennium.

And so, we come to the millennials, Generation Y. As this group moves into the workplace they are proving that far from being 'Generation Snowflake' they are embracing the challenge of 24/7 digital technology, changing lifestyles and new working patterns. Once again, proving the old guard wrong. Yet despite access to a wealth of technology and lifestyle choices, Generation Y is starting out with bigger burdens than any since the early 1950's. The recession of 2008 is still having a major impact upon wages while spiraling house prices have put early home ownership firmly on the back burner. Add an average student debt of £45,000 and Generation Y can be forgiven for asking "Why me?"



Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

A recent survey of Millennials by property specialist CBRE threw up some predictable results. No surprise that 64% are renting with 65% citing financial circumstances as their reason. 41% live with their parents with 46% of those stating that they plan to leave within two years to move into rented accommodation. Given that Millennials spend almost 50% of their disposable income on leisure it seems Generation Y could fairly be renamed Generation Rent?

The challenge for the rental sector is to provide the high-quality accommodation required by today's

young professionals and to develop innovative ways to allow them to afford this level of quality. Our ProShare Plus scheme allows young professionals to share larger properties at a fixed, all-inclusive rent. This allows them to create their own flexible micro community with minimal hassle.

So, all the indications are, we need a buoyant rental sector for the foreseeable future. Good news for the buy-to-let landlord you might think? Possibly not. New regulation in the lettings sector means compliance must be paid for and the abolition of letting fees will inevitably result in higher rents so the tenant is hit.

More stringent mortgage requirements are hitting landlords, as is the very digital technology Generation Y takes for granted. Online estate agents promise cost benefit to the vendor by swapping an estate agents percentage fee for a flat fee. But all too often we see online estate agents undervaluing property for a quick sale. Of serious concern is the effect of this under valuation upon the remortgage market which landlords need to finance their next project.

Generation Rent seems here to stay but current legislation and market trends seem set to suppress the vital buy-to-rent sector. The lettings sector must prepare for the inevitable rise in demand as best they can so I will finish with a final quote from Benjamin Franklin. "Without continual growth such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning".

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## PART EXCHANGE YOUR WAY TO A NEW LUXURY HOME IN HEXHAM

For buyers looking for affordable luxury in Hexham, Woodland Rise from David Wilson Homes North East could be the perfect choice. The housebuilder, which was recently awarded five star status from the Home Builders Federation for the eighth consecutive year, is encouraging buyers to visit its development on Corbridge Road to explore the various buying options available on its range of stunning properties.

One of the homes available to buy at Woodland Rise is the Millford, a beautiful four-bedroom house starting from £354,995. With a bright and airy interior throughout, the Millford features a stylish kitchen with dining, family and utility areas on the ground floor, as well as a glazed bay opening onto the rear garden. The lounge also benefits from a gorgeous bay window, allowing plenty of natural light to fill the space. Upstairs is the master bedroom with its own en suite, as well as three further double bedrooms and the family bathroom with a separate shower. What's more, two of the plots available at Woodland Rise come with upgraded kitchens, offering effortless style with a modern touch.

Those looking to purchase a home at Woodland Rise can also make use of David Wilson Homes' innovative Part Exchange scheme on many of the homes available. Using the scheme, buyers have the opportunity to sell their existing property to David Wilson Homes North East, in order to move with no estate agents fees or chains.

Ashlea Wright, Sales Manager at Woodland Rise commented: "There's no surprise that Woodland Rise has seen so much popularity since its launch, given its stunning surroundings. There's a great sense of community here now, with many links to local schools and clubs, so it's well suited to growing families. It's also a great location for those looking to relocate from a city centre to somewhere more rural, whilst maintaining great commuter links."

Located on the outskirts of Hexham, homes at Woodland Rise have been in high demand since its launch, with more homes now nearing completion. The beautiful market town is within close reach of the development, with idyllic river walks and many boutique shops. What's more, Woodland Rise offers strong commuter links, with the A69 providing easy access to Newcastle and the Lake District.



For more information on the Woodland Rise development visit: [www.dwh.co.uk/WoodlandRise/](http://www.dwh.co.uk/WoodlandRise/)



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# BELLWAY LAUNCH APARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES AT STANNINGTON PARK



Bellway has announced the latest phase of development at Stannington Park which will comprise a range of one and two bedroom apartments, two and three bedroom houses and three bedroom townhouses.

Sales Manager, Alex Philipson, said: "We expect that there will be considerable demand for this latest phase of the development, buyers will be able to select from a broad selection of designs and floor plans to suit their living requirements."

"Stannington Park is a very special location. This really is a unique opportunity to enjoy all the benefits of a brand new home in a new development that has been designed as a countryside village where residents can wander through tree-lined avenues and enjoy the open spaces that the development offers."

Prices will start from £119,995 for a one bedroom apartment and buyers will be able to enjoy contemporary designed kitchens with Zanussi

oven and hob cooking appliances with bathrooms featuring Roca suites. Buyers will have a choice of contemporary kitchen finishes dependent upon the build stage. One bedroom apartments offer around 620 sq ft of living space and two bedroom townhouses provide around 1,268 sq ft of living space.

Depending upon the plot selected there is garaging or allocated parking available and some of the latest phase of properties enjoy views over landscaped grounds which were formerly the hospital Airing Courts.

To help buyers relocate to Stannington Park, visitors will be able to discuss with the sales advisor a range of options that Bellway is offering buyers including part exchange arrangements or their Express Mover

service, where Bellway will manage the sale of your old property free of charge.

Buyers can also take advantage of the Government's Help to Buy scheme which only requires a 5 percent deposit and offers a 20 percent 5 year interest free Government loan which helps to reduce mortgage repayments during the first five years of ownership.

Stannington Park is situated three miles from the attractive village of Stannington on the A1 and is therefore only 13 miles from Newcastle city centre and 5 miles from the market town of Morpeth.

For families there is a selection of well-regarded local schools including King Edward V1 senior school and Chantry and Newminster middle schools.

For more information, visit [www.bellway.co.uk](http://www.bellway.co.uk) or call the sales centre 01670 789682

Our sales office is open 11:00am – 5:30pm Friday to Monday and 11:00am – 7:00pm Thursday. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

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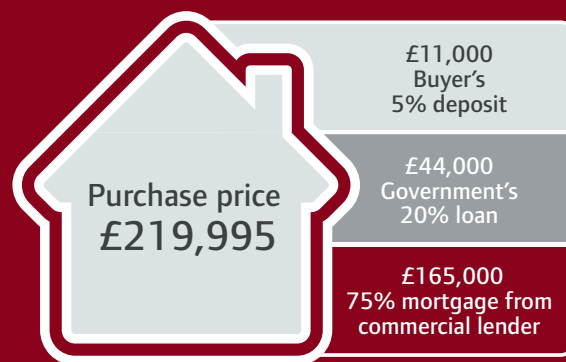
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YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE OR OTHER DEBT SECURED ON IT. Credit is secured against your home. Photographs show typical Linden homes and the local area at The Aspens. Interior may include optional upgrades or extras available at additional cost. \*£175,996 represents 80% of a £219,995 purchase price. Subject to status, Help to Buy Terms & Conditions and available on selected properties in England only. Eligible applicants will be offered an equity loan up to a maximum of 20% of the purchase price (based on the open market value). Applicants are required to fund at least 80% of the purchase price by means of a conventional mortgage, savings/deposit where required. The equity loan is provided by the HCA and held as a second charge. This offer is not available in conjunction with any other promotion. †Stamp Duty paid offer on selected homes only and limited to reservations made by 30.09.17. Not in conjunction with any other offer. Terms and conditions apply. Full details will be provided on request. Prices and details correct at time of going to press.



## Q ELEVEN SUITES HIT THE MARK WITH SME OCCUPIERS

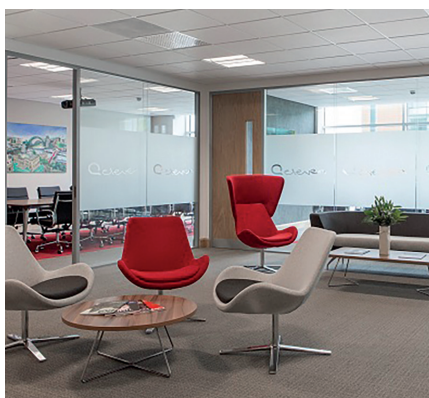
Quorum's new SME offer has been paying dividends, as the Qeleven semi serviced suites start leasing.

Quorum Business Park in North Newcastle, has always been known for the larger occupiers. It is home to the Greggs PLC headquarters and a range of other major employers including Tesco Bank, Convergys and Balfour Beatty. The 25 businesses at the park employ over 6,000 staff on site between them.

However Quorum has also been catering for smaller occupiers. The SME market sector in Newcastle has been more robust with good levels of demand in the sub 10,000sqft size range. Responding to this, a number of smaller units have been created at Quorum, particularly with the recently launched Qeleven suites.

These offer space from units of 535sqft (for 6 to 8 people) upwards with a range of different sized units available up to 4,392sqft, to accommodate 45 to 50 people. 3 of the units have already been taken, with International building consultancy Gleeds to be the first to take occupation.

Newcastle has seen a burst of tech companies outgrowing incubators and serviced offices and looking for semi managed small workspaces. With city centre supply restricted and rents increasing, many are looking at the cost advantage of being on the edge of town, where flexible leases, generous car parking and a range of on-site events and amenities are available. The table tennis table and BBQ area just outside the building have been popular through the summer months.



The ability for a growing company to upscale is also important. Being located on a park majority owned by a single major investor, offers the ability to walk away from existing lease commitments to take larger spaces. This ability to upscale without having to worry about disposing of the end of leases is a major advantage.

The Qeleven units benefit from high speed internet connectivity. Quorum have partnered with Apire, a locally based IT support company and have installed the necessary IT infrastructure to ensure that new occupiers can quickly plug in to services offering superfast connectivity.

The suites also offer a range of meeting rooms, so individual occupiers don't need to put meeting rooms into their own space. The 4 meeting rooms are of different sizes, with 2 smaller meeting rooms on a free to use basis, while two larger ten and fourteen seater rooms can be booked by the hour. These have presentation equipment, conference call facilities and supplied with freshly made teas and filter coffee.

The suites are looked after by Claire, who provides a range of reception and concierge services. These range from booking taxis, organising dry cleaning to organising business lunches for occupiers. Claire also supports the meeting rooms, organising bookings and providing the all-important teas and coffees.

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## PROPERTY FIRM CELEBRATES SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION ACROSS THE NORTH EAST

Leading North East property firm BH Group is celebrating significant expansion across the North East.

The company, which announced its aggressive growth strategy last year, has employed a dozen new team members while also promoting existing staff to further strengthen the company's commercial and residential operations as well as its separate mortgage and finance arms.

The BH Group head office, which is based on Hood Street, Newcastle has benefitted from the promotion of Catherine Affleck, who has been made operations director after re-joining the firm. She now oversees the running of the organisation as well as continuing her role in property management.

The property management team is now further supported by chartered surveyor Rachel Farrier, who joins the team with 10 years of experience in the property industry, while the accounts team welcomes accounts clerk Paul Simpson.

Building surveyor Ricki Hutchinson joins associate director Henry Scott to oversee building surveying from the head office.

Students Daniel Simons, who is based in the Newcastle office and Callum Armstrong, who is based in the Durham office, join the team as

assistant surveyors during their placement year at University. They will both provide key support with commercial property.

BH Financial welcomes commercial mortgage expert Phill Barker, while BH Mortgages welcomes experienced mortgage advisor Samantha Smith.

Residential operations are also going from strength to strength, with the relocation and expansion of the company's Morpeth office now complete. The office has moved to larger premises on Newgate street to meet demand in the area. The estate agency arm is also set to open a base Sunderland in the autumn of 2017.

To meet demand in Morpeth the firm has employed property executive Jessica Wilce and graduate valuer Oliver Hindle, who has been employed full time following a successful placement year at the firm.

The Gosforth operation gained area valuer, Liz Humphreys, who oversees home sales across the North East from her base in the popular Newcastle suburb.

The company's Durham operation has also gained new manager Danny Miles, who has over a decade

of experience in the residential property industry. Property executive Gabrielle McKenna, who provides assistance with general clerical support, viewings, marketing properties and customer services also joins the team.

BH Group director Neil Hart said: "We're thrilled to have hired a collection of talented staff as we look to continue our growth strategy across all of our operations. Activity across all services and arms of the company is stronger than ever, and these key appointments will assist us in providing the high quality services we have become known for in recent years.

"We are also pleased to welcome new placement students who will provide us with vital support. We have always been committed to growing the next generation of property experts and many of our senior members of staff and directors started with the company as placements. We hope to replicate this success with our new recruits."

The appointments add to another successful year of growth and expansion. The team is currently undergoing growth from 35 to 50 people across its residential and commercial offices.

For more information on Bradley Hall's commercial, residential and financial services, please visit [www.bradleyhall.co.uk](http://www.bradleyhall.co.uk).



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# PLANNING MYTHS

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House

There are some common myths about town planning which you should be aware of before you embark on a project, in this article I want to dispel a few of them.

**'Apply for something bigger than you want to build then you can compromise with the planners to the actual size you want'** What a load of rubbish! Apply for what you want and save time and resources with unnecessary negotiations, if a planner has a scheme they can support – they will – planners don't tend to disagree out of obstinance.

**'My plans are similar to down the street, so it's guaranteed to be approved'**. Every planning decision is based on specific circumstances. Policies evolve and significantly influence a planning decision. The creation of a conservation area or where a development boundary line is drawn on a local plan can all fundamentally change the way a proposal is viewed. Planning history and constraints of a site also play a huge part in the process. Whilst precedent can be a contributing factor the planning mantra is 'every application will be determined on its own merits'.

**'Pre-Application advice has been positive so my application will be approved'**. Planning decisions are based on adopted policies, however, don't underestimate local objections and politics. If nearby residents object against your application and contact the parish or local councillors you could also end up with objections from them. Some Councillors sit on the planning committee and can override the planning officer's recommendations. Speak with neighbours and local representatives in a bid to avoid objections and potential appeal.

**'Planner Officers will guide me to an approval'**. A planning officer's role is to process your application. Some planners are worth their weight in gold and talk to applicants about issues and guide in overcoming them. However, planners have set timeframes to decide an application, they are often under resourced and as a consequence can take the easier route of refusing an application rather than discussing any issues. Contacting your planner to ascertain their view on your application can avoid unnecessary refusal.

**'I'll get my decision in a couple of months'**. Let's assume your planning application is valid when its submitted, i.e. all relevant information is submitted. Only once its valid does the decision making clock start to tick. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that if an application is valid no further information could be requested, something could crop up which means you may need to provide further information, potentially meaning further time is needed.

Planning applications have timescales for determination and Council's try to adhere to these, however extensions of time can be requested by the planners – you don't have to agree to them, but unless you appeal against non-determination the Council can take longer to decide your application, especially if the application goes to the Planning Committee for determination.

**'Once I have permission I can start to build'**. sometimes this is the case – but generally there are conditions attached to a planning approval which must be discharged, for instance agreeing a brick or tile for your development or providing information relating to boundaries etc. Check your conditions, as discharging conditions can take a number of weeks which you need to plan into your build schedule. Also, don't forget about Building Regulations Consent which is a completely separate process to planning.

**'I can change my plans as I go'**. We've all seen TV programmes that encourage alterations however be aware that technically, if a proposal is not built in accordance with the approved plans or conditions it doesn't have planning permission! Changes can be risky and could have fundamental consequences such as enforcement action, demolition, finances being withdrawn by your mortgage company, or an unsellable asset. Always check that changes don't invalidate your planning permission.

## FAMILY FARM ATTRACTION CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF 'FARMTASTIC' FUN!

A popular North East farm attraction has celebrated its milestone 20th anniversary in style. Whitehouse Farm Centre near Morpeth in Northumberland recently threw a two-day weekend birthday bash marking two decades in business and reflecting on how the site has changed in that time.

From a poultry farm threatened with closure in the wake of the salmonella crisis in 1997, to a flourishing tourist attraction welcoming over 100,000 visitors annually by 2017, Whitehouse Farm has transformed completely since Keith and Sheila Slater opened a small farm park to visitors, hoping to survive by diversifying.

Chickens have been replaced by an impressive range of animal residents, including a collection of snakes and reptiles, meerkats, marmosets, deer, wallabies, owls and parrots, in addition to the standard farm animals; sheep, goats, pigs and cattle. Site buildings have been converted, upgraded and added to, providing additional animal housing, play areas, a shop and a restaurant to enhance the visitor experience.

The anniversary weekend saw young guests handed party bags on entry, magic shows, party games and the unveiling of new mascot, Nelson the Pig, to officially cut a huge cake. There was also face painting, sheep shearing and show-and-tell



L- R: Karen Lovatt, Operations Director celebrates with new mascot Nelson the Pig and Fiona Teasdale, Managing Director

sessions alongside the usual attractions; animal handling, talks and displays.

Karen Lovatt, operations director, says: "20 years is a huge milestone for any business, but especially for us given the unique pressures we have faced over the years.

"If Keith and Sheila had not thought of diversifying in 1997, the farm may have closed before the visitor centre ever opened. The 2001 outbreak of

foot-and-mouth disease took a massive financial toll as we had to close our doors for a period. Then came the 2008 financial crash, when people understandably had to tighten their belts and cut out non-essentials like family days out.

"We survived despite these major challenges, and now, years later, are thrilled to be welcoming a new generation to the farm. We're looking forward to another 20 years of welcoming more friends, old and new, through our doors."

Find out more about Whitehouse Farm and this year's 20th anniversary activities at: [www.whitehousefarmcentre.co.uk](http://www.whitehousefarmcentre.co.uk).

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L-R: Rita Grey, Treasurer of Elemore Ladies' Club, Shaun Newton, Centre Co-ordinator at ELCAP, and Ann Donkin, Community Partnership Co-ordinator at Gentoo with local residents.

## TOP MARKS FOR SUNDERLAND'S GENTOO GROUP

Gentoo has achieved a score of 100%, earning 5 stars, in Business in the Community's 2017 Corporate Responsibility Index (CR Index).

This is the third consecutive year that Gentoo has achieved this high rating, highlighting their commitment to the responsible business agenda. They are one of only four organisations to be awarded 5 stars, alongside; Midcounties Co-operative, Ricoh and Yorkshire Water.

The CR Index is one of the most recognised and longest running benchmarks measuring how businesses are integrating responsible business practice into all aspects of how they operate. It measures a wide breadth of indicators, from how companies are responding to global trends, engaging with stakeholders and their customers in sustainability as well as transparency over pay policies.

Over the past few years, there has been a significant shift towards the responsible business agenda. In 2017, a number of companies committed to measuring their organisation's CR credentials, demonstrating a positive commitment to both measurement and improvement of their internal practice and overall impact. As it is Business in the Community's commitment to ensure that businesses remain at the forefront of building a better and fairer society, they work with Gentoo and other members to continually refine and equip them with the latest thinking and support.

Gentoo value their participation in the Index and benchmarking their performance as the rigour of the process requires in-depth analysis of the work that they do and of the value it adds. Participating in the Index allows them to improve their

performance year on year, which is proven by their consistently high rating.

Over the past year, Gentoo has dedicated themselves to improving local communities and inspiring the people within them. To do so, they have; contributed almost 2,500 hours of volunteering time to make a difference in local communities, donated to a number of causes aiming to help the less fortunate and awarded 72 aspire grants to individuals and community groups. Creating new opportunities for people to learn and develop has always been a priority for Gentoo and in 2016, 20 apprentices were recruited with a further 10 vacancies in 2017. Gentoo is currently also holding the eighth year of the Genfactor competition, which inspires young people to take part in performing arts and gives them a chance to build their confidence.

In order to achieve their aim of building stronger communities, Gentoo has a designated positive engagement team that supports perpetrators of anti-social behaviour (ASB), alongside this; they have a partnership with the BIG project, which aims to help perpetrators of domestic abuse to change their behaviour. Gentoo take a similar responsible approach to wellbeing within the organisation, offering a wide range of support to their employees. Gentoo has 28 domestic abuse champions and 45 mental health first aiders who are trained to recognise the early warning signs of abuse and mental ill health and offer support. Gentoo is also the only organisation in the North

East to be awarded the Stonewall Star Performer for their consistent strong approach to LGBT workplace inclusivity. They fundamentally believe that staff can be more inspired in a workplace that enables them to be themselves.

Commenting, John Craggs, Chief Executive Officer at Gentoo, said: "We are delighted to be awarded 5 stars in the Corporate Responsibility Index for the third year running. We believe that being a responsible business starts with our vision and values. It is about how we translate our values of working together and doing the right thing to inspire people and build strong communities.

"In order to make a tangible and sustained impact staff must be committed to the responsible business agenda. Our staff are at the heart of everything we do and we are so proud of the difference they have made. Gentoo will continue to work alongside other businesses in the future as well as its supply chain to ensure best practice is shared so as to continue being a proud ambassador of the responsible business agenda."

Amanda Mackenzie, Chief Executive of Business in the Community, said: "Every business should do something significant for society by being a force for good in the community, but that's only possible if companies are able to measure the progress they are making as responsible businesses. I congratulate Gentoo for achieving its score and look forward to working together to create a fairer society and a more sustainable future."

To find out more about Gentoo's responsible business activities, visit [www.gentooigroup.com](http://www.gentooigroup.com)

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# UNWRITTEN CREATIVE SETS SIGHTS HIGH WITH NEW CONTRACT WINS

Unwritten Creative, the Newcastle-based strategic brand and digital agency, is enjoying a period of growth on the back of landing some high-profile contract wins.

The company has secured contracts with clients including Sage, Northumbrian Water and NRG Group, which has helped Unwritten achieve growth in the first quarter of its current financial year of 64.8% compared to the same last year.

Unwritten Creative uses an innovative approach when generating brand strategies, which include the development of Buyer Personas, which helps the company understand its

clients' target customers. It then creates brand identities for its clients, as well as providing them with a full digital service, along with design for print.

To meet the demands of its new clients the company, which has now been trading for three years, is recruiting two new staff, an account manager and a designer, with a view to creating further roles later in the year.

Amy Mooney, Director of Unwritten Creative, said: "Our new client wins, along with the sustained quality we have provided for our existing accounts, have put us ahead of our financial predictions for 2017/18, after a particularly strong first quarter."



# NEW DARLINGTON PR AGENCY TASKED WITH BUILDING SOCIETY



**A North East-based building society has appointed a new agency to take its PR and social media activity to new levels.**

Darlington Building Society, which has ten branches covering County Durham, North Yorkshire and Teesside, made the decision to bring the team from Harvey & Hugo on board to develop its digital presence and strengthen social media activity with the aim of building audiences across the generations.

Caroline Darnbrook, Customer Strategy & Delivery Manager for Darlington Building Society, said: "We are looking forward to working with a new partner in Harvey & Hugo.

"We were impressed with the teams' fresh ideas and can't wait to see our brand and business develop further, building upon our strong, existing member base, into new, previously untapped markets."

Darlington-based Harvey & Hugo, known affectionately as 'The Pack', was part of a tendering process and learned of its success in June of this year.

"We are delighted to be working with another local firm that represents all that is great about the North East and its people," said Account Manager, Jenn Brown, speaking of the society's commitment to donating 5% of its net profits after tax to good causes in the area.



# NEWCASTLE COMPANY NAMED ONE OF THE BEST PR AGENCIES OUTSIDE OF LONDON

Newcastle-based O PR has been shortlisted for the prestigious 2017 PR Week Awards in the Best Agency outside London category.

After already scooping a Best Places to Work Award in 2016, the agency set its sights on an award which represents best-in-class client work, business strategy, investment in people and agency culture.

The Ouseburn firm was revealed as one of the top

five agencies in the UK outside of London.

Owner and Managing Director at O, Kari Owers said: "We are extremely excited to be flying the flag for the immense talent which exists outside of London. Here in the North East the creative and digital sector is thriving – we truly believe we're the region to watch!

"Our company ethos is all around taking local brands national and national brands local - so this

award is really important to us as it celebrates our strategy as a business.

"I'm not only thrilled that our talented team is being recognised for its work but for our innovative clients who are, of course, a huge part of our success."

The overall winner will be revealed at the awards evening on Wednesday 18th October in London.



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## SOCIAL MEDIA WORKS, IF YOU WORK AT IT

Beth Cronin, Account Manager at The Works, a full-service creative, marketing and digital agency, has seen how the functionality between nearly all social media channels has become increasingly interchangeable and heavily overlapped with each landmark update.

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Here, she discusses why this might not be such a bad thing if the channels are used in the right way...

Snapchat's most recent addition 'Snap Maps' isn't hugely different to the 'Find My Friends' app. When Instagram stories launched, it mimicked Snapchat stories. After Facebook reported success with its messaging app, Twitter increased its direct message character limit and then LinkedIn rolled out its own messaging experience. You can see where I'm going with this...

So, if the platforms are starting to become homogenous in many ways, do they still individually hold importance for brands, businesses and individuals? The answer is, of course: yes, but in varying degrees and only if they are channels that are relevant to you or your business and if they're used to the best of their capacity.

Take, for example, LinkedIn. As one of the top three platforms for businesses and individuals, and as the world's largest professional network online, a lot of people seem to think that LinkedIn will help them just by being on it. Wrong! LinkedIn, like all social channels, is a tool – and just like all tools, you must make best use of it to get results.

So, whilst recognising that every individual, brand and business will need a social media strategy to

suit them, here are some quick tips on using social media that apply to all.

**Play to each platform's strength(s).** Take the time to learn how you can best utilise the strengths of each channel – for example, Twitter is the global go-to platform for real-time events and is trying to position itself as a breaking news source rather than a social platform – but it's an open network, so it can't provide in-depth user profiling. Conversely, Facebook and LinkedIn can glean much more information about users to give you more insight into your audience(s).

**The clue is in the name: social.** Posting content – photos, blogs, updates – is obviously important, but that may not be getting the most out of your platforms or your audience. The point of having these profiles is to be social – if you're not engaging with people, you're leaving the conversation one sided. Use the analytics insights that are available to you (for free) to see where you're getting the most engagement with users and what type of content achieves that – video? Images? Limited text?

**Cross-promoting and cross-posting are not the same thing.** Your audience on Twitter will likely interact with you in a different way to your audience on, say, Instagram. Sometimes you will

have content that will speak to both, in which case, post it on both networks but tailor it before you do. Copying and pasting on multiple accounts gives off a negative perception that you're lazy. We're all busy and it may save time, but taking the extra 10 seconds to tailor your message to the platform is more professional and will have more much more of an impact.

**Measure twice, cut once.** Forward planning, where possible, and goal setting are not just going to make it easier for you to keep focused and give you the time to do your homework on your content, but also identify your engagement, reach, conversions and more to inform future content generation too. Not all content can be produced ahead of time, there will always be real-time events that you want to talk about, but make it easier for yourself where possible.

Social media marketing isn't going to disappear anytime soon and the channels will continue to overlap even further as they compete for user's attention. But for marketers, this is no bad thing. If you use the tools social media platforms give you to drive business results by using the channels that are relevant to your audience(s), ultimately, the homogeneity between the platforms means better features and options.

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To find out more about what we do and how we can help you, visit [wearetheworks.com](http://wearetheworks.com) or follow @wearetheworks

Christian Cerisola



## ARE WE DOING ENOUGH TO MAKE CHANNEL FWOARR?

The Government's pledge to move Channel 4's operations out of London presents a huge opportunity for a city in that great expanse of this nation I like to term as not-London.

I'd be dying to know if there is a willingness within the North East to stake their claim and roll out the red carpet to the broadcaster as its future HQ.

Birmingham is making a big play, as are Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds/Bradford. The likes of Brighton, Hull and Nottingham have also already thrown their hat into the ring too. I feel Newcastle could compete pretty well with list, don't you? There's still time, so I hope others are thinking the same as me.

Channel 4 are, probably unsurprisingly, making a strong case against the move. The arguments you hear against anything leaving the capital are predictable. Among many things, they cite 'a considerably smaller and less experienced pool of talent' available outside of not-London. Myopic.

Many of their compatriots at the BBC made the move North in 2011. Whatever your arguments about the output of the BBC generally, I'd love to see evidence to suggest the quality on BBC 5 Live or BBC Sport has suffered specifically because it moved to Manchester.

I want success for this city, for this region, now more than ever, so I hope the powers that be

forgive my over eagerness to see our name in the running. Perhaps I'm looking too hard.

In my relatively new position of heading up Northern operations for a London communications agency, I remain fiercely proud that they chose to expand in Newcastle over other more predictable cities in the North that they could have headed to. I've also argued the case for a brand Newcastle to lead for the North East on these pages before. I faced the vitriol (and I accept it'll never happen) from those who think Newcastle already has ideas above its station in that regard. We'll kindly agree to disagree on that front.

We've seen how transformational it became for the wider region around Manchester when vast swathes of the BBC upped sticks and headed to Salford. These major relocations don't just benefit a small section of a city, the uplift reverberates around the region.

It's estimated that some 4,000-plus jobs have been created at the BBC from that move, but you only have to look at how the self-styled capital of the North has positioned itself around such major developments for the long-term benefit of the regions. Reports suggest moving Channel 4 out of

London could create 3,000 roles.

There are other examples. The Tour de France (just about) touched the southern end of the region a few years ago, but it brought a multi-million pound legacy of cycling to Yorkshire. Millions of fans descended in 2014 and they still do for the newly created Tour de Yorkshire, which generates just as keen a following.

And when this region does it, we do it well. The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts still holds the record for the most visitors for when the Turner Prize exhibition decided to make a rare foray out of London and to the North East in 2011.

We have wonderful opportunities to put the region on the map again with the Great Exhibition of the North in 2018 and again with the World Transplant Games a year later. Sunderland are down to the final five for the 2021 City of Culture. That's a great example of something the entire region must get behind for the greater benefit of the region.

The Channel 4 relocation debate creates headlines across the UK and wider, not least in London. I can't help but feel a North East city looks conspicuous by its absence at the moment.

# ASK SILVER BULLET

## “IS IT IMPORTANT TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER WHEN PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS?”

Well, the simple answer  
must be yes!

Photography used to present your organisation's products or services, just as other marketing collateral, needs to reflect the professionalism of the company. Professional photographers understand what they are doing in terms of lighting, positioning and post editing, and possess the skills and expertise to bring an image to life.

A photograph can be personalised to individual businesses and is an important technique to portray your message to the key demographic, whether this be potential customers stakeholders or staff. Moreover, a professional photograph can help your business stand out from the crowd – if there are numerous companies competing in the same field, originality is key.

Whilst there's an obvious difference between PR and brochure photography for printed and digital media, they both benefit from the professional's touch – a typical PR shot, or 'photo opportunity' as they're known, will probably be a one-off with various people or equipment gathered in a certain location that would be very hard to replicate should the original shots not work - building demolitions, royal visits etc can't be repeated so you need to ensure you get the photo you want first time.

Similarly, imagery for products or services brochures etc have to be as good as you can get them – we've been involved in marketing everything from jewellery to electrical fuses and have commissioned long shoots for both, but the end result was "the best investment we've ever made" according to both clients because their products looked great and could be promoted across a range of printed and digital media in a highly professional manner that reflected

the values of each client.

But to get a more rounded view, we asked some old friends. Alan Burrows, Editor of World Pumps, commented, "As an editor of trade magazines for more than 20 years, it still bemuses me that companies will go to the expense of employing PR/Marketing companies yet still cannot see the value of investing in some decent photography to accompany their press releases. Many a Marketing Manager will say that they pay good money to have their products/messages promoting growth for their company without having to resort to advertising. So why not pay a little more good money for some decent images. After all, something has to go on that front cover."

Elaine Maslin of Offshore Engineer, agrees, "In today's digital world, where it's increasingly hard to get people's attention amid the plethora of channels we get our information from, a good image could be the difference between getting an audience or not. Even in traditional media – magazines, newspapers – it's the images we're drawn to, which can lead to an editor being more likely to give more space to a well-illustrated article."

Simon Williams of Crest Photography, added, "Investing in a professional picture has always meant the difference between front page coverage and a few words at the bottom of Page 7. It amazes me to see iPhone snaps of two suits standing outside their £500,000 expansion story on social media, it's a poor reflection on a blatantly successful venture - they may have saved £100 but they've wasted thousands of pounds worth of potential exposure, because even on social media, a bad photo will still turn people

off the story never mind the picture editors of mainstream media!"

The alternative, of course, is the ever-present smartphone with their increasingly powerful integral cameras, but a camera is only as good as the user so don't be fooled by the available technology!

Beware stock photography - people can generally tell the difference between stock images as opposed to an original - in this instance people might not get a clear vision of what your company is offering. Many companies will use a generic picture from online, which could lead to copyright issues as well as co-branding.

Finally, Peter Ullman of Process Industry Informer, takes a more practical view, "There's absolutely no excuse these days to NOT provide good photography with you PR and SEO should be considered with imagery as well as wording. A properly captioned photograph (visible to Google spiders) will attract people's attention and be repeated elsewhere resulting in higher click through rates and higher ranking on Google. Link your properly captioned photographs to your company's website or social media to increase visitor traffic."

"But be realistic. You and your smartphone may be able to get into places or recognise opportunities when a professional isn't available – take the shot! Sometimes an application shot can be just as good as a staged shot. Many trade publications and sites will make a nominal charge for featuring the photograph so build this into your marketing budget, which, at the end of the day, will determine whether you can invest in professional photography or not!"



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## MEDIAWORKS CONTINUES LOCAL RECRUITMENT DRIVE

After experiencing continued growth and client retention, award-winning digital marketing agency Mediaworks is expanding its team - and drawing on the North East's local talent pool to do so.

As a digital marketing agency, we fully understand that our success is a result of the hard work and dedication of our team. Without them, the exceptional results we deliver for our clients simply wouldn't be possible.

Due to the outstanding performance of our team, the business has recently enjoyed incredible success, both in terms of client retention and business growth. As we continue to add stellar brands to our ever-expanding client portfolio, we've had to reinforce our team with some of the North East's brightest talent.

We strongly believe in talent development — that's why we offer a successful apprenticeship scheme, which is now in its fourth year. Former apprentices have developed into some of the region's brightest marketing talent, enjoying much success within the industry, and our latest recruits are set to follow in their footsteps.

We have recently welcomed four apprentices to our business, working across our content, paid search

and outreach teams. With another set to arrive in September, we are firm believers in our local talent pool and are confident our new team members will bring fresh ideas and new skills to our team.

For the first time, we're also offering a degree apprenticeship this year, which will see a degree-level apprentice join our Insights team as a Data Analyst at our Newcastle HQ. We'll cover the candidate's tuition fees as they study towards a Digital and Technology Solutions BSc (Hons) Degree Apprenticeship from Northumbria University, splitting their time between working and studying.

Running alongside our apprenticeship programme, we're also proud to launch our graduate scheme for the very first time in 2017. We are currently recruiting for a Graduate Paid Search Executive and Graduate Search Engine Optimisation Executive to work alongside our existing paid and organic search teams. Further roles are set to become available as part of this scheme in the coming weeks.

Speaking of the graduate scheme, Mediaworks' Managing Director Brett Jacobson said: "The north has proven itself time and time again as a powerhouse of industry, yet unfortunately some graduates still feel like they have to relocate further south to find digital marketing opportunities. We want to change this by offering local graduates the chance to work alongside some of the biggest brands.

"2017 marks 10 years since Mediaworks was established, so it seemed like the right time to establish such a scheme. Alongside our successful apprenticeship scheme, we have and will continue to support the region's brightest talent."

In addition to our apprenticeship and graduate scheme, our continued growth has driven further recruitment across the business. We have welcomed over 60 new recruits in the past 6 months to support Mediaworks' continued success.

Interested in joining Mediaworks or know the perfect candidate? Visit [www.mediaworks.co.uk/about/careers](http://www.mediaworks.co.uk/about/careers) or call 0191 4040100 to find out about our vacancies and apply.



## MOVING INTO NEW FIELDS, THE WORLD OF WORK AND FURTHERING MYSELF

By Bailey Spray

It's a drizzly afternoon in July, after three years of stress, hysteria and sleepless nights, I'm finally graduating university.

As I begin to course my way up to the podium to accept my scroll of congratulations, I'm flushed with anxiety. Suddenly I'm besieged with what feels like a thousand 'what if' scenarios and I'm repeatedly reassuring myself I won't fall, choke or freeze during my acceptance. Within seconds, I've graduated.

Reeling from the podium toward my peers I feel relieved. As the spotlight motions to the next graduate I'm overcome with prosperity and I begin to plan my next steps. After today I'll no longer be classed as an undergraduate, student or eligible for high street student discount, the thought welcomes back my prior anxiety. I need to start thinking ahead.

I've been lucky, I'll admit it. Towards the latter end of my time at university I managed to acquire

employment as a Marketing and PR Assistant within JAM Marketing following an internship with the company at the beginning of the year. Following a restless six months of living in two separate worlds of work and university, I finally began full time employment at JAM Marketing and I haven't looked back since.

I've learned a lot during my time with JAM. Amidst the cliché, I am thinking outside the box. This is new and not only am I learning a lot about the business I'm also teaching myself the importance of punctuality and taking responsibility for my work performance and how I interact with my colleagues.

As an assistant, I'm tasked with a variety of duties critical to helping the business function and assisting my colleagues with their day to day jobs.

Assistance comes in many forms at JAM, from contacting clients, assisting with strategies and social media, to telecommunication; I'm always kept on my feet.

The work environment is swift and keeping up with my experienced co-workers can often feel like I'm a tortoise racing a company of hares, but I'm learning and this is good. This is the industry I want a career in and the only way I'm going to further myself is starting from the bottom and learning the industry through experience.

As far as stress and anxiety goes, the only thing I have to worry about now is crippling student debt, paying my rent, eating healthy and making the perfect cup of coffee for my co-workers.

It's just the average week...

# CHARLIE GARD PUBLICITY HIGHLIGHTS ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PR

By Sarah Hall,  
Managing Director, Sarah Hall Consulting  
@Hallmeister

There can be few people not familiar with Charlie Gard, a baby who was born in August 2016 with a rare inherited disease.

His parents Chris Gard and Connie Yates took his case first to the UK then European Courts, as they battled for ongoing treatment for Charlie after Great Ormond Street hospital specialists advised that this should stop.

They also courted publicity to raise as much support for his cause as possible.

Sadly Charlie died on 28th July of this year.

Since then, questions have been raised about the nature of public relations work and the ethical responsibility of practitioners, with particular reference to those who were responsible for advising Charlie's parents.

A report in The Times on Saturday 29th July investigated the conduct of Alasdair Seton-Marsden and Alison Smith-Squire, who were their two main advisers.

As President-Elect of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), I asked the Institute to clarify its position on the issues raised, the result of which is helpful for both practitioners and the general public, as published here.

The CIPR made it clear that neither Seton-Marsden nor Smith-Squire were members of the CIPR. The Institute also had no knowledge of the agreements those named may have reached with Chris Gard and Connie Yates, but did say this about professional practice:

- Public relations professionals must always make statements with the informed consent of their client. CIPR members may not make public statements outside the scope of what their client has asked them to provide.
- Public relations professionals may work for their client for an agreed fee, or they may work pro



Sarah Hall

bono. A CIPR member may not offer their services for free to the client, and then seek to monetise stories, information, images or other material by selling them to third parties. We regard working on this basis as unprofessional because it is, or is open to, a serious conflict of interest.

- Clients may seek advice on how to obtain publicity in support of something they feel very strongly about. Part of the advice a CIPR member needs to give their client is that publicity is not always necessarily positive, and that bringing something to public attention can have unexpected, and indeed alarming consequences.
- Readers of a newspaper story should know whether it has been produced by a person who is independent of the story they are writing about, or by someone representing their client. CIPR members should take care to avoid any potential confusion.

## Advice to clients

- If you want public relations advice, choose a practitioner who follows a professional code of conduct and is therefore accountable for their actions and advice e.g. CIPR or PRCA.
- Insist upon a written contract, including clear terms of payment. Where the work is to be undertaken free of charge to the client, insist on a written

agreement that sets out how you expect them to represent you and what they may or may not do with your assets, data and intellectual property.

- If you feel that your public relations adviser has a conflict of interest or is in some way not discharging their responsibility to you, contact the CIPR or the organisation of which they are a member to ask for advice.

What is clear is that any person working on behalf of a client must represent their views accurately and with their informed consent. They must not allow a conflict of interest to arise, such as also being paid by the media to write articles about them. Conflicts of interest are not removed where work is undertaken free of charge.

You wouldn't hire a solicitor who hadn't passed their legal exams or take medical advice from someone who wasn't a doctor, so never hire a public relations practitioner without the relevant credentials.

Anyone unsure about how to procure support or with concerns about the service provided can call the CIPR for help.

A grieving family lies at the heart of this case and thoughts are with Charlie's parents at this time.

The CIPR operates an Ethics Hotline for members seeking advice on the management of ethical conflicts.

For more information visit [www.cipr.co.uk](http://www.cipr.co.uk)

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Sarah Hall Consulting Ltd.  
m: 07702 162 704  
t: 0191 659 7072  
e: [sarah@sarahhallconsulting.co.uk](mailto:sarah@sarahhallconsulting.co.uk)  
w: [sarahhallconsulting.co.uk](http://sarahhallconsulting.co.uk)



## A DECADE IN THE DESIGN INDUSTRY

Ten years can seem like a long time on paper, within that space of time a person will live through 5,256,000 minutes, endure ten summers and winters whilst growing a decade older.

On paper, ten years is a long period of time and speaking of paper, creative designer Steve Myers of web, graphic and user experience design company, Paper Voice, has flourished within that time.

Life for Steve hasn't always been devoted to web and graphic design. Prior to the designers 25th birthday, Steve's career was in a further afield work environment. Steve worked for entertainment retail company HMV between 1998 and 2004, his six-year position within the company concluded and then followed by a career move to Northern Rock in 2004 until 2007. From there he took on the role as a mortgage advisor.

It was in 2007 when Steve made the executive career decision to attend university to study Interactive Media Design. With a new career path established, Steve attended Northumbria University between 2008 and 2011 to then leave the north-east institution with a 2:1 BA Honours. Freelance work was the next step.

Looking back on his time at Northumbria University, Steve mentioned, "I was actually the only member of my alumni that went into freelancing and self-employment, all of the other students went towards working for other businesses, however, I was also the oldest on the degree and freelance was what I wanted to do."

Freelance work is important and following his time at Northumbria University, Steve's impressive skillset forwarded him to freelance for companies such as WSI Newcastle, Metro Radio, WDP Studio, Chartwise UK and JAM Marketing. With a successful freelance career spanning over three to four years, Steve finally made the adventurous decision to set up his own company, Paper Voice.

Paper Voice specialises in using user interface design methods in creating the perfect design that reflects a business in the correct way, the company does this by fully researching what potential clients do and what services they offer to their own clients.

During Steve's time directing Paper Voice, many

doors have opened and a continuous variation of clientele have followed. Successive doors have developed through Steve's involvement in joining BNI Cookson. BNI (Business Network International) Cookson is South Shields' very own chapter of the world's biggest and best business referral networking organisation and incorporates a range of local business and service owners within the north east.

Having being a member of BNI Cookson since 2011, Steve spoke of his time with the group and his intentions for the future, "I have no intention of leaving the group, I'm grateful to BNI because I've received a constant stream of business through this outlet."

As Steve prepares for his 35th birthday, Paper Voice continues to grow a successful client base across the UK. The last ten years in the design industry have been prosperous for Steve and Paper Voice with the next 5,256,000 minutes of the following decade looking even brighter.



10 YEARS

[www.papervoice.co.uk](http://www.papervoice.co.uk)

# YOU'VE "HIGHLIGHTED" OUR BUSINESS

Highlights PR is a successful PR agency run by Keith Newman. Uniquely, their office is a boat based on the River Tyne.

Steph Edusi, CEO of Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead tells us why they use Highlights PR.

"We've been working with Highlights PR since 2015 and we've seen our media profile grow year on year.

"At Healthwatch Newcastle (HWN) and Healthwatch Gateshead (HWG), we cover all publicly-funded health and social care services for both adults and children. We work hard to champion the rights of those using the social care and health systems in our areas and secondly, we act as a watchdog to ensure that social care and health systems correctly engage with the public.

"We collect feedback on services from people of all ages and from all communities through a network of voluntary and community sector organisations; during events, drop-in sessions and at listening events. We then collate that information and make recommendations to health authorities and other professional bodies. It's vital that we engage with the public and that they know who we are and where to find us for help. That's why we value PR

and the benefits it brings us.

"We've worked with Keith since 2015 and we've had a number of radio and TV appearances as well as around 20 articles in the local newspapers. We've a high media profile with an average of one in four people on Tyneside having had the chance to read about us and our work in the community.

"In June this year, HWG needed to engage with the public in the search for new committee members and a chair person. Keith explained to us that a normal press release wouldn't attract the media's attention so he suggested something a bit more radical and fun.

"The result was a video in which our team wrote alternative words to the famous Blaydon Races song in a very tongue in cheek way. Our team dressed up as medical staff and sang about recruiting new volunteers and it worked.

"We were delighted with the amount of hits it received on social media and we also appeared on BBC Newcastle too where the song was played.

"Keith always comes up with great ideas to capture the media's attention and the whole process is very easy for us from start to finish. He has certainly highlighted the work of both Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead.



The video can be seen here: [vimeo.com/219676906](https://vimeo.com/219676906). For a no obligation chat about your PR and a coffee on-board Highlights – the floating office, call Keith on 07814 397951 or email [Keith@highlightspr.co.uk](mailto:Keith@highlightspr.co.uk)

## DELIVERING GROWTH THROUGH DESIGN: ABSOLUTE AGENCY SUPPORT DRAYTON PARTNERS REBRAND

Absolute Agency work with a number of brands across the North East and UK providing design and digital services to clients. A recent collaboration with consumer recruitment specialists Drayton Partners to deliver a rebrand project has helped to better align the profile of their client's business, supporting sales growth and engagement. Founding Partner of Newcastle based Drayton Partners, Ian Pickett and Co-founder/Design Director at Absolute, Sarah McCrady uncover the value design has brought to the business.

### The project brief

Ian approached Absolute to initially perform a brand audit believing a design evolution was necessary in order to generate further growth. With their existing identity and strapline no longer aligning with Drayton Partner's goals, vision or values, the team were keen to redirect the business and build a stronger brand to support below the line marketing activities.

### Absolute's approach

To identify changes needed, Absolute delivered a brand audit to uncover the essence of Drayton Partner's identity and vision for the future. Through a range of scoping exercises the team were able to extract the key values, characteristics and USP's of the business whilst also understanding more about Drayton Partner's clients, their personas and key markets.

Their key proposition was unveiled as: Industry experts, providing recruitment solutions that have your best interests at heart and brand essence as; We care about finding the RIGHT solution not just ANY solution ...a smarter approach

Following their scoping exercises, Absolute were then able to reposition the brand with a new 'Think Smarter' strapline and by redesigning every touch point of the business including their website, candidate packs and office interior.

### The outcome

Ian Pickett summarises the impact the project has had to the Drayton Partners business;

"What I will say, is that some of the most respected businesses, globally, have been impressed by the collateral and have referenced this as a reason they wanted to work with us. I know we've won work because of the rebrand and that is thanks to the team at Absolute. It's certainly been an investment worth making."

The team have also acknowledged how stronger brand alignment has enhanced their processes, improving the way they recruit as well as giving them a renewed confidence to deliver services in a way that is true to who they are.



To transform your business through design contact Sarah McCrady Co-founder and Design Director at Absolute Agency [www.absolute-agency.co.uk](http://www.absolute-agency.co.uk) email: [sarah@absolute-agency.co.uk](mailto:sarah@absolute-agency.co.uk) or call 0191 499 8458

## HOBGOBLIN 3D DESIGNS ARE AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Middlesbrough-based Hobgoblin 3D limited is expanding its US exports with help from the Department for International Trade's (DIT) e-commerce experts.

The company, a trailblazer in 3D printables for the expanding gaming market, has worked closely with DIT North East's e-commerce specialist, Sue Beverley, to develop its export strategy and target gamers in the lucrative US market.

Sue explained: "3D printables for home use are relatively new to market but there is an ever-growing interest in gaming across the world. We worked with Hobgoblin 3D to target key markets and to ensure that all the strategic planning was in place to maximise e-commerce opportunities."

Hobgoblin 3D's managing director, Kevin Miree commented: "The advice and guidance of DIT really helped us refine our export strategy, and make use of the channels most effective to our business model. We'd encourage any early start up to make use of their support. It's never too early to consider your international approach!"



## NORTH EAST TECHNOLOGY COMPANY HELPS ATTRACTION GET CONNECTED



**Visitors to the North East's newest tourist attraction will be able to stay connected – following the latest win by the region's leading technology company.**

The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre opened at Once Brewed on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland National Park on 29 July, with exhibitions, learning and event spaces, café, shop and youth hostel – all with different technological requirements.

And now those many challenges have been met, thanks to Gateshead's award-winning

Aspire Technology Solutions.

The company – which provides a whole range of services to organisations across the UK – was awarded the tender to look after all the connectivity services at the £14.8 million state-of-the-art visitor attraction.

Aspire worked closely with all of the partners involved which included BT Openreach, Virgin and the contractors, project-managing the entire operation to ensure that everything was up and running in time for the opening.

## IT FIRM BOOSTS TEAM AS IT CONTINUES GROWTH

**A tech firm has boosted its head count by recruiting another expert to its fast growing team.**

Paul Reid, 28 from Wickham was appointed by Gosforth based ION bringing with him a wealth of experience as a former senior support engineer for global recruitment specialist Nigel Wright. Paul will expand on his experience implementing Salesforce CRM, across distributed teams as part of the company's ambitious growth plans.

Approaching its first year in business next month, ION's Managing Director Rob Mathieson believes the team's combined talent and experience is behind much of the firm's success and strategic growth since its launch.

He said: "Paul is a very welcome addition to our team. We have some exciting new projects underway, so with a new developer on board to help deliver the high quality work we are becoming known for, the future for ION looks very exciting."



## IT COMPANY CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL FINANCIAL YEAR END

North East IT solutions provider, Perfect Image is celebrating a great end to the financial year - achieving £9.7 million in turnover - a 29% rise fuelled by repeat business and the addition of 63 new customers during the period.

The company, based at Cobalt Business Park in North Tyneside, delivers innovative IT and cloud services for business including national brands, SMEs and start-ups.

Last year, the company celebrated its 25th anniversary and was successful

in winning major new contracts with the likes of North Tyneside Council, Northern Gas Networks and Middlesbrough College. This further adds to their ever growing client roster which has been bolstered as businesses continue to see the benefits of innovative cloud solutions.

The business continues to drive best value for its clients and has strengthened partner relationships with global technology firms, receiving several cloud accolades including Microsoft Gold Status and Amazon Web Service (AWS) Advanced Partner classification.

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# The NEW Data Protection Act makes you responsible...

Time is running out. The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force in May next year, replacing the Data Protection Act.

Protecting the personal data you manage will be the responsibility of your business, and failing to do so could land you with fines of up to £18m or 4% of turnover, whichever is highest.

Your data security is paramount.

Cybercrime against businesses is constantly evolving, last year it cost UK companies £1 billion, and you need to keep one step ahead.

Find out more about protecting your business by talking to ITPS, or coming along to one of our cyber security events.

Our world assures yours

Contact us today to find out more:

call 0191 442 8300

or email

[contact@itps.co.uk](mailto:contact@itps.co.uk)

[www.itps.co.uk](http://www.itps.co.uk)

**ITPS**

DATA CENTRE  
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# READY FOR THE NEW RULES ON DATA?



Andy Hunter, Technical Director at technology solutions experts ITPS, takes a look at why businesses need to prepare now for the new data protection laws that come into force in 2018.

In 2018 the Data Protection Act (DPA) will be replaced by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As well as extending the scope of the DPA it involves much stiffer penalties for those who do not comply with new rules around the storage and handling of personal data. Fines could be £18m or 4 percent of global turnover, whichever is highest.

So what do the changes cover? You can read the full detail on the Information Commissioner's Office, but some of the key changes are:

- The definition of data will be wider, for instance it will also cover children's data, and an online identifier such as an IP address could be classified as personal data
- The rules for obtaining consent have been changed, and an audit trail must be maintained
- Data protection impact assessments will become mandatory, as will the appointment of a data protection officer for certain types of organisation
- Notification of data breaches will be mandatory
- People have the right for their data to be forgotten

The new rules will have a big impact on how organisations gather and process data, and while May 2018 is not far away, a recent YouGov poll

of 2000 businesses showed that 71 percent were not aware of the new penalties. Around 38 percent were aware of the new rules, but only 29 percent had started preparing for them.

While the Information Commissioner's Office has published a useful guide to steps that you can take now, our advice is to take a step back and start by undertaking a comprehensive review of your ICT security as a whole.

Nearly half of all crime now has an element of cyber-enablement so it makes sense to take all necessary steps to protect yourself against security breaches arising in the first place. If you start by looking at data security in isolation it would be like baling water out of the basement of your house, without first fixing the hole in the roof where the rain is coming in.

Even the smallest of businesses typically has a website and uses smartphones, tablets and laptops. Balancing opportunity with accommodating your people's need to have 'anywhere, anytime and from any device' access, while staying on the right side of the GDPR will be a delicate balancing act.

Unless you have an in-house team of security experts, the wisest move is to bring in some help to create and deploy the right solution for your organisation. Make sure you appoint partners who are experts in topics such as external security, data leakage, email encryption and archiving, spam and

antivirus, and have a track record in successful implementation and support.

Some basic principles to consider include:

**Backup:** if you do not backup your data securely, and hold it off site or split between on and off-site, there is a high probability that one day you could lose it.

**Control:** do you know where your data is stored and how it is accessed? Data centre models, with multi-layered monitoring and security, are super-safe, and cost effective even for small businesses.

**Cloud services:** lowered costs and bespoke models can make it easy to create a secure, part-public and part-private cloud in which to keep your data safe and accessible.

**Policies:** create and monitor staff policies, particularly those around updating both company and personal mobile devices that staff use to connect to your network.

Use the available tools and keep up to date: even the smallest businesses should have a firewall, anti-virus software and email spam filters in place.

Data protection and security is a wide-ranging topic that cannot be comprehensively covered in a short article such as this one, but if you want to find out more about protecting your business, get in touch with our experts, come to one of our regular technology briefings or sign up for our monthly newsletter.

# MY WEEKEND

We find out what

## MARK LANGDOWN

Head of Support and Managed Services at technology experts ITPS, gets up to on a typical weekend.



### Do you ever work weekends?

Part of our business entails providing 24/7 support for businesses ranging from SMEs through to household names in the finance, aerospace and legal sectors, so it does mean that weekends are sometimes fair game but it's all part of the job.

### Are most weekends the same?

Yes and no. Weekends are always about family but we try to vary what we do. Our National Trust family membership often sees us visiting Gibside or Wallington, and we've recently got a family season ticket for NUFC, so we are all looking forward to getting our money's worth out of that.

### Do you find it hard to switch off?

I'll let you know if I ever find the off button! We have a great and highly experienced team in place, but part of me is always on the alert for any problems.

### What do you do at the weekend which you can't fit in through the week?

I head up a team of over 50 IT support staff keeping the wheels turning for hundreds of clients so I go through the week at 100mph, and kicking back a bit and spending time with family and friends is

my weekend priority. My family would say I spend too long in front of a screen to indulge my interest in gadgets and technology at the weekends too, so they tend to encourage me to get up and out, and I'm always pleased that they do.

### Morning exercise or a recovery lie in?

Head says exercise. Heart says lie in. Heart wins every time.

### Big night out or night in the house?

Both please! Newcastle nightlife is fantastic so when I do go out I like the bars and pubs around Central Station, but if you forced me to choose between out or in, nothing beats a take away and binge-watching my favourite TV shows.

### Do you watch or play sport at the weekend?

Both my sons play football, so we'll watch them whatever the weather. I've also recently dusted off my boots and joined an 11 a side team which plays in Durham, which is something I haven't done for about 20 years. I was very happy to score in my debut game, and even happier to see everyone on the pitch is a stone heavier than me!

### Where do you like to eat out at the weekend?

My wife is a wonderful cook, so thankfully we don't need to eat out to have a great meal. We are not particularly keen foodies as a family - the boys would eat at Pizza Hut for breakfast, lunch and dinner if we let them - but we do enjoy the great seafood caught around our coastline, and Seahouses is a particular favourite.

### How important is the weekend to you?

It's hugely important. You can only give your all during the week when you have a break at the weekend to catch your breath and spend time with family and friends to remind yourself just why you work so hard.

### What's the best thing about weekends?

Snoozing the 6am alarm with no guilt, and being on my own timetable and not someone else's.

### At the weekend, you'll usually find me...

On the side lines of an under 10 or under 8 football game, having a family bike ride in the rain, walking the dog or doing jobs round the house. Probably complaining loudly, but secretly loving every minute of my family weekend, whatever we do.

To find out more about ITPS check out [www.itps.co.uk](http://www.itps.co.uk)

## DO IT YOURSELF



Calibre's Karen Nelson (right)

Technology for SMEs is about thinking smarter, doing things differently and working more efficiently, says Karen Nelson, Managing Director of Calibre Secured Networks Ltd. It's also about securing cost effectiveness and reliability.

The right technology, supported by a partner who understands sector needs, can help small businesses reach more customers, break into new markets, deliver growth and cut costs. But fundamentally, any investment in technology has to work for a business, not vice versa. This might be facile but it's surprising how many people fail to take the right approach.

Whether it's your computers, storage, network or software, as a small business owner/manager you will not only need solutions that meet your current needs but also ones that can be scaled-up to meet additional capacity as the business expands and introduces new services and resources in the future.

So, is it about the cloud? There's little doubt that companies see the benefits of the cloud: rather than paying out for a costly on-site physical infrastructure, SMEs can save time and money by investing in cloud computing for various applications, storage, and back-ups.

It allows you too not only have access to your files and documents wherever you are, but also facilitate

collaboration and deliver improved security, helping make satellite offices secure and reliable. It also means you have the flexibility to up-scale or consolidate as your business needs change, as well as updating, again without incurring large costs.

Communication is also paramount in today's global market place, especially for smaller, more nimble-footed businesses that operate on the move using mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones, or from various locations either in the UK or around the world.

That means remote access, wireless networks and a range of ways of communicating – to succeed, most businesses will need a network, usually wireless as well as wired, and the confidence to know that network is secure and reliable. Moreover, to achieve growth, SMEs need to be able to communicate internally and also with customers, and for that many are turning to a range of ways to stay connected, from superfast broadband Voice over IP (VoIP) phone services to video conferencing.

And while larger companies may be able to invest

in expensive IT teams to keep an eye on their IT and cyber security, most SMEs simply don't have the same resources, expertise and budgets at their disposal. But information and data is just as important to a small business as its larger rival, so protecting it is just as vital – especially to grow.

For small businesses trying to grow, buying new applications for each new employee as they join can be expensive and time-consuming, so consider software licensing to reduce costs – something experts like Calibre can help small companies do, guiding you through suitable options and budgets, and offering advice of do's and don'ts.

So rather than buying another piece of software, for example, each time a new employee joins the company, a small business can take advantage of benefits such as volume discounts, multiple purchase options and subscription options, and flexible usage rights. All of which can help boost productivity, save money and add the flexibility that you need, while also improving security and data management.

To find out how technology can grow your business, contact Calibre. We provide IT solutions for UK and international clients, building long-term strategic relationships to deliver added value solutions that provide lasting user benefits. More at [www.calibre-secured.net](http://www.calibre-secured.net)

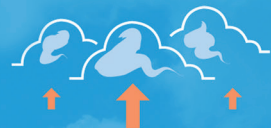
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## DIAMOND AWARDED GOLD

The Diamond Group are pleased to announce that they have been awarded Ricoh Premier Business Partner Gold Accreditation.

With customers demanding a higher standard of customer service from their suppliers, the award was developed to recognise and be awarded to only a select few suppliers that operate to the highest and most advanced levels of customer service. Owen Macfarland from Ricoh told us more: "It was a pleasure to present this award to The Diamond Group, a company that we've worked with for many years and that deliver exceptional customer service. Only 10-20% of our clients receive this accreditation. The criteria for receiving it and keeping it means that their services must be kept up to our very high standards as they are monitored yearly, so it's congratulations all round to the Diamond team."

In becoming a Certified Partner, Diamond had to demonstrate their business is customer-centric, improve efficiency within their service operations, drive performance improvement and improve profitability.

John Burns was presented with the award by Owen Macfarland, Business Partner Manager for Ricoh UK Ltd. John concluded: "We're honoured to receive this accolade from Ricoh and pleased that our hard work, determination and customer service has been recognised on such a grand scale."



[www.diamond-group.net](http://www.diamond-group.net)

## BUSINESS STUDENTS HELP TRUST TO FIND THE RIGHT TRACK

Business students have examined potential ways to secure the future of the birthplace of one of the North East's most famous sons, 'father of the railways' George Stephenson.

The humble miner's cottage in Wylam which was Stephenson's childhood home has been managed by the National Trust for almost 70 years. Run as a small museum, café and gardens since 1990, escalating running costs and declining visitors forced closure of the premises in January this year. With limited charitable resources available and other sites and properties to consider, the Trust urgently needed to re-evaluate how best to utilise the cottage.

Business students examined this problem as part of Northumbria University's highly successful Business Clinic initiative. Groups of students form 'consultancy firms' to provide free advice to organisations. 'Holly Consultancy'; Jake Ostrovskis, Callum Howes, Matthew Haley and Greg Clarke, explored ways to restore financial viability to Stephenson's cottage and ensure its long-term future.

Andrew Poad, General Manager for Hadrian's Wall and Tyne Valley for the National Trust, says: "Working with the students was a pleasure. They were very professional, asking intelligent questions about the project. They presented and evaluated several ideas, including the suggestion of creating a mobile app that visitors could download to their phone to guide them through Stephenson's birthplace. We'd not considered this before and we're now examining possible sources of funding to get this off the ground."

Nigel Coates, Business Clinic Director, is thrilled to add this positive outcome to the growing list of other great results achieved by students participating in the initiative.



"Since we created the Business Clinic in 2013 over 600 students have worked with and advised more than 145 organisations. With the recent move to modern new premises and continued excellent feedback from both our students and the companies they have worked with, we are looking forward to assisting even more businesses in the years to come."

The Business Clinic initiative works with all types of businesses from SMEs and multinationals through to not-for-profit organisations.

If you feel the students could help your business and would like to know more, email: [nb.consultancy-projects@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:nb.consultancy-projects@northumbria.ac.uk).

Our school is just like home.

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**Visit us on Open Day (Sat, 14th October, 10am till 2pm)**

to know more about this 133-year old institution, with a heritage in building generations.

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classroom  
is always  
the one  
at home.*



ARGYLE  
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SUNDERLAND

# WHAT WERE THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS LIKE FOR YOU AS A CHILD?

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster, Durham School



If you are of a certain age, I am sure you look back at what seemed like endless weeks off school, with sun-drenched days turning into balmy evenings.

Perhaps you went for long walks in the countryside, scrumping for apples or swimming in lakes. If you grew up in the city no doubt you played in the park, or took long bus rides to explore other areas of your city.

Halcyon days, and ones which I suspect are not replicated in the experience of youngsters this summer. Few parents now I suspect would allow their children out unaccompanied for extended periods of time, and certainly some of the more Blyton-esque escapades above would be forbidden. Whilst no doubt children are busy during the summer, their activities are more likely to consist of organised play, sometimes at home, and sometimes at a communal locations where kids are chauffeured and chaperoned by parents relieved to have found something to pass the days with. Or, inevitably, children's time will have been taken up by screens; cinema trips with friends at the most sociable end, or time spent on tablets or mobiles watching the latest YouTuber at the other more insular end of the screen spectrum.

There is little point bemoaning the latter situation. The genie is well and truly out of the bottle with

mobile devices and as parents all we can do is to moderate and modulate our children's viewing experiences. Attempts to ban them are akin to Canute pushing back the sea and it is more our role now to educate pupils in the sensible uses of screens than to reject them. I dare say my parents worried about how much TV I watched as a child, and how much time I wasted playing on my Atari or ZX Spectrum. Plus ça change.

There is however a perhaps more worrying problem. Children do spend less time outside than they used to and, allied to that, they are less exposed to the range of experiences I had as a child. We don't just see that during the holiday. At school, organising a trip for pupils involves an extraordinary amount of red tape – risk assessments, consent forms, medical information etc etc. The effect of this bureaucracy is twofold: it is a significant disincentive for teachers to organise trips, and it restricts the type of activities that can be offered by schools. Many schools no longer offer ski-trips, for example, and the burden of DBS checks and safeguarding means the language exchange trip no longer runs, as we cannot realistically check host families overseas.

Amanda Spielman, the new head of Ofsted, spoke out recently on the matter. She said schools were wrapping pupils in cotton wool, denying them the experiences which allow them to develop resilience, grit and other current government buzzwords. It's true, but it is unfair to blame schools for this. A culture of blame, intensified by the media and ambulance chasing lawyers, means that schools and teachers are naturally risk averse. I have seen at first hand the scrutiny that teachers are put under should something go wrong on a trip, and I wouldn't wish it on anyone. Who can blame teachers if the fear of a ruined career or their name being dragged through the tabloid press outweighs their desire to give pupils the opportunity to travel overseas?

What's to be done? Well, as in many areas, it starts with parents. We need to loosen the apron strings so that our children do have the opportunity to take calculated risks and face challenges. We aren't protecting them if we deny them that: quite the opposite. It is, to coin a phrase, a big bad world out there and our children need to be tough enough to deal with it.



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14th October 2017

6th Form Information Evening  
18th October 2017

16+ Burkitt Scholarships  
2nd December 2017

11/13+ Entrance Assessments  
13th January 2018

FOR A PERSONAL VISIT;  
**Tel: 0191 731 9270**

[admissions@durhamschool.co.uk](mailto:admissions@durhamschool.co.uk)

[www.durhamschool.co.uk](http://www.durhamschool.co.uk)

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in the heart of  
Gosforth"*



*Westfield*

S C H O O L

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

# ARE THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS JUST TOO LONG?

By Ken James, Headmaster, Red House School

A recent article published in The Telegraph stated that the summer holidays have a negative impact on the health of parents. Their routines change because the routines of their children have changed leading to a compromised diet and irregular sleep patterns. The wallets of parents tend to suffer too as parents strive to fill the summer months with fun activities.

But what about the impact on the children? Should schools still operate an educational model which sees children absent for a number of weeks during the summer? Should we continue to run a model implemented in the Victorian era when our economy was more heavily reliant on agriculture and children were required to toil in the fields during the summer?

One of the major concerns put forward against the long holiday is that the children easily forget the work they have been taught. As a mathematics teacher, I know daily repetition is key to success. However, others would stress that this is not insurmountable. Some pupils forget work taught the lesson before never mind six weeks ago. Reinforcement is always necessary and pupils still have some recall even after the summer break.

A radical approach suggested is that the working day and working year should mirror 'normal' working conditions, with schools providing cover from 9-5 and most holidays being two weeks in

length with four weeks in the summer. Whilst reapportioning the holidays would be cost neutral, providing greater cover in schools during the school day would not. Outside observers may think teachers work 9am-3pm but they do not see the extraordinary amount of preparation and marking colleagues do outside the face-to-face contact they have with the children. Greater cover means greater cost and this is unlikely to happen when school budgets are cut.

At Red House we run holiday clubs which undoubtedly help parents but this comes at a cost. We recently hosted a church activity week which provided activities for local children for free. However, this is not a sustainable answer.

The reality is if we were to redefine the school year for our children with no set parameters, we would not adopt the model we currently have in place. It is not the best model for parents and there are models which would work better from an educational perspective. However, there are parameters and, therefore, change will occur through evolution not revolution. The availability of holiday clubs will increase and I predict a greater availability of learning clubs where children are actively engaged in learning rather than merely enjoying fun activities. However, this requires funding. We can run it in the independent sector. Will the government do so in the state sector?



[redhouseschool.co.uk](http://redhouseschool.co.uk)

## Saturday 30 September 10am–1pm

Do come and see us on our Open Morning. It's a very relaxed and fun event where you and your children can discover what's so special about Red House and all we have to offer.

At Red House we are very proud of our:

- + Small class sizes
- + Unique family atmosphere
- + Extensive co-curricular activities
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## NPS - OPEN DAY

Saturday 7th October 2017 10am - 12noon



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**Headteacher:** Mrs Margaret Coates, 6 Eslington Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4RH Tel: 0191 281 1769 [www.newcastleprep.co.uk](http://www.newcastleprep.co.uk)

# NEWCASTLE SCHOOL FOR BOYS SECURES ITS BEST A LEVEL RESULTS EVER.



August's A Level results saw great success for Gosforth-based Newcastle School for Boys, with the Sixth Form securing its best set of results in its history.

Boys at the School produced a record-breaking set of results with a 100% pass rate and over 35% of the grades being awarded at A\* and A: higher than the national average by some margin. These results are particularly pleasing in a year where there has been added uncertainty due to the new examination reforms.

Amongst the overall achievement for the Year 13 cohort, the School also saw particular successes on an individual level. Notably, 18 year old James Holland who secured himself two A\* grades and an A, and Sunny Sudera, also 18, who achieved an A\* and two As, in addition to his A\* for his Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Both boys now go on to reconsider their university courses having surpassed their predicated grades with Sudera interested in studying Dentistry, and Holland, Philosophy. Equally strong were the results of Timothy Sung, 18, with an A\*, two As and an A\* EPQ, who will shortly be joining University College London to read European Social and Political Studies.

Deputy Head, Mr Alex Newman said of the results "We're incredibly pleased with the boys' results this year. There has been a huge amount of hard work put in over the past two years and the boys should be very proud of their achievements.

"Many of the boys now go on to study some fantastic courses at some of the UK's most prestigious universities. We greatly look forward to

keeping in touch with them and hearing all about their future successes."

As one of the region's newest Sixth Forms following its formation in 2009, the School has seen great A level success, improving year on year. It is down to this track record that the Sixth Form is seeing growing popularity, with its largest cohort yet to come in the next academic year. As a result, the School have taken the decision to expand into a new Sixth Form Centre, opening this September.

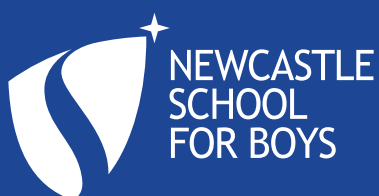
"These results couldn't have come at a more exciting time for the School and specifically our Sixth Form," said Headmaster, Mr David Tickner.

"Such results as the boys have produced are exactly why the Sixth Form is now one of the most successful in the region. The opening of the new Sixth Form Centre will allow us to further expand on the excellent educational experience boys receive whilst studying with us.

"Boys will not only have access to best possible provision for their A level studies, but will also be allowed the space to develop their own independent study. A successful Sixth Form should bridge the gap between school and university education, leading its pupils into a more independent style of learning, whilst still allowing students to benefit from the high level of teaching and support from the teaching staff. It is with this in mind that we have introduced and developed our new centre. It's a very exciting time for the School."



A small number of places are still available in the Sixth Form for September 2017. Those interested should contact the School on 0191 255 9303 or [admissions@newcastleschool.co.uk](mailto:admissions@newcastleschool.co.uk). Newcastle School for Boys will host their next Open Day on Saturday 7th October, 10.00am to 12.00pm. For more information, please visit [www.newcastleschool.co.uk](http://www.newcastleschool.co.uk).



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HOURS  
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Take the  
right path  
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education

## OPEN DAYS

### Junior School

Saturday 30th September  
10:00am to 12:00 midday Nursery to Year 6  
North Avenue and West Avenue

### Senior School

Saturday 7th October  
10:00am to 12:00 midday  
Year 7 to Year 13 The Grove

**Junior School**  
(boys aged 3 - 11)

**Senior School**  
(boys aged 11-18)

Junior School (ages 3-7), North Avenue,  
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Junior School (ages 7-11), West Avenue,  
Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4ES

Senior School, The Grove, Gosforth,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1NH

**Tel: 0191 255 9300**

[www.newcastleschool.co.uk](http://www.newcastleschool.co.uk)



# COMPETITIVE DEALS AND A CONVENIENT AFTERSALES FACILITY AT JENNINGS FORD TRANSIT CENTRES



Alan Bailes, General Sales Manager at Jennings Ford Transit Centre, with the new Ford Transit.

Jennings Ford Transit Centres are helping to keep local businesses on the road with a range of competitive savings across the commercial vehicle range, and a flexible Mobile Servicing facility.

There's a deal on offer for every customer looking to purchase a commercial vehicle from the award-winning range at Jennings Ford Transit Centres based on Cargo Fleet Lane in Middlesbrough and Eslington Park in Gateshead, where the entire model line-up is readily available to test drive.

Alongside a range of competitive offers available to suit individual circumstances, opening hours at both Transit Centres have been extended to 5pm on Saturdays - so there's now even more time to take a test drive.

One of the most competitive discounts currently available in the range includes a saving of up to £5000 against the recommended retail price on the new Ford Transit V363 Van.

Launched at the beginning of the year, the latest addition to the iconic Ford Transit range offers a powerful, yet economical EcoBlue 2.0LTDi engine, which meets the strict Euro Stage 6 emissions legislation first introduced in September 2015.

Alan Bailes, general sales manager at the group's

Middlesbrough Transit Centre, said; "The Ford Transit has been the number one choice for businesses for more than four decades - and this is expected to continue in future years as a result of continued improvements to fuel-efficiency, emissions and whole life running costs.

"Ideal for businesses large or small, the new Ford Transit V363 Van offers increased carrying capacity, an array of advanced technologies and low running costs.

"From multi-national firms to small and medium-sized businesses, there's an offer to suit individual needs and budgets."

Businesses who purchase a commercial vehicle or a fleet of vehicles at Jennings Ford can also take advantage of a Mobile Servicing facility, which is currently available to customers across Teesside, and is scheduled to be rolled out at the group's Gateshead branch in the near future.

The facility, which was set up to meet the increasing demand from commercial customers for flexible service arrangements with minimal vehicle

downtime, allows businesses to take advantage of service, warranty work and maintenance being carried out on their own premises by an approved Ford motor vehicle technician.

The Mobile Servicing Transit Van is fully kitted with racking and tooling, as well as including a full diagnostic kit, telematics and a vehicle tracker.

For several decades the company's Transit Centres have been responsible for selling the Ford commercial vehicle range and created a loyal customer with both local and national firms, from multi-national blue chip companies to one-man operations.

The Ford commercial model line-up consists of the Fiesta Van, Transit Connect, Tourneo Connect, Transit Courier, Transit Van, Transit Custom, Transit mini-bus, Transit Tipper, Transit chassis cab and Ranger.

There is also an adaptation service and a commercial vehicle body builder facility available to customers who need specific alterations and vehicle requirements.

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Ford Transit Centres, customers can contact Middlesbrough on 01642 209100, Gateshead on 0191 4607464, or visit [www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk](http://www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk)

# Get the job done for less at Jennings Ford



## New Ford **Transit** Courier SWB 1.5 TDCi Sport (95 PS)

**Includes: Metallic Paint & Ford Ply Lining**

- 16" alloy wheels • Air conditioning • Sports stripes
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- Ford SYNC® with Bluetooth® & USB connectivity
- 3 years/100,000 miles Manufacturers Warranty†

Only **£148.99+VAT** per month  
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Advance rental of £2681.82+VAT followed by 47 monthly rentals of  
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## New Ford **Transit** Custom 270 L1 2.0 TDCi Limited (130 PS)

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## New Ford **Transit** 290 L2 H2 2.0 TDCi Trend (130 PS)

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- Rain sensing wipers • Front and rear parking sensors
- Cruise control • Automatic headlights
- 3 years/100,000 miles Manufacturers Warranty†

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£199.86+VAT and final balloon payment of £6030+VAT

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\*Ford Finance Lease with Balloon is available to business users only, subject to status. Guarantees/indemnities may be required. Payments shown based on 18-0-47 agreement with balloon payment (18 rentals up front followed by 47 monthly rentals and final balloon payment +VAT) and 10,000 miles per annum on a non-maintained agreement. When the vehicle is returned it must be in good condition and not have exceeded the agreed mileage, otherwise further charges will be incurred. Prices exclude VAT. Prices are correct at the time of going to print and are subject to change without further notice. Terms and conditions apply. Ford Lease with Balloon is provided by ALD Automotive Limited, Oakwood Drive, Emersons Green, Bristol BS16 7LB. Certain categories of business users may be excluded. Model year restrictions may apply. †Manufacturers terms and conditions apply. These offers supersede any previously advertised offers and are not available in conjunction with any other offer. Vehicles not necessarily as illustrated. Subject to availability. Offers may be withdrawn at the discretion of Jennings Ford Sales Management at any time. Exclusions and restrictions may apply. Offers end 30th September 2017. E&OE.

## TYNE THEATRE & OPERA HOUSE CELEBRATES ITS 150th ANNIVERSARY



The Grade 1 listed Victorian Tyne Theatre & Opera House turns 150 years old in 2017 and is holding a whole host of special events to celebrate this monumental milestone.

An exciting new exploration of Tyne Theatre history takes place from Monday 11th to Sunday 17th September presented by Twenty Seven Productions. Interactive tours will provide a multi-sensory experience for each limited audience, anchoring the sights, sounds and smells of the building.

Hot on the heels of their last successful production, Tyne Theatre Productions return with a grand production of one of the most memorable musicals of all time, *West Side Story*, running from

Wednesday 20th to Saturday 23rd September.

Two of the performances will take place on the Victorian Opera House's birthday (Saturday 23rd September). *West Side Story* will be another theatre fundraiser, with funds raised contributing to the preservation and future restoration of the magnificent building.

Tyne Theatre & Opera House are thrilled to welcome the highly acclaimed National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company to join in the celebrations from Thursday 28th to Saturday 30th September with stunning new productions of *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado* and *HMS Pinafore*.

Following the success of 2016's *The Greatest Show*

on the Tyne, Tyne Theatre has once again teamed up with Geordie magician Chris Cross to present the family variety show on Friday 6th October as part of the celebration programme, featuring comedians, circus performers, acrobats and of course magicians.

Last but not least the theatre has joined forces with Customs House to bring *Geordie the Musical* to Newcastle from Wednesday 11th to Saturday 14th October. Based on an idea by Andy Bogle, this heart-warming story of North East life steps back to 1890, combining traditional Northumbrian songs with the award-winning storytelling skills of Tom Kelly.

## SINGER BRINGS BACK GREAT LADIES OF SONG

Whickham-born singing sensation Anna Reay is bringing back her sell out show *Great Ladies of Song* to the Durham Gala Theatre on the 17th September.

The intimate performance showcasing an array of female singers will see Reay travelling through the decades with timeless classics from Nina Simone, Dusty Springfield and Crystal Gayle to Sarah Brightman, Whitney Houston and Adele to name a few.

The classically trained singer/songwriter has spent most of her 12-year career as a headline act travelling around the world on Caribbean and Mediterranean cruise ships and is 'delighted' to be bringing the show back to the North East after it sold out at the Whitley Bay Playhouse in 2013.

She said: "Since becoming a professional singer, my career has been a whirlwind of opportunities and exciting experiences. I have been incredibly lucky to have had a career

that has taken me all over the world, but I love returning to the North East and am delighted to be bringing back this popular show."

Since her early debut performances at small venues across the region, Anna Reay has enjoyed extensive tours of the UK, Europe and the USA and was shortlisted for the Women in Business Best Cultural and Creative Business and Social Entrepreneur in 2008.

Reay, 35, has also just released a charity single dedicated to those running the Great North Run this year with all proceeds going to 'Prostate Cancer UK'.

"This is the first year that I'll actually be running the Great North Run," she said.

"I decided to do with my friend Helen Watson and her brothers Ian and David who's Dad sadly passed last year from prostate cancer so along with our sponsorship money, proceeds from the sale of the single will be going to the charity."





## SKATING WORKSHOP WITH THE STARS OF DISNEY ON ICE

Disney On Ice is offering keen young skaters the chance to enjoy a skating workshop with the stars of the show when Disney On Ice presents Passport to Adventure comes to the Metro Radio Arena this October.

The Disney On Ice team would love to hear from budding young skaters from age 5 upwards, who could win the chance to spend an hour in training with professional skating stars from the show. 10 lucky winners will be chosen at random to attend a skating workshop on the morning of Wednesday 4th October.

To enter the competition to win a skating workshop with the stars of Disney On Ice, go to [www.metroradioarena.co.uk/events/competition](http://www.metroradioarena.co.uk/events/competition) to send us a video of your skating skills, introducing your video by stating your name, and why you'd like to win.

This competition is now open and will close at 9am on Tuesday 5th September.



## TYNE THEATRE PRODUCTIONS TO STAGE WEST SIDE STORY

Tyne Theatre Productions have announced that they will return in September 2017 with one of the most memorable musicals of all time, West Side Story.

After their first production in September 2015, Tyne Theatre Productions have gone from strength to strength. This production of West Side Story comes at a very special time for Tyne Theatre & Opera House, with September 2017 being the month of the theatre's 150th Anniversary. Two performances of West Side Story will take place on the Victorian Opera House's birthday (Saturday 23rd September). West Side Story will be another theatre fundraiser, with funds raised contributing to the preservation and future restoration of the Grade 1 listed building. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is transported to modern-day New York City, as two young idealistic lovers find themselves caught between warring street gangs, the "American" Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks.

## ARTS EXPERIENCE OF THE MONTH

With a real scarcity of new music releases this month, we bring you something a little different.

Tyne Theatre & Opera House are excited to have teamed up with local immersive theatre group Twenty Seven Productions to present "1867" – a week of theatre tours with a twist to celebrate their 150th Anniversary year.

Twenty Seven Productions are the team who brought Hitler's Headquarters to the Victoria Tunnel, and who unearthed the secrets of Newcastle's Castle and the doomed Geordie witches in WYCH. Their newest venture is a celebration in the form of a new, high-tech, exploration of Tyne Theatre & Opera House's 150 year history.

In 1867 the "North's La Scala", The Tyne Theatre, opened its doors for the first time and has housed countless stars and starlets across the years, as well as triumphing in times of darkness and standing tall as the only original working Victorian Theatre in the country.

Aptly named, "1867" will be a multi-sensory experience for each limited audience, anchoring the sights, sounds and smells of the building, all whilst discovering new paths you never knew were there. Cheer for Tosca, escape the 1985 fire, search for lost treasures and mingle with theatre ghosts. Don't miss out!



## WHAT'S ON THIS SEPT?

**Young Frankenstein**

September 1-9

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

**Pet Shop Boys**

September 2-3

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661  
[www.sagegateshead.com](http://www.sagegateshead.com)

**Cornered/Wise Men Say**

September 6-8

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234  
[www.customshouse.co.uk](http://www.customshouse.co.uk)

**John Legend**

September 9

Metraradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666  
[www.metraradioarena.co.uk](http://www.metraradioarena.co.uk)

**Neil Sedaka**

September 10

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661  
[www.sagegateshead.com](http://www.sagegateshead.com)

**Flashdance**

September 11-16

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

**Crazy For You**

September 12-16

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

**Animal Farm**

September 12-16

The People's Theatre T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.peoples theatre.co.uk](http://www.peoples theatre.co.uk)

**Son of a Preacher Man**

September 19-23

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

**Gilbert O'Sullivan**

September 21

Newcastle City Hall T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

**Hairspray**

September 25-30

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

**Texas**

September 27

Newcastle City Hall T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

**The Pretenders**

September 30

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# MICHELLE HEATON TO PLAY THE WICKED QUEEN IN TYNE THEATRE PANTO"

Tyne Theatre & Opera House are thrilled to announce that singer, actress and presenter, Michelle Heaton, will star as the Wicked Queen in this year's Pantomime, *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs*.

Michelle joins several brilliant cast members who have already been announced, including Matt Pagan from Britain's Got Talent winners Collabro who will play the Prince, local favourites Charlie Richmond and Lewis Denny who will return as Muddles and Herman the Henchman, and talented local actress Robyn McEnaney who was picked to star as Snow White through the theatre's 'Search for Snow White' auditions.

Michelle Heaton is formerly and maybe best known for her time in the pop band Liberty X. Along with Jessica, Kelli, Kevin and Tony they were formed during their time on the hit ITV show Popstars. It was the year of Hearsay Vs Liberty X in 2001 and the band went on to sign with Richard Branson's V2 label. In the subsequent 5 years they had 7 top 10 singles, including their most successful, 'Just a little'. This track debuted at number 1 in the UK, selling 100,000 copies in its first week. The track also won the Brit award for Best British Single in 2003.

The band reformed for the TV show The Big Reunion on ITV in 2013. The year of Sive, Blue and others – they had a very successful and critically acclaimed TV show and followed on with a sellout Arena tour.

After the group went their separate ways, Michelle appeared on various TV shows, including Celebrity Big Brother, Come Dine with Me and the Irish Apprentice. She has also appeared regularly on ITV's Lorraine show and Loose Women.

Recently Michelle has gone back to touring not just with Liberty X but also with Atomic Kitten internationally. She stepped in to the shoes of Liz McClarnon, for a recent tour of Australia and New Zealand and more dates with both bands follow this year, both in the UK and internationally.

Theatre Director Joanne Johnson says: "I'm so excited to announce that Michelle Heaton will be part of our pantomime this year, it's great to have a local celebrity treading the boards! I think we have a fantastic strong cast and *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs* will be an amazing show for the whole family. We already can't wait until December!"



*Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs* runs from Friday 8th to Sunday 31st December. Tickets are available now from [www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk](http://www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk)



# TYNE THEATRE & OPERA HOUSE

Mon 28th August - Sat 2nd September  
**Enchanted Entertainment presents:  
Summer Theatre School 2017**  
(ages 8—16)  
Workshop places: £140 per child

Saturday 2nd September  
**Summer Musical Theatre Performance**  
Tickets: £9

Sunday 3rd September  
**2CC Music & Laughter show**  
Tickets: £10

Friday 8th September  
**The Junco Partners Farewell  
performance—SOLD OUT**  
Tickets: £11

Saturday 9th September  
**Frankenstein 1899**  
Tickets: £14, £12 concessions

Mon 11th - Sun 17th September  
**27 Productions in association with Tyne  
Theatre & Opera House present “1867”**  
Tickets: £20

Wed 20th - Sat 23rd September  
**Tyne Theatre Productions present: West Side  
Story**  
Tickets: £16, £14 concessions, £10  
limited view. Groups 10+ get 1 free

Monday 25th September  
**Shane Filan: Love Always Tour**  
Tickets: £27.50—£50

Sunday 1st October  
**Smile for a Night Variety Show**  
Tickets: £10 adults, £7.50 concessions, £30  
family ticket. Groups 9+ get 1 free

Mon 2nd & Tues 3rd October  
**Stick Man Live**  
Tickets: £14.50 adults, £12 under 16s, £48  
family (2 adults, 2 children), school groups buy  
10 get 2 free

Thursday 5th October  
**Russian State Opera presents: Tosca**  
Tickets: £22.50 - £31.50

Friday 6th October  
**Live at the Tyne & Chris Cross  
present: “The Greatest Show on the Tyne”**  
Tickets: £25 VIP, £15 adults,  
£12 concessions

Saturday 7th October  
**Tyne Theatre Guided Tour (11am)**  
Tickets: £5

Saturday 7th October  
**Katherine Ryan: Glitter Room**  
Tickets: £19.50 (14+)

Sunday 8th October  
**Sean Kelly and the Stars of Storage  
Hunters**  
Tickets: £21 (12+)

Wed 11th - Sat 14th October  
**Based on an idea by Andy Bogle, A  
Customs House Production in  
association with Tyne Theatre & Opera House  
present: ‘Geordie The Musical’**  
Tickets: £18, £16 concessions &  
limited view

Tuesday 17th October  
**The Hunting of the Snark**  
Tickets: £16 adult, £13 under 16s &  
concessions, family ticket £54

Wednesday 18th October  
**TAMED: with Professor Alice Roberts**  
Tickets: £18.50, £17 Concessions

Friday 20th October  
**Rockin’ & Rollin’ with Laughter**  
Tickets: £25

Sunday 22nd October  
**Hollie McNish: PLUM**  
Tickets: £10, £8 concessions

Thursday 26th October  
**Luisa Omelian: Am I Right Ladies?!**  
Tickets: £14 (16+)

Friday 27th October  
**Liz Pichon & the Tom Gates Brilliant Bands &  
Doodle Live Show**  
Tickets: £16.50, family ticket £56 (limited  
availability, must be booked in advance)

Saturday 4th November  
**Tyne Theatre Guided Tour (11am)**  
Tickets: £5

Saturday 4th November  
**Marc Almond: Shadows & Reflections Tour**  
Tickets: £29.50 - £60

Sunday 5th November  
**Monty Don: Down to Earth**  
Tickets: £18

Wednesday 8th November  
**Russian State Ballet presents: Swan Lake**  
Tickets: £30 adults, £22 under 16s, £28  
concessions & limited view, Groups 10+ get 1  
free

Thursday 9th November  
**Jerry Sadowitz: Comedian, Magician,  
Psychopath!**  
Tickets: £22.50 (Strictly 18+)

Friday 10th November  
**Robert Temple: The Hypnotist – LIVE!**  
Tickets: £15, £12 concessions/NUS

Saturday 11th November  
**Jon Ronson’s Psychopath Night**  
Tickets: £18

Sunday 12th November  
**Blackadder Goes Forth**  
Tickets: £15, £14 concessions

Wed 22nd - Sat 25th November  
**Starlight Theatre Productions  
present: Paint Your Wagon**  
Tickets: £12-£18, concessions £1 off full price  
ticket on Wed evening only. Groups 10+ get 1  
free

Thursday 14th December  
**The Geordie Rat Pack**  
Tickets: £20, Groups 9+ get 1 free

Fri 8th - Sun 31st December  
**Enchanted Entertainment presents: Snow  
White & the Seven Dwarfs**  
Tickets: £14 - £22, Groups 10+ get 1 free  
(except Christmas Eve) Boxes: £132. Youth &  
school group offers available

Friday 9th February  
**The Circus of Horrors: The Voodoo VaudEvil**  
Tickets: £18—£27. (Early bat offer: £3 off top  
price tickets until 31st October)

Tues 13th - Sat 17th February  
**West End Operatic Society presents: Top Hat**  
Tickets: £9—£18, Concessions £2 off full price  
ticket Tues only. Groups 10+ get 1 free.

Tuesday 20th February  
**Rebecca Ferguson**  
Tickets: £29 - £60.50

Thurs 8th - Sat 10th March  
**Tyne Theatre Productions present: Into the  
Woods**  
Tickets: £16, £14 concessions, £10  
limited view. Groups 10+ get 1 free

Wednesday 14th March  
**An Evening with Ant Middleton**  
Tickets: £21.50, £19.50 under 16s

Friday 16th March  
**The Lock In ‘Folk Fairy Tale’ featuring The  
Demon Barbers**  
Tickets: £17.50, £15.50 concessions, £7.50 un-  
der 18s

Saturday 24th March  
**Ed Byrne: Spoiler Alert**  
Tickets: £24 (Age guideline 16+)

Thursday 29th March  
**Dave Spikey: Juggling on a Motorbike**  
Tickets: £15 (16+)

Sat 31st March & Sun 1st April  
**Enchanted Entertainment presents:  
Beauty & the Beast Easter Panto**  
Tickets: £20 adults, £18 concessions, £69 family  
Group 10+ £1 off regular prices, Group 20+ £2  
off regular prices

Fri 6th - Sun 8th April  
**Sarah Millican: Control Enthusiast**  
Tickets: £27.50 (16+)

Friday 13th April (rescheduled from 28th Oct)  
**Heather Small: The Voice of M People**  
Tickets: £28 - £60.50

Thursday 10th May  
**Menopause the Musical**  
Tickets: £28

Saturday 12th May  
**Daliso Chaponda: What the African Said...**  
Tickets: £15.50 (14+)

Saturday 26th May  
**The World Famous Elvis Show  
Starring Chris Connor**  
Tickets: £26.50

Wed 30th May - Sat 2nd June  
**Astravaganza Entertainment  
presents: “The Producers” A Mel Brooks  
Musical**  
Tickets: £14 - £20

Fri 8th - Sun 10th June  
**What the Ladybird Heard**  
Tickets: £13, school tickets £10

Thurs 5th - Sat 7th July  
**Sarah Millican: Control Enthusiast**  
Tickets: £27.50 (16+)

Thursday 16th August  
**The Dreamboys**  
Tickets: £19.50 - £27.50. Groups 10+ get 1 free  
(strictly 18+)

**BOOKING HOTLINE: 0844 249 1000**

**www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk**

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# IT'S AN ACTORS LIFE, OR IS IT?



My acting career, and passion for the performing arts, actually goes back to my childhood, in fact I was but seven-years-old when I played 'King Canute' in a school production at Biddick Arts Centre.

It was then that I knew what I wanted to be in life, but I had to wait until I was ten before I could enrol at the Youth Theatre at the Peoples Theatre in Jesmond, which in itself has been a breeding ground for success, helping to hone the skills of people like Chris Tennent and Tom Goodman-Hill.

Whilst the roles that stand out would be playing Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Lol in Cider with Rosie; my performance of Puck still brings tears of joy to my mother Celia's eyes when she recollects and talks about it even now.

The Youth Theatre also gave me some early trips abroad as I performed in America aged just thirteen, and in Russia at sixteen, so it fast became my focus in life, all I wanted to be. However, I did fall out of love with acting after doing a year of the BTEC Diploma at Newcastle College and being ripped off doing a Panto for a local agent. I decided to walk away from my career and go into the family business.

Thirteen years passed before I got back into acting and I can thank John Altman ("Nasty Nick" Eastenders) for that. John, Chris Connell, and Nigel Pivaro were doing a production called 'Bouncers' and came to me for guidance.

One thing led to another and the next thing I know I've got myself an agent in Janet Plater, who landed me my first role in the Newcastle-based TV series, 55 Degrees North.

I then played some bit-part roles in Wire In The

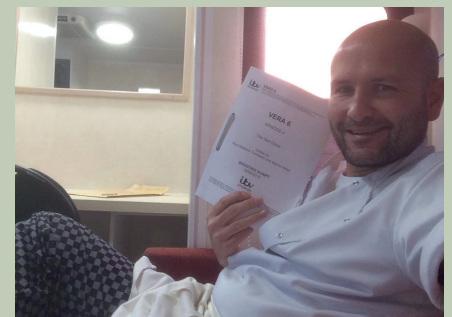
Blood, Cass and Byker Grove, appearing in the last ever episode as a zombie which gave me a real buzz.

After 6 years as an extra I decided the time was right to become a professional actor. I had networked and learned a lot as a background artist but I wanted to be in front of the camera now. I met up with Stephen Melville who I knew from my days at Youth Theatre who was now a lecturer. After speaking to him I went back into education, enrolling at Gateshead College to do the BTEC again and I stayed on to do the degree as well. After 3 years I graduated and at the same time changed agents joining Sam Claypole in Darlington.

I've done quite a lot since then and she (Sam) has fast become a really good friend as well as being a fantastic agent and, although being an actor up north means there's not regular work, it suits me because I spin a lot of different plates.

Every so often though you land a good role and I got a break when playing 'Big Pete' in the hit TV series, Vera. To be able to work alongside somebody like Brenda Blethyn was a fantastic experience in itself.

Most parts I get are playing criminals or hooligans which is fine with me. At college we were asked to tell our lecturer what our acting ambition was. Mine has always been the same, to be the villain on Coronation Street. Many of the roles I have had have been villains. In my life as a doorman and author I have met many notorious figures from the so called underworld and can call on many of their



traits and characters when I am playing those types of roles.

Recently I landed the role of 'Steamboat' in the upcoming, Rise of the Footsoldier 3 film which is a great move for me and for my acting career. It's a massive part for me to have taken on and, like the role in Vera, *Rise* gives hope that there will be a breakthrough into other films. To work alongside the likes of Craig Fairbrass, Jamie Foreman, Terry Stone, Billy Murray and Andy Beckwith was surreal. I have watched the first 2 films and would never have dreamt that I would be starring in the third instalment. The director Zack Adler is one of the best in the business and we are definitely going to work together again.

On the other side of the lens I have just gained my first Associate Producer credit on a documentary called 'Fred' with Salon Pictures based on Freddie Foreman's life which is due for release in 2018 which Lionsgate will be distributing.

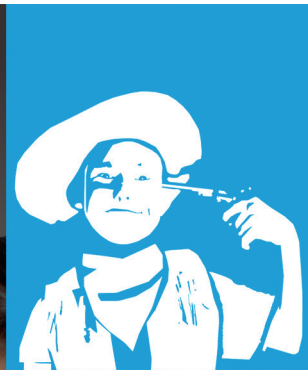
Rise Of The Footsoldier 3 is released November 3rd. For updates follow their twitter account @FootsoldierFilm and follow Steve on @stevewraith

'Fred' is released June 2018

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## THE VALLEY JUNCTION 397 CELEBRATES 20 YEARS IN JESMOND

This July family-run restaurant The Valley Junction 397 marked 20 years since opening its doors in Jesmond's old train station. Over the last two decades the restaurant, owned and operated by brothers Daraz Aziz and Locku Rahman, has tickled the taste buds of thousands of diners, collected a handful of industry awards and welcomed a host of famous faces in the process.

For the big celebration, special guests including loyal customers and competition winners enjoyed an evening of food and drinks, beginning with a Champagne reception in the sunshine.



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A watercolour painting of four white chickens with red combs and black tails. The chickens are standing in a row, facing slightly to the right. They have large, upright combs and long, flowing tails. The background is a soft, painterly depiction of green foliage and trees. The style is soft and painterly, characteristic of watercolours.

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# THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEER - AN EPIC TRAIN RIDE THAT'S A BUCKET-LIST MUST

By Kathryn Malone, Travel Bureau

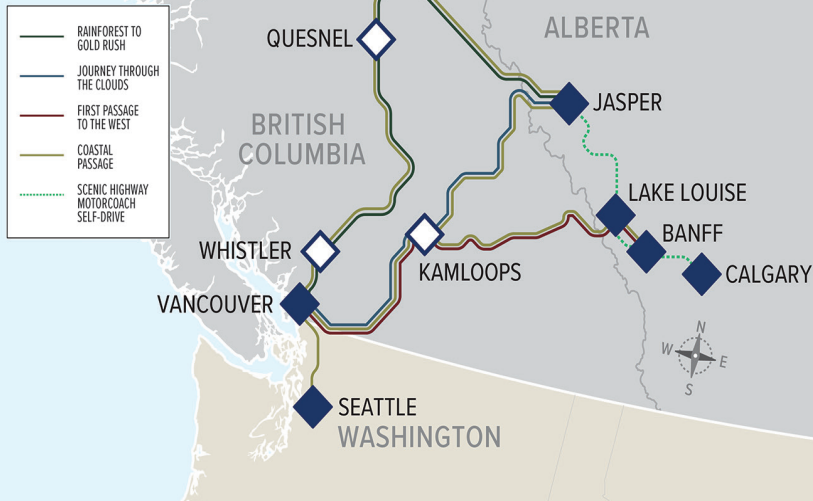
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My scheduled departure out of Banff station on that crisp July morning was aboard no ordinary train. As we ventured out through the early morning mist, which cloaked the spectacle that was set to come, the chattering passengers of the Rocky Mountaineer were full of expectation.



continued overleaf →

...continued from previous page



Much like those first explorers, fur traders and gold seekers, our two-day journey west, across the Canadian Rockies, was to be a fascinating journey of discovery.

True to its name, the 'First Passage to the West' from Banff to Vancouver retraces the historic Canadian Pacific Railway, famous for uniting the country and connecting British Columbia to Canada over 125 years ago. Now a flagship route for this luxury touring train, our journey took us past emerald green, glacier-fed rivers and fir-clad mountains, across suspension bridges of engineered excellence and through dusty towns, heavy with the histories of their pioneering founders.

Luckily, our Silver Leaf carriage hosts were on hand to ensure none of these colourful tales or the unfolding natural wonders passed us by without notice. Setting out from Banff towards Lake Louise we were told of the founding of Canada's National Parks, its early European visitors and the First Nations people of Canada, all whilst tucking into freshly baked cinnamon scones, served to our tables with piping hot coffee. Sitting within our glass-domed canopy, the mist rose to reveal the picture postcard views that we had all been waiting for. Eyes were peeled for glimpses of wildlife, with strict instructions to shout out our moose, eagle or bighorn sheep sightings, so that everyone in the carriage could share in the spectacle.

As the landscapes rolled by, further tall tales were shared of the race to the west by the railroads, the arduous expeditions of those early explorers and the amazing feats of engineering that still make this journey possible today. The spiral tunnels through mountain innards that took 1,000 men 20 months to complete being just one such achievement. The entire journey was blessed with engaging commentary and interesting anecdotes from our carriage hosts, never over-bearing and always delivered as if telling these tales for the first time.

Around another bend, over another creek, the views kept on coming to be savoured from the comfort of our seats, accompanied by a cheeky glass of wine (or two) and a delicious

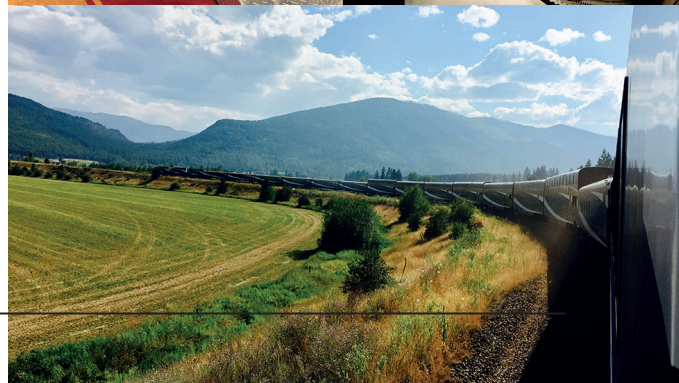
three course lunch. The Silver Leaf breakfast and lunch menus over both days offered a culinary tour of Canada with a choice of two dishes for each course including a gluten free and lighter option, with other special dietary requirements catered for at a moment's notice. Our meals were all prepared off the train but Hamish our carriage chef, worked wonders from his tiny galley kitchen to serve up these tasty treats to our individual tastes. If you're travelling Gold Leaf the menu choice is broader and served à la carte in a separate lower deck dining area of your two-tier carriage.

Stepping out to the vestibule (or larger viewing deck if you're travelling Gold Leaf) for some post lunch fresh air and to capture some photo memories through the open windows, the heat struck me. Gone was the mountain chill, and the rolling pastures and desert-like tundra that had crept up on us whilst we ate, was a pleasant surprise.

As the train has no sleeping quarters, our overnight stop, which is included in the journey, was in Kamloops, a sleepy little town with a riverside park to stretch our legs and plenty of dining options, although a light bite and an early night was all we could muster.

Day two of our magnificent 594-mile journey brought much of the same, with desert plains turning to pastures, the train skirted sprawling lakes and snaked again around mountain ridges, before the city of Vancouver beckoned in the distance. More fine food, a little snooze (shhh!) and lots more gazing out the window were blissfully the only things that required my attention.

The one thing that had changed was the atmosphere on board. After 48 hours of making friends and sharing stories and experiences, a more congenial band of travellers you could not find. Leaving our glass cocoon, having relived the struggles of those first pioneers and marvelled at nature's genius together, we bid fond farewells and made promises to ourselves of return journeys to Jasper, Whistler and beyond, with the slow life of train travel never feeling more appealing.



Kathryn travelled to Canada with luxury holiday company First Class who specialise in tailor-made Canadian itineraries. To find out more about holidays to Canada call Travel Bureau on 0191 285 9321, email [holidays@travelb.co.uk](mailto:holidays@travelb.co.uk) or visit [www.travelb.co.uk](http://www.travelb.co.uk).

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# OUT & ABOUT - HALTWHISTLE



Heritage open days (7-10 sept 2017) is a national movement to open the doors to a wide variety of heritage buildings. At the time of writing, the regular booklets and websites that confirm which places are open to public view were not available, but the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership have suggested to me that we should promote Haltwhistle, which has at least one site participating in the scheme.

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership is opening in the Old Booking Hall in Haltwhistle Railway Station on Friday and Saturday of the weekend (8th and 9th). There may even be a small pop up craft fair in the Old Booking Hall during those two days. This building was built in 1855 and retains its wooden 'booking office wall' complete with ticket racks which will be filled with reproduction Edmondson Tickets.

Edmondson tickets were the standard ticket of the railways in Britain almost from their inception until the advent of the early computerised ticket machines in the 1970s. The system was invented by Thomas Edmondson who was stationmaster at Brampton station, west of Haltwhistle, on the Newcastle to Carlisle line.

Chester-le-Track also has a connection with the Haltwhistle Old booking Hall, since there were plans years ago for Tynedale District Council to open up the office for ticket sales. The unsigned draft contract was presented to me in 1999 as a basis for negotiation with the then railway operator, Northern Spirit. It's the grounding for our trading today at both Chester-le-Street and Eaglescliffe.

This interesting Northumberland town, claims to be the Centre of Britain, as the signpost shows. I think this debate has now been settled but they like to be challenged about their centrality because then they can roll out the maps which prove Haltwhistle is in the middle of England, Scotland and Wales. There will be informal railway walks running during the two days, looking at Alston arches and other remains of the Alston branch line, which closed in 1976. Haltwhistle water tower is still in existence and it is hoped that this too will be open for visitors to see. Bringing the railway offer bang up to date, the Virgin Azuma roadshow will be pulling into town too! That's a van, not the actual new trains which have been built at Newton Aycliffe, and can now be seen testing on the East Coast Main Line.

Being in the area of the Border Reivers, when attacks on the town were common before the union of crowns in 1603, and even thereafter, the greatest number of Bastles (defensible houses) on the English side of the border are here. The trail to find them is detailed in the "turbulent past" leaflet. Take a walk too up the Haltwhistle burn, once the industrial hub of the town.

The parish church, Holy Cross, is 13th century, with Roman stones and much more. It houses an old water stoup which may have been used as a font. Children of all ages will enjoy Mr George's Time Museum in the main street (free donations welcome).

I am informed that there are some great places to eat in the town, and if early September is still warm and sunny, the three outdoor pools of the Haltwhistle Open Air Swimming pool are particularly invigorating. Cheap day returns are available to Haltwhistle, but there are no Northern Rail advance purchase tickets as yet. Remember you can break your journey as often as you like to visit other towns on the way.

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## PORTERHOUSE BUTCHER AND GRILL OPENS IN FENWICK

A unique butcher and steak bar combination – created and run by renowned North East chef and restaurateur Terry Laybourne – has opened in Newcastle's Fenwick department store.

Porterhouse Butcher and Grill is the latest development in Fenwick's Food Hall and is the latest operation within Terry's successful 21 Hospitality Group.

Porterhouse Butcher and Grill offers casual dining at the counter, along with seated restaurant space. There is counter seating for around 14 people, table seating for 30, an open kitchen, creative chefs and knowledgeable service staff.

Meat will be cooked in front of customers using a charcoal fired Josper grill, ensuring a lively, dynamic environment throughout the day. Diners have the opportunity to see and discuss how premium meat should be prepared and cooked.

Terry Laybourne said: "This new venue has been driven by the positive response we've had to the Saltwater Fish Company which operates as a fish bar and fishmonger within Fenwick. We offer a premium product, treated with respect and cooked in front of customers who really engage with the process."



One of the key suppliers to Porterhouse Butcher and Grill is world renowned meat supplier Peter Hannan who runs Hannan Meats. The award-winning beef is dry aged for up to 45 days in Himalayan salt chambers which give the meat a unique flavour and tenderness.

Top nationally renowned chefs turn to this beef because of its unique quality. Terry Laybourne has been working with Peter Hannan and serving his Himalayan salt-aged beef from other restaurants

within his 21 Hospitality Group for several years. However, this will be the first time such premium, restaurant quality beef will be available from a retail outlet in Newcastle and the North East. London's Fortnum & Mason is the only other retailer to offer this beef in England.

Terry Laybourne said: "I have never come across beef that is so good and is of such consistent quality. This beef isn't just different, it's consistently better."

"Our chefs will work hand in hand with our butcher, taking a 'we cook what we sell, we sell what we cook' approach. Our meat and game is seasonal so both our butcher and dining menu will be constantly changing."

Peter Hannan said: "We are delighted to be part of what is an immensely exciting and unique dining and retail experience in Newcastle. It's a great example of the smart culinary and catering ideas that we've come to expect from Terry."

"We've developed an excellent relationship with him over several years and we look forward to offering consumers in Newcastle and the wider North East supreme quality meats from our Himalayan salt chambers."



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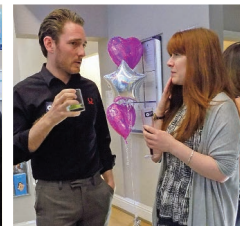
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## HONOUR HEALTH JESMOND 'AFTER WORK' EVENT

Onkar Dhanoya, principal dentist at Honour Health - a dental care and skincare practice (based in Jesmond, Ponteland and Stanley) hosted an 'After Work' event to celebrate re-branding the practice from 'The Osborne Dental Group' to 'Honour Health'. Patients and local businesses enjoyed drinks on arrival, live music, and demonstrations of the range of skin and dental treatments offered at the practice.



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## CREATIVITY AT THE BOILER SHOP

By Daveid Phillips, MD, Stephenson Works and Boiler Shop, Newcastle

### Tell us a little about your background

I have been involved in the promotion of live music and club nights since the mid-80s when I started working for the Mean Fiddler Organisation in London, where I was soon booking Reading Festival (from 1989 to 1994) and most enjoyably the live acts for the massive dance music based event Tribal Gathering in 1997. I spent the last 10 years as head of music at KOKO in Camden. Early in 2016 I moved to Newcastle to begin my next project at Boiler Shop.

### What attracted you into this sort of business?

I saw it as a thrilling alternative to normality; I wasn't wrong.

### Why did you leave London for Newcastle?

London is going through an awkward period of transition that has seen most of the interesting venues and spaces that attracted me to the city in the first place, close down. After 10 years at KOKO in Camden, I was starting to consider it was time for a move when my friend Richard Clouston, a director at Clouston Group, told me about what the project he was working on in Newcastle. One visit to do some consultancy work for him and Boiler Shop and I was hooked.

### Differences between Newcastle and London?

Obviously, the size, I like the fact you can walk to most appointments in the city. Also, there's a real industry for 'celebrating events'. Everyone around the city seems helpful and enthusiastic, focussed on making things work.

### How do the creative opportunities differ?

It's good to be away from the 'London bubble' and feels like we are starting over again afresh with a blank canvas. Unique venues like Boiler Shop make cities interesting and attractive. There's a creative energy around Stephenson Quarter and the wider city. We already have strong links with Crowne Plaza Newcastle and our connections are set to strengthen with the planned UTC and Phoenix Building.

### It's your 1st anniversary at Boiler Shop – what's been achieved?

Since getting off the blocks with our in-house promotion of the German legends of the Avant garde Einsturzende Neubauten show back in May we have gone from strength to strength with further shows of our own confirmed including Sparks (Sep), The Fall (Oct 22), Godspeed You! Black Emperor (Oct 25) and 65 Days Of Static (Dec 5).

These acts are all of a pedigree that will attract the true music fan based in the North East and further afield.

### What are your biggest challenges?

I feel we are only going to be limited by our own imagination, so not a huge list of challenges as such.

### Do you have a vision for the Boiler Shop?

To stand proudly alongside the Sage and Baltic as a North-Eastern hub for interesting events based in music and art.

### How does the business fit into the wider Stephenson Quarter?

Boiler Shop will sit at the heart of all events hosted within the quarter. The developer Clouston Group has a clear vision to make the area a vibrant and dynamic working, learning and relaxing environment. We will host and support many of the events that are set to take place within the Stephenson Square public space next year. Arts, culture and creativity will bounce off one another to make this a lively, innovative part of the city.

### How do you unwind?

Cycling home to sunny Tynemouth and heading to the beach whatever the weather.

## SIX FIGURE INVESTMENT BRINGS NEW LIFE TO THE BLACKBIRD

The Blackbird, Ponteland are in the midst of celebrating the re-opening of their kitchen doors after an incredible six-figure investment and timely six-week refurbishment period. Formerly Ponteland Castle, The Blackbird Inn have fully launched their fully renovated kitchen after extensive works, which is said to have cost the company £225k.

The kitchen refurbishment will be accompanied by a new menu with the intention to offer a wider selection of dishes to new and existing customers. The new kitchen space was created to allow The Blackbird chefs the freedom to be able to deliver new techniques and approaches to the food being served within the pub. The menus will also maintain menu favourites like the 'posh fish finger' sandwich on the bar food menu and the famous 'Blackbird Beef Burger' on the A La Carte Menu.

Operations Director, Stuart Young, talked about the new menus, he said: "As well as our bar and restaurant menus which have received a complete revamp to include more dishes and some new techniques we've not used before. We have worked to create a new bar snacks and nibbles menu as an alternative to the ubiquitous crisps and nuts."

Not only has the kitchen updated the menus this summer, the Ponteland pub has also welcomed new Assistant General Manager Mark Thompson to the team. Mark has over 20 years within the catering business and previously worked for The White Swan Inn in Dinnington.

The new menus and renovated kitchen are fully functional at The Blackbird situated in the heart of Ponteland Village.



The Blackbird is open from 11am, 7 days a week. You can find out more about their new menu at [www.theblackbirdponteland.co.uk](http://www.theblackbirdponteland.co.uk)

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## HISTORIC NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE VENUE UNDERGOES £75K REFURBISHMENT

The iconic Assembly Rooms located in the beating heart of Newcastle city centre, has seen the completion of a substantial refurbishment and renovation.

The recent injection of investment to enhance the Assembly Rooms interior has seen extensive floor refits throughout the venue, including new carpet fitted to the four main meeting and events suites including the renowned Chandelier suite. The addition of elegant new furniture has also dramatically upgraded the venue.

Antony Michaelides, managing director of both The Assembly Rooms and Bonbar, which sits within the iconic venue, said: "Since my father and uncle acquired the venue back in 1974 and I took the reins over two decades ago it has always been our ethos to pay meticulous attention to detail in the maintenance of the building.

The recent refurbishment of the Assembly Rooms is an ongoing process, we will continue to invest to maintain the exquisite fabric of one of England's most beautiful buildings."

The dramatic renovation work follows refurbishment that took place last year which included new carpet to the ground floor reception, grand staircase and first floor reception and the installation of LED lighting to the premier ballroom suite, adding to its opulent setting by creating various colour washes on the walls.

Best known for the grandeur of The Chandelier suite, the Grade II listed Assembly Rooms have been lovingly transformed. The interior has been brought up to date whilst still in keeping with the much loved Georgian architecture with towering ornate ceilings, decorative plasterwork and breath taking rare Rococo crystal chandeliers

Antony Michaelides added, "With the opening of many new conference and events venues, it is important for us to stay abreast of the competition, continuing to invest in the Assembly Rooms ensures we are offering the very best to our clients and customers.

We really do offer something special here, with unrivalled customer care and a personal service we ensure you receive the very best experience".

With 6 meeting and events suites, the Assembly Rooms can accommodate from 2 guests up to 420 delegates. Offering tailor-made exclusive events and wedding packages, the venue offers superb flexibility.

The continued investment of the historic building follows a £1m renovation of the 'lower ballroom' on the ground floor into the renowned Bonbar back in

2014 and more recently the £20k refurbishment of the outdoor terrace area.

Bonbar located on the ground floor of the Assembly Rooms is one of Newcastle's premier drinking and dining venues offering an extensive cocktail list from old classics to new innovative concoctions. Bonbar prides itself on an excellent menu, offering sharing boards, afternoon tea and the now famous Bonbar Sunday lunch.

The Assembly Rooms and Bonbar can cater for all your needs. From meeting and events space, to corporate hospitality, private cocktail classes and drinks receptions, The Assembly Rooms and Bonbar will help you plan what ever the occasion.

Looking to plan your Christmas party or festive get together with friends? From stylish Supperclub evenings, mixed disco parties and exclusive private hire to themed nights, festive afternoon tea and more.

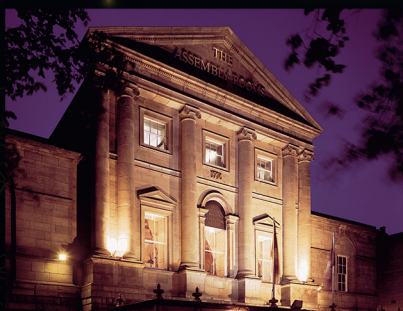
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### Disco Party Nights

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# MEET THE GM...

## LYNDA COALEY

General Manager, Hotel Indigo Newcastle.



### **Whilst growing up did you always envision yourself working within the Hotel Industry?**

My parents are both hoteliers, a General Manager and a Financial Controller respectively, and I lived in a hotel until I was 12...so it is in my blood.

### **Can you briefly outline for the readers your career path to date?**

My initial management training was with De Vere Hotels, then I progressed my career through Swallow, Virgin and Marriott Hotels. Most of my general manager positions are within the IHG family, mainly with Holiday Inn ending with Holiday Inn Leicester, before I joined the Crowne Plaza Leeds and finally coming home to Hotel Indigo Newcastle.

### **Is there a mantra you always aspire to do business by?**

Support the team by allowing their personalities to shine, if I ensure they have fun in their job they will in turn look after our guests.

### **We imagine that working in hotels can be exciting and varied. Is it true that each day offers something different?**

It is the variety that make hotels so exciting, looking after a large team and guests that visit for so many reasons. The hotel life is 24 hrs over 7 days, it never closes and that brings you so many memories.

### **What do you feel is the Hotel Indigo Newcastle greatest asset?**

It's the people, they are true Ambassadors of friendliness, they are proud of Newcastle and all that it offers.

### **Can you summarize some of your greatest achievements to date?**

Each hotel I've managed has a different story, my highlights include managing the Crowne Plaza Leeds through a £4.5 million refurbishment over a 17-week period and taking the Holiday Inn Leicester into the IHG's top 10 UK hotels.

### **Which ideas are you currently working on?**

I guess as a new General Manager it is making sure you don't change anything that is great already, keeping note of your first impressions and seeing the hotel with a new set of eyes.

### **Hotel Indigo has been central to the fabric of Newcastle for many years now, can it be challenging ensuring that this remains the case?**

Most definitely. The City is evolving enormously and its difficult keep the same levels of business coming through. The challenge is to retain the buoyancy when the sun isn't out!

### **With the continued opening of new hotels in the city can you outline how you adapt to the changing trends in the hotel industry?**

Competition will always be there, it is about remembering that your reputation is now on a global social platform and that it needs to be maintained. However, it still always comes back to guest experience and offering a great personal and friendly service.

### **How do you relax after hours?**

Now that I have returned home, my immediate time is taken by starting and finishing decorating my house. But the majority of the weekends I enjoy visiting the coast and exploring Newcastle as it has changed so much since I left.



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## LIVE FROM THE LOUNGE

By Gordon Taylor

Set in sumptuous countryside in North Yorkshire, Crathorne Hall Hotel was the perfect setting for my wife, daughter and self to experience the fayre on offer at this exceptional establishment.

On arrival we were greeted by General Manager, Peter Llewellyn and introduced to our waitress for the lounge dining experience, Denise Dimbleby, who proved to be outstandingly attentive and efficient.

As a bit of a traditionalist, I chose for my starter the homemade soup of the day, which turned out to be white onion. It arrived with two homemade, perfectly warmed bread rolls of different type and flavour. The soup, cream in colour had a hint of sweetness, as all white onions tend to possess. In many ways the amount on offer was a challenge but I finished the delicious liquid with aplomb.

My wife's opening dish was Tempura Prawns with a sweet chilli dip. Often in restaurants, they skimp with the portions, but not here. There was probably 10 – 12 prawns covered in crisp, light batter and she assured me the lightness of the outer covering and the delicate taste of the prawns allowed for a quality starter which would not impinge on her main course to follow.

Lesley, my daughter's, first experience of the food at Crathorne was her main course of Cumberland



Sausage and mash with caramelised red onion jus. Presentation is often the key to a good meal and here a bed of creamy potato formed the base for three generous pork sausages. Surrounded by the jus it just looked every bit as tasty as Lesley, pronounced it to be.

Freshly battered 'Catch of the day' with chunky chips and garden peas was the item I chose for my main. Attention to detail is a thing I always admire and this dish came with a half lemon wrapped in a sheet of muslin, bound with a blue tie. It stopped

the dropping of pips onto the fish. Ingenious and relevant. The fish itself, pristine white demonstrated the chef's ability to choose the finest haddock from the fishmonger. Garden peas also arrived in a square pot, just another bit of flair. Chunky chips are notorious for being badly produced but here they arrived in regimented lines, forming a tower and the taste was superb.

Lynda chose Thai Curry with aromatic rice, poppadums with chicken. She pronounced it superb. Not a normal lover of curry, Lynda enjoyed the subtle taste of the chicken in its curry sauce, which after a few seconds blossomed out with a bite not experienced on first taste. Rice was fluffy, and filled with herbs and spices to create its aromatic taste.

For dessert, Lesley chose Vanilla Crème Brûlée with a shortbread biscuit accompaniment and I experienced the Eton Mess. All that can be said about the taste of both dishes was sublime.

A glass of crisp sauvignon blanc rounded off a delightful day and we headed home replete.

[www.handpickedhotels.co.uk/crathornehall](http://www.handpickedhotels.co.uk/crathornehall)



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## THOUSANDS FLOCK TO THE SILL DURING OPENING WEEKEND

On Saturday 29 July, Northumberland National Park Authority officially opened the doors to The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre. The crowning jewel in the UK National Parks Week celebrations, National Park staff reported that the new £14.8m state-of-the-art visitor centre and world-class youth hostel attracted over 5,000 visitors in its first weekend.

Over the course of the weekend, The Sill, which was partially funded by National Lottery players through a £7.8m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), played host to a range of activities for visitors of all ages to enjoy and as you can see from the photographs, everyone got stuck in!



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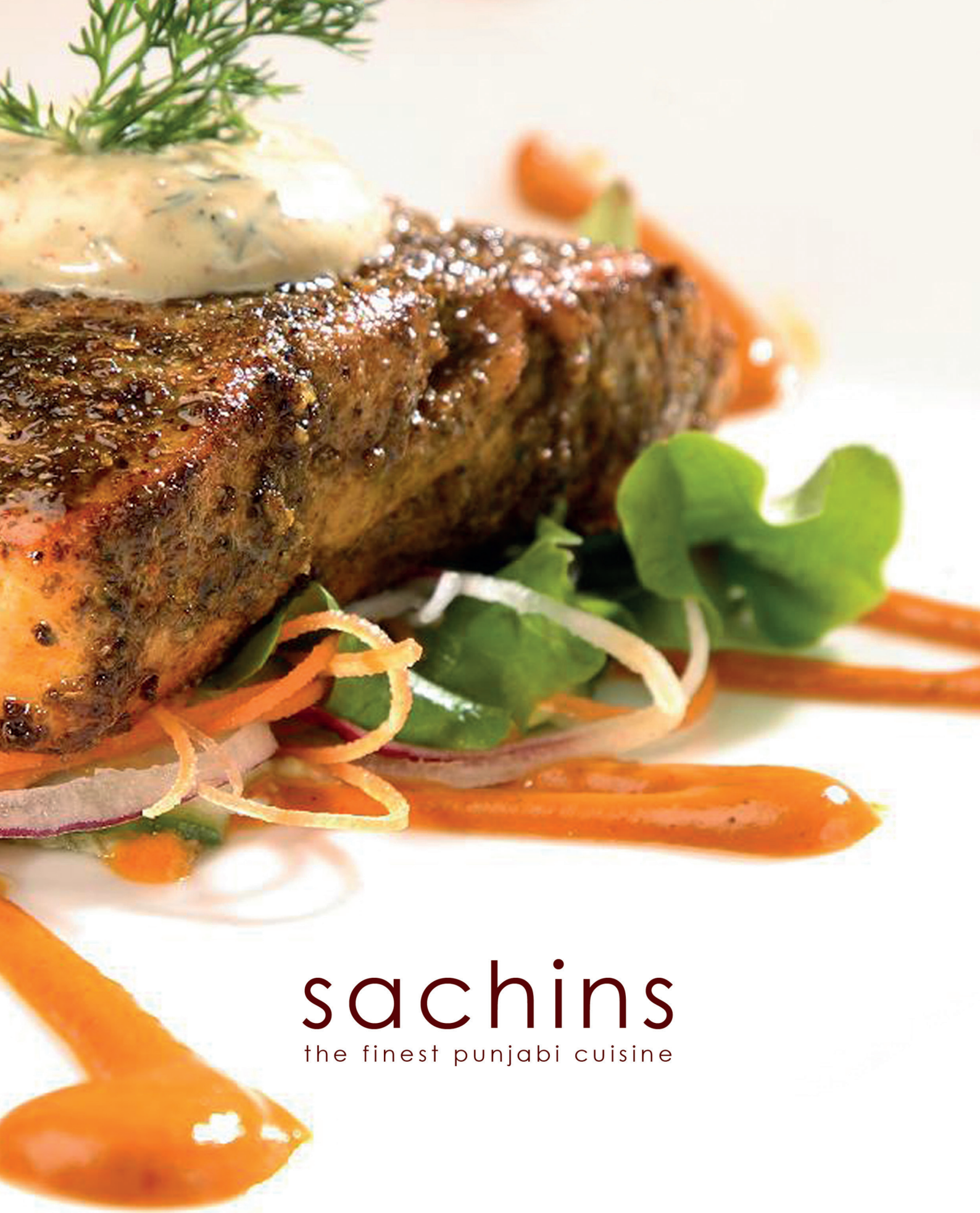
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## EXPANSION OF BUSINESS BRINGS OLYMPIC LEVEL SERVICE TO GATESHEAD AND NEWCASTLE



The Performance Clinic, well known in the region for its treatment of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, has expanded the business with an exciting new clinic based in Low Fell.

And in doing so, the company has not only created ten jobs doubling the size of the team, it has also invested in the local community by renovating an old car accessory garage on Kells Lane, transforming it into an attractive clinic with treatment rooms and a yoga studio.

Within easy reach for Gateshead and Newcastle residents, The Performance Clinic is the only sports physiotherapy clinic on the Gateshead side of the river Tyne.

Led by Penny Macutkiewicz, the Low Fell practice is putting women's health high on the agenda, working with parents and babies, helping mums get back into full fitness and sport, alongside offering health and wellbeing packages for all age groups, male and female.

Even more excitingly, The Performance Clinic is also offering other new services. This gives the Newcastle Gateshead community access to Olympic level sports physiotherapy alongside more holistic offerings including a package that is unique

in the North East. Made up of six elements the "Back to Life" programme is a package including assessment, education, back care classes, hands on treatment including acupuncture, rehabilitation classes alongside physio led pilates and yoga. This aims to get those living with chronic pain and fear of movement back into exercise and moving confidently.

Penny qualified as a physiotherapist in 1998 and since has been treating the highest level of GB Athletes, having worked with TeamGB at the Turin, Beijing, London and Rio Paralympic Games. She was also the lead physiotherapist at the Inaugural Invictus Games in London and launched The Performance Clinic in 2009 from its first clinic, based in Sunderland University. Penny said:

"We have an amazing team of world class therapists now on hand to bring our service to every member of the community in the Newcastle Gateshead area.

"Whilst we are enjoying working with high level

local sports people such as Stephen Miller, Adam Taylor and The Eagles captain Fab Flourney, we are actually very excited to improve the health of anyone in the area who needs to recover from injury or improve their physical strength and health.

"Our offering is really unique, and should appeal to men and women, parents, fitness fanatics, hobby sportspeople, half marathon and 5k runners through to anyone with an injury that they want to tackle!"

Penny is joined on the Low Fell team by GB Basketball physiotherapist Darren Finnegan, as well as Crystal Rosser GB taekwondo physio amongst other talented therapists and professional Yoga and Pilates instructors.

Bike Fitting is also available from expert John Bateman. This service ensures the correct set up of cycles bespoke to each cyclist, both increasing performance and minimising risk of injury, all important in the boom of Triathlon, proving to be the biggest growing sport in the UK.

More information is available on the website [www.theperformanceclinic.co.uk](http://www.theperformanceclinic.co.uk) or by following us @TPPerformanceC on Twitter and @TPPerformanceClinic on Facebook. You can also call Penny and the team on 07984452671.



HORTON GRANGE  
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## CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR EVENTS 2017



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fabulous food and be entertained by our resident  
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**£92.50 per person.**

### JASON ISAACS PARTY NIGHTS

Enjoy a wonderful 3 course meal with Prosecco  
and Canapés on arrival with the fabulous  
Jason Isaacs on Sunday 3rd and Thursday  
14th December.

**£43.50 per person.**

### CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHTS

Join in the festive spirit at Horton Grange with  
delicious food and fabulous entertainment from our  
resident disco letting you dance the night away with  
friends, family or colleagues!

Available Friday and Saturday nights  
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**£34.50 per person.**

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Spend Boxing Day at Horton Grange with friends  
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## A NEW AGE OF FITNESS

Building better bodies (not to be confused with bodybuilding!) and minds has a great impact on our lives and mental state and can help us live healthier...for longer. Sounds simple when you write it!

My name is Phil Earley and at almost 51 years old, I have the experience of over 30 years of training and have established an intelligent approach to strength and longevity. I have a passion for fighting the ageing process naturally and I'm going to share this with you over several articles in the forthcoming months with Northern Insight.

My journey to date has taken me to the U.S., Italy, Hungary as well as across the UK to study varied facets of fitness training under World-leading Coaches, so I am immersed in a variety of approaches and cultures. The beauty of Amazing 12 is that it is a uniquely tailored programme that becomes geared to you personally – that's why you won't have seen the likes of it before – it's not off the shelf, but based on decades of knowledge to find the most effective techniques for individuals.

So, what makes this programme different from all the others? The man behind it - internationally renowned fitness coach and speaker- Paul McIlroy. The programming and techniques he has mastered border on genius, as to be expected from a man who won regional, national and then world honours as a junior, setting world records in the process.

If you take a look at the people in our advert this month, the first reactions are usually 'I've seen all this before', let me assure you that you have not – just as I hadn't! Simply consider the majority of their ages and where they started. Next, consider the photos cannot show the incredible gains in strength across the board, such gains are not typical to any other programme (in the same time-frame naturally). This programme achieves more with people at a 'relatively advanced' age than most achieve with people half their age!

There is also an incredible carry over to cardiovascular health and performance too. If you



Phil Earley

currently participate in any sporting endeavour then expect to perform better by the end. We have had many clients report personal bests in running, cycling and other sports as we will expand upon in upcoming articles. Several other important 'anti-ageing benefits' are improved bone density, joint integrity and mobility.

Having designed and lead strength programmes for five years for a government backed Care Initiative for over 65s in conjunction with leading medical experts and highly-experienced physiotherapists at our NHS Falls & Syncope Service, I can speak with some authority. The results were published in 2016 in one of the world's leading online medical libraries.

We do of course welcome many younger clients too who often have similar issues regarding how they feel about themselves and want the best results in the shortest timeframe. We have had couples, parents with suitably-aged children or friends train together who all enjoyed sharing their journey.

Whilst the ages or the reasons for their journeys may differ, the destination is the same - dramatic, life-changing results in 84 days or less!

Our goal is to offer an education, not just world-class coaching. Learn how you can eat more and look better and how to maintain it without drastic



diets! Understand why extreme low-calorie dieting of 1,000 calories or less, often associated with 'body transformation' can be unhealthy, unless under the supervision of a medical professional.

Choose wisely - The Amazing 12 is a worldwide, time-proven body and life changing system (over 12 years!) that offers a unique level of certainty in an industry often proliferated with misleading information, photo shopped images and false promises.

We also offer more individual and small group solutions which again are tailored towards the individuals needs or to help support development in a particular sport, such as cycling or golf. Watch out for next month's article for more details on this!



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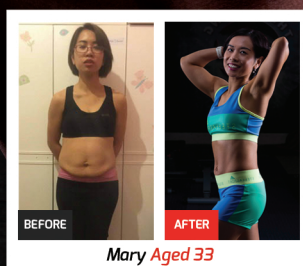
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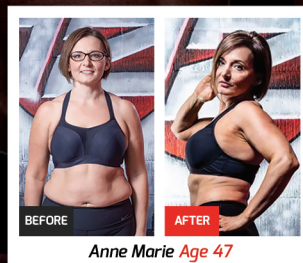
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## THE WHOLE PICTURE -

A bespoke approach to Health and Fitness

All too often, health and fitness is defined purely by numbers - how far you've run; how long you've spent exercising; how many calories you've consumed; how much weight you've lost etc. As helpful as this can be it doesn't tell the 'whole' story.

Which is why the approach of Bodyguards Health & Fitness is a breath of fresh air for many. For them, it's not just about quantity - the focus is very much on quality too. Quality of lifestyle, exercise, diet, nutrition, and most importantly, health and thus quality of life.

The highly qualified and vastly experienced Personal Trainers at Bodyguards also appreciate that every client is different and so an entirely bespoke approach is needed with each individual.

Bodyguards, established back in 1993, was Newcastle's first and continues to be one of the most reputable personal training services of its kind in the region.

They are actively challenging the commonly accepted buzz phrases in the fitness industry like "no pain, no gain", "calorie cutting" and "move more, eat less".

Instead, they place more emphasis on topics that bring about sustainable balanced health i.e. nutrient content, hydration, stress management, mental health, digestion, inflammation, sleep/rest/recovery, breathing, posture, spinal health, core stability and three dimensional functional movement, to name but a few.

"In many cases, when people first come to us, there is so much stress - be it physical, nutritional, mental or emotional - in their life, and as a result on their bodies, that it is far more beneficial for them to

actually eat more at first (more good, nutrient-rich food, that is) and exercise less (intensely), so being more efficient with your 'gym time' by prioritising the exercises that will reduce overall stress on your body and bring it back into balance before moving on to more challenging workouts" says Duncan Edwards, Managing Director of Bodyguards.

"With many of our clients, they work so hard in their careers to be successful, they sacrifice looking after themselves and their bodies fall out of balance - vigorous exercise is another significant form of stress on the body, so to introduce more stress into that situation before re-establishing balance would not be the best option, often leading to more problems down the line."

"You often hear 'no pain, no gain' quoted in relation to exercise. However, I find that when you're in pain, it's usually a signal or a message from your body that something is wrong or out of balance."

"Being fit and healthy is not simply about jogging or lifting weights until you're hurting to achieve results because those results are often only temporary. Unfortunately, in many cases, sustainable weight loss is not just about cutting the calories we consume and burning more via hard gym sessions. We want to work with our clients to show them how to achieve positive lasting changes to their body and their health by teaching them how to implement healthy principles into their

lifestyles, such as how to eat, how to move, how to listen to their body and how to improve their body's function as a whole."

"It's not an approach usually associated with personal trainers, but we prioritise health first, and then fitness. When we first meet a client, during their initial 2 hour Wellness Evaluation session, we often hear them say that they 'need to lose 2 stones to be healthy and fit again'. But we explain to them that in reality they need to be fit and healthy again to lose 2 stones! i.e. Weight loss is a consequence of having a healthy balance and therefore burning unwanted fat is much more easily achieved when your body is healthy."

"With most of our clients we take a 'holistic' approach. While that word is often associated with tree hugging, it actually means 'the sum of all parts', and so we look at the human body as a whole, every system is taken into consideration. That means we don't just focus on the musculo-skeletal system - we also consider the immune system, hormonal system, nervous system, cardiovascular system, digestive system and so on. They're all connected and each contributes to the others. It's about so much more than just exercise. But it's really not complicated or difficult, some simple steps can make a huge difference and when people have got it right we've seen some seriously outstanding results."



From its discreet, private facility on Jesmond's popular Clayton Road, Bodyguards' seven-strong team train a wide range of clients, working with leading business figures, professional athletes, people with illness or injuries, young, middle-aged and retired people alike. The business has established itself at the heart of Jesmond and Newcastle's community and is well-respected even by health professionals for its advice.

Having spent over 15 years as a Personal Trainer at Bodyguards, and many years playing sport and working in gyms before that, sports science graduate Duncan knows his subject inside out, and his understanding of - and passion for - high quality nutrition amongst other topics of health is probably unrivalled in health & fitness circles. That knowledge is something he is keen to pass on to clients, to equip them to make lasting changes to their diets, lifestyles, fitness and consequently their health.

"Our analogy for health and fitness is that your body is like your bank account and energy is the currency of health. If you keep spending all the time and don't make any deposits every now and again in the way of quality nutrition, hydration, sleep and recovery for example, then you'll plunge into the red and (depending on the size of your overdraft facility) incur some hefty bank fees or interest, which equates to leaving yourself vulnerable to injury, illness and disease," says Duncan.

"We aim to help our clients achieve and maintain a healthy balance. And it's only when you achieve that balance that you are capable of expending more energy, introducing more stress (such as intense exercise) without causing further problems. Once balanced, clients quickly begin to reap the benefits from the gym and all their efforts pay dividends."

"A person's own individual nutritional requirements is an important factor to take into account and I use a method known as Metabolic Typing® with most

of my clients to identify their own personal needs. Many people who live in the North East nowadays are actually descended from places all across the world and as a result we all have differing genetics that means we all do best on different diets with different foods.

"As Hippocrates said: 'One man's food is another man's poison', meaning what works for a friend might have absolutely no effect on you and could even make a third person worse, so it's important to know what's right for your body. This refers to exercise as well as nutrition.

"What makes Bodyguards unique is that we acknowledge every person is different and design health & fitness plans based on their specific needs in order to re-establish their 'balance'. We do not give out generic advice and it is all about the individual and their specific circumstances. We make a point of asking every client 'what's your dream?' i.e. what could they potentially achieve with their life if they were even more energetic and healthy. With a little introspection, we can help them identify what they love the most in their life and what will motivate them to make the necessary lifestyle changes and stick to a routine. This is a very important step toward a healthier, happier lifestyle that is often overlooked by other fitness instructors."

"That's what will always separate Bodyguards from other health clubs, who cram as many people as they can into their gyms with cheap monthly memberships and minimal guidance. We focus on every client as an individual person and help to establish what it will take to find their healthy balance again, then design and guide them through a programme that will help them to achieve their own goals in a private, friendly facility with all the equipment they need."

A reminder of that balance is ever-present in the gym, with a distinctive graffiti art mural adorning the wall. It serves as a reminder of the need to strike

a balance between the black and red areas, the yin and yang, to achieve homeostasis and therefore optimal physical and mental performance and wellbeing.

"It says a lot to me that at this point in time, there have never been more gyms and more people having gym memberships, yet levels of diabetes, obesity and disease have never been higher.

There is something clearly wrong there. It just goes to show that 'beasting' yourself in the gym and eating less is not the only solution," says Duncan.

"There is too much obsession nowadays with how much exercise we do, and not enough on the type and quality of exercise we do. People are mindlessly exercising out of habit."

"Bodyguards personal trainers are all about a 'holistic approach to health & fitness', 'exercise intelligence', 'quality over quantity', optimal physical and mental performance and showing clients how to be more efficient with the time they spend in the gym. After all, Einstein's definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. For you to improve your health and change your body for the long term, there has to be a holistic approach, not just exercise in isolation."

"Sometimes less is more if you want long-lasting results. Be cautious of any unsustainable 'transformation' programmes that tend to provide only temporary results, which often causes you to lapse back into your old habits, putting back on the weight you've lost and some more. When it comes to health and fitness, we truly believe in the old adage:

"Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. But teach a man 'how' to fish and feed him for a lifetime..."

Re-establishing balance and health should be a gradual process and with the right guidance, information and support, you can fulfil your potential – and Bodyguards can help you do that."

For more information call 0191 239 9000 or email: [info@bodyguardsapt.com](mailto:info@bodyguardsapt.com)

BodyGuards Health & Fitness, Jesmond House, Clayton Road Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1UJ [www.bodyguardsapt.com](http://www.bodyguardsapt.com)

# THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DETECTION



Unlike most women, Amanda always checked her breasts on a regular basis, so when she discovered a lump on the side of her right breast she was distraught. Here she tells us her story:

"After finding a lump on my right breast, I didn't want to wait for an appointment; I decided to go through my private medical insurance to be seen quicker. They provided me with the details of three consultants who I could call to arrange a consultation.

"I rang Spire Washington Hospital and spoke to a very efficient adviser who was extremely helpful and sympathetic. I arranged an appointment to see Mr Bhatti, for just three days' time. I was relieved to know I'd be seen so soon.

"I attended my consultation with Mr Bhatti who I found to be caring and understanding. He examined me and immediately put my mind at ease. On the same evening I underwent a mammogram, ultrasound and biopsy. I was petrified and feared the worst, but Mr Bhatti and the staff at Spire Washington Hospital provided me with plenty of

reassurance. I was advised on the night that the lump would have to be removed but it was unclear what it was.

"Just two days later I returned for the official results. I was advised it was not cancer and there was nothing to be concerned about - I was ecstatic! An appointment was made for me to attend the hospital just over a week later, to have the lump removed.

"When I returned for surgery the staff were outstanding. I met so many different staff in varying capacities and each one of them were extremely professional in their role. I underwent my procedure which was a great success, I was only in for the day but I received fantastic care.

"I then had a follow-up appointment to discover that the lump was in fact a benign tumour. Mr

Bhatti checked my wound and was happy with my progress. He said he would see me in six months but advised me that if I had any problems or concerns, I could contact him any time.

"Mr Bhatti was a very polite, professional and friendly gentleman. I would have no hesitation recommending him and can't thank him – or the wider team at Spire Washington Hospital – enough."

Mr Bhatti says: "Self-examination of the breasts is extremely important and should be done by every woman once per month. If there are any unusual findings, such as a lump, tenderness, nipple discharge or change in size or shape of the breast, these should be immediately reported to a GP or consultant. Detecting cancers at an early stage makes all the difference in the treatment of breast cancer."

For information about Spire Washington Hospital and the services they provide, or if you'd like to find out more about inSpire – Spire's exclusive private medical plan - contact one of their friendly customer service advisers on 0191 448 9645.

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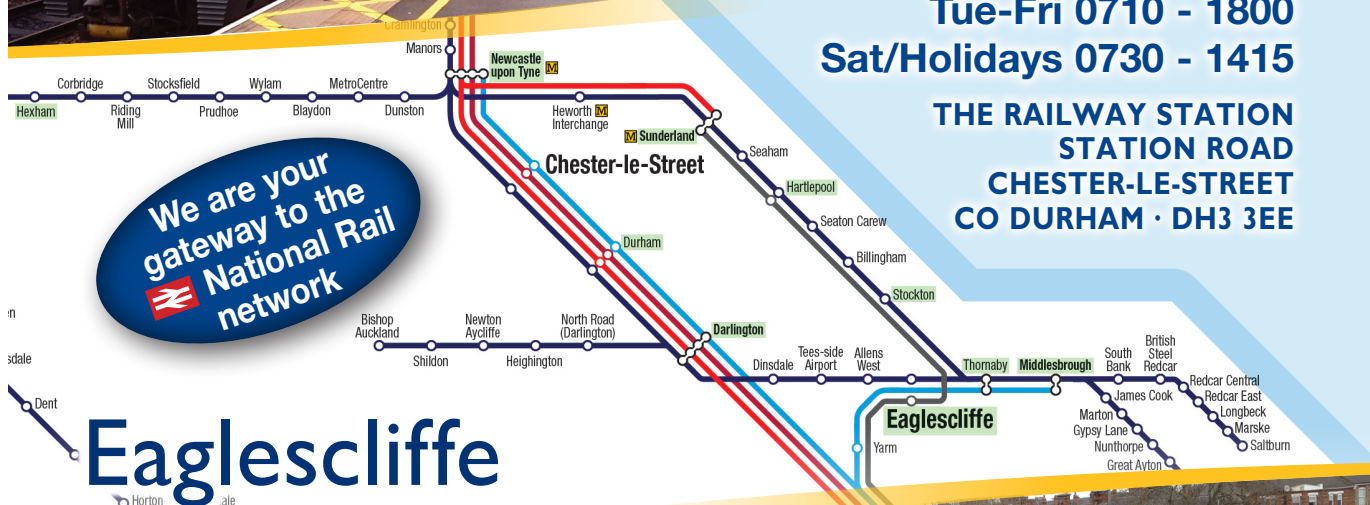
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We are proud to welcome Dr Reid to our practice providing skin rejuvenation treatments.

Our skin clinic will be launching Wednesday 30th August.  
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