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# INSIGHT

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AUGUST 2017

MEDIAWORKS CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

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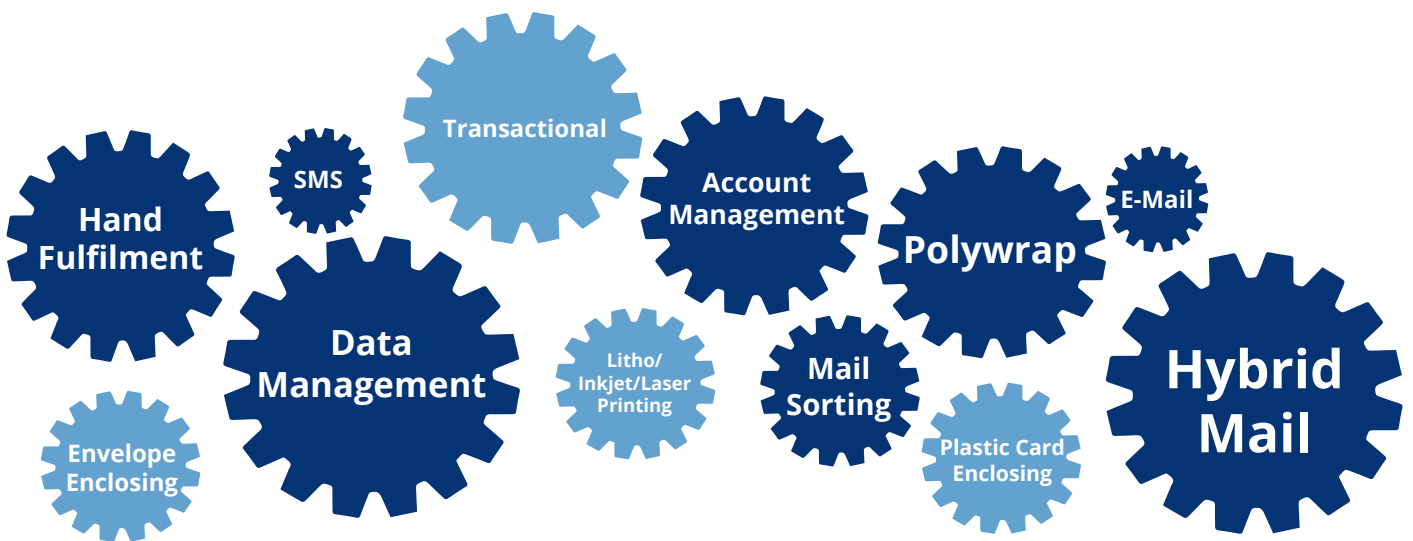
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## FOREWORD

### Welcome to the August edition of Northern Insight

With the new football season upon us we are delighted to bring you another 'Premier' issue full of content, features and event photography. Our cover star is Brett Jacobson, Managing Director of award winning digital marketing agency Mediaworks who tells their exciting story so far.

The subject of our Staying Power feature is John Dias of Silver Bullet who reflects on over 25 years in the PR industry.

Look out for some fantastic corporate Golf Day coverage also including the recent ITPS/Cellular Solutions event at Close House.

All in all much to enjoy as Northern Insight enters an exciting new phase in its development.

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

**Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher**

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# NORTH EAST CHEMICALS MANUFACTURER TO BE ACQUIRED BY FRENCH-BASED TRADE BUYER



Teesside-based chemical manufacturer Chemoxy International is to be acquired by Novacap for an undisclosed figure with the help of business advisers UNW.

A leading producer of speciality chemicals and environmentally friendly solvents, Chemoxy employs over 150 people across its Middlesbrough and Billingham sites, recording sales of £42 million in 2016. French-based trade buyer Novacap will use the acquisition as an opportunity to expand its Performance Chemicals division and geographical presence.

Chemoxy CEO Ian Stark and COO Martyn Bainbridge have reduced their stake in the company to a minority holding and will continue in their respective positions.

Commenting on the transaction, Ian said: "Chemoxy is an innovative company with a proven ability to develop new businesses and products, which fits very well with Novacap's values and ambition."

The Chemoxy shareholders were advised by Paul Kaiser and James Allsopp from UNW's Corporate Finance team throughout the deal.

Ian added: "From the first approach from Novacap late last year, the UNW team have worked alongside us and guided us towards a transaction that worked commercially for both buyer and seller. The resulting transaction is a good outcome for all stakeholders concerned."

Paul said: "Having worked with Ian and the team for over a number of years, it was great to be a part of the sale to Novacap. The Chemoxy team have developed the business to be a world class provider and we wish the team well in the next phase of its development."

## POWERFUL BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED TO DRIVE CHANGE

Leading Newcastle businesses have joined forces to establish a powerful business association in the centre of the city, The Forth Street Business Association. The partnership is being driven by Clouston Group, who want to promote improvements and change around Newcastle Central Station.

Companies initially committed include commercial property consultants Cushman & Wakefield, customer care specialists Convergys, Crowne Plaza Newcastle, the Boiler Shop, the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers accountancy, North East Futures University Technical College and business management consultants PwC.

The overall concept of the partnership is to improve the general environment for anyone visiting or working around the Forth Street, Forth Banks and lower Westgate Road area.

David Clouston, Managing Director of Clouston Group, explained: "There is a powerful group of businesses and organisations operating within this part of Newcastle city centre. By working together, the association can become a strong local voice that raises important issues, promotes mutual interests and drives environmental improvements for the benefit of the wider community."

Several initial meetings have already been held to agree on an overall strategy and an immediate plan of action.



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## JIMMY NAILS HIS COLOURS TO NORTH EAST CANCER CHARITY

Star of stage and screen Jimmy Nail has backed the ambition of North East cancer charity FACT by becoming its patron, in order to raise awareness of the local charity.

FACT (Fighting All Cancers Together) was founded by cancer survivor and mum of two Joanne Smith to provide services which simply did not exist when she was going through treatment. Via its team of trained counsellors and volunteers, the charity provides a range of support including counselling, social events, fitness sessions, mastectomy bra fitting evenings and even 'kindness kits' of toiletries, food, clothing and other essentials for patients facing financial pressures during treatment.

Joanne said: "To secure Jimmy's support is amazing and we are so grateful that he has joined the FACT family. We have recently moved into larger premises and we are expanding our range of services, so anything we can do to raise our profile is extremely important."



## SINTONS STRENGTHENS REAL ESTATE TEAM

Law firm Sintons has further strengthened its highly-rated Real Estate team through the addition of two new lawyers, and the return to work of another.

Newcastle-based Sintons has appointed specialist solicitors Vinaya Jigajinni and Paul Stevens to add to the expertise in its department, which is one of the biggest and most capable Real Estate teams in the North East.

Vinaya joins from Watson Burton and handles a wide range of property matters of all complexities. She has particular experience in acting for lenders and investors.

Paul moves to Sintons from Whitehead and Low LLP and is a specialist in landlord and tenant matters, dealing with commercial sales, purchases and leases.

The department also benefits from the return of well-known solicitor Joanne Russell, who has been on maternity leave. Joanne has significant experience in dealing with public sector clients, including supporting schools in their conversion to Academies.



## PLANS REVEALED FOR TRANSFORMATION OF TYNEMOUTH TOY MUSEUM

Plans have been revealed to transform a derelict former North East tourist attraction into a cultural hub and public events space.

The Palace Building in Tynemouth, best known for housing the former Toy Museum, is to be rejuvenated under new plans, which will see significant investment made to bring the building back into active use.

Developer Sudfeld Ltd has been chosen by North Tyneside Council to carry out the project, following several years of negotiations. Plans have now been submitted to the authorities for permission to proceed, with many local businesses already expressing interest in making use of the space once it has been completed.

Sudfeld wants to transform the exterior of the Palace Building, which occupies a prominent seafront position on Tynemouth's Grand Parade, to help rejuvenate the run-down façade. The company has been supported by Newcastle law firm Sintons, with Mark Dobbin, Partner and Head of Real Estate, acting for the developer.

## RED ENGINEERING WINS QUEEN'S AWARD

RED Engineering has won a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation in recognition of its ground-breaking approach to designing and delivering complex engineering challenges. The Queen's Award is one of the highest honours that can be bestowed on a UK-based company and is given annually to those who have achieved outstanding success.

RED Engineering, formerly RED Marine, provides consultancy, bespoke equipment and testing services for clients in the offshore oil and gas, renewables and nuclear decommissioning sectors.

Recent projects, including two subsea umbilical clamps to facilitate the development of the world's deepest subsea production facility, demonstrated both exceptional technical expertise and an innovative approach to project delivery, singling them out in the award citation.

The company's project execution capabilities and the ability to design and deliver ground-breaking equipment on a fast track basis were specifically recognised by the award. The award also marked out RED Engineering's team of world-class engineers, its strong supplier relationships and its in-house test facility at its Hexham premises.

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# A DECADE OF SUCCESS AT MEDIAWORKS

These are heady days for leading digital marketing agency, Mediaworks.

**Not only are they expecting to achieve record financial results this year, they are also aiming to double their number of Mediawork-ers and plan to expand into larger headquarters within the next 12 months.**

**Oh and they're getting ready to celebrate their 10th birthday!**

Not bad going for a company that was set up in Newcastle by a Northumbria University graduate with no previous experience of running a business, but with the vision to see the huge potential for an agency like Mediaworks in the digital age and an unwavering determination to succeed.

It's hard to believe that only ten years ago, Google was still a relatively new internet tool. The idea of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Pay Per Click (PPC) was a mystery to many businesses.

Most firms had caught onto the idea that they needed a good, user-friendly website, but few realised how to make the most of what was actually their window onto the world.

That's where Brett Jacobson, the MD of Mediaworks, decided to make his mark. With a degree in computing and marketing, Brett knew where companies were missing a trick.

"It was the classic case of businesses and individuals knowing what they wanted but not sure how to go about it," said Brett. "They were paying out a lot of money to create a website with bells and whistles to showcase their business or their product, however once you got beyond looking at the pretty pictures and reading the text, the website failed to deliver in terms of generating any real business benefits or growth in revenue. I set up Mediaworks to help firms of all shapes and sizes take advantage of digital marketing and make their websites work harder to add real value to their business."

Mediaworks prides itself on being at the forefront of any new developments

and consistently invests in new systems and innovations to create smarter, more insightful solutions for its clients. Their list of national and international awards shows how well-regarded they are by their peers.

For example, Mediaworks omni-channel approach includes and often centres around the development of apps as a key part of their client strategies. They see smartphones and tablets rather than PCs and laptops as being the number one way that users will access information and engage with brands online. As the digital world continues to evolve, there will be less of a distinction between online and offline. Google will continue to become more intelligent and rapid adaption to areas like voice search will drive this even further. Alongside that it's only a matter of time before AR (Augmented Reality) becomes an industry standard.

"The pace of change is staggering," said Brett. "Here at Mediaworks we have experts in search engine technology with the vision to predict where our industry will go next. This sort of information is crucial to all businesses, irrespective of size. Their competition will be trying to get ahead by utilising new technology and, in effect, stealing their Internet traffic. In the past, firms which developed clever newspaper or TV advertising campaigns would invariably attract more attention than other firms which offered a similar product or service. The same applies when it comes to search engines and the digital environment. Everyone needs to be much more savvy to ensure that when someone goes looking for something, their attention is directed to your website or app. CRO (conversion rate optimisation) then comes into play, helping turn website visitors into 'customers'; we use our data scientists and analysis tools to inform strategies to maximise the number of visitors who will ultimately convert into customers."

The success achieved by Mediaworks has

attracted a host of big-name, prestigious, national clients such as Ralph Lauren, Lookers, Yorkshire Water, Northgate, GlaxoSmithKline and House of Fraser. However, Mediaworks is now also turning its attention back to the North East. Granted, many of its national clients are based either in London or Edinburgh, hence the reason that Mediaworks has offices in the two capital cities, but they are now looking to apply their expertise and knowledge to help more firms in this region.

"It has been a fact of life over the last couple of decades that when any new developments regarding the Internet appear, they generally surface first of all in London. Most of the UK's leading, blue-chip firms are based in London so it is a logical step for new ideas to be implemented there. That was why the majority of our early success at Mediaworks, came from London-based firms. However, I want that to change. Okay, we'll still have strong ties with London and Edinburgh, but as a North-East firm ourselves, we want to support businesses here in the region to enable them to optimise their digital presence and exploit emerging technologies, and to play our part in promoting the North East economy. A key focus for us over the next 12 months is to proactively engage with the North East's leading businesses, to offer advice on their digital strategies and ensure they are taking advantage of every online technology available to them. We want to help maximise the opportunities for the North East business community on a national and international front. We aim to be recognised as the North East's leading trusted digital partner."

As mentioned at the start, these are heady days for Mediaworks. Turnover is up 30 per cent already this year and will hit around £5m by the end of the year. The number of Mediawork-ers will double over the next couple of years from the current total of 80.





## ITPS AND CELLULAR SOLUTIONS HOST JOINT GOLF EVENT AT CLOSE HOUSE

Guests were welcomed to Close House on Wednesday 28th June for the ITPS and Cellular Solutions annual golf day. The two companies invited clients and partners to the joint event to enjoy some team bonding and hospitality. The day included a wide range of on-course games with challenges such as 'chip in the chimney' 'hit the car' and 'cider pong' to name a few. As ever, the event saw great support for two of the companies nominated charities, with a fantastic £3,000 raised and split between the Chronicle Sunshine Fund and The Percy Hedley Foundation.











## ANGEL OF CORBRIDGE HITTING THE ROAD WITH £170,000 STREET FOOD VANS INVESTMENT

The owners of one of Northumberland's best-known hotels are taking it onto the road after investing £170,000 in three new street food vans.

The Angel Inn at Corbridge already operates the Angelfish hospitality van, which serves the same high-quality fish and chips offered at the Angelfish shop that opened in the historic pub's outbuildings in 2014.

And it is now further extending its brand by launching 72 Angels & Burgers, which offers street food including chargrilled burgers made from freshly ground Northumbrian beef and lamb; Posh Box, a converted horse box which serves bespoke coffee, crepes and cakes; and Moroni Pizza Shack, which offers freshly-made pizzas cooked in a clay oven.

All the Angel Street Food vans are set up to offer restaurant-quality food using only the best local produce, and will primarily be targeted at corporate events and private functions around North East England.

Three new full-time jobs have been created as part of setting up and running the new project, with teams of casual staff almost being employed at each event, and booking of each van can be made via the [www.angelstreetfood.com](http://www.angelstreetfood.com) website.

More than 100 invited guests tried out all the

Angel's new food offerings at a successful test event at the start of July, and contracts have already been secured for a number of events in the coming months including Taste Tynedale, Burgham Horse Trials and Stamfordham Village Fair, as well as for several corporate and private functions.

Long-term advisor RMT Accountants and Business Advisors have worked with the Angel's directors on all the financial and management aspects of the hotel's latest venture.

The Angel Inn offers seven bedrooms and a self-contained apartment as well as a bar, lounge and barn restaurant, and has seen its overall turnover almost double to around £2.5m since coming under new management in 2011, with staff numbers rising to now reach 53.

Kevin Laing, Managing Director at the Angel Inn, says: "The Angel's reputation for high quality food is well established and respected, and it makes sense to maximise the use we make of it by widening the range and availability of the food that we offer.

"Street Food is all about fun, and we want to over-deliver on expectations. Our aim is to provide restaurant-quality food and drink from each of our

vans by using only high quality ingredients, and to ensure we differentiate ourselves fully from the levels of catering that you might ordinarily expect from most mobile facilities

"It makes logistical sense to focus this new venture primarily on North East England, as we know the market very well and have a strong reputation on which to build, and we've been very pleased with the initial reaction from both existing and new customers.

"RMT's excellent support and advice has helped us make terrific progress over the last few years, and we're very confident that our new street food venture will take us another big step forward for us."

Paul Gainford, Commercial Services Director at RMT Accountants and Business Advisors, adds: "The Angel management team have always taken a forward-thinking approach to developing an impressive range of services, and have created an exciting street food concept that's unmatched in the North East in terms of both quality and range."





*The Coastal Accountants*

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## WELCOME TO "LEATHERS THE ACCOUNTANTS"

Leathers have undergone a transformation of late. Development Director, Tim Mallon explains the background to "Leathers the Accountants"



We hinted at the change in the July edition of Northern Insight – you might have seen our new logo in the bottom right hand corner of our article on page 14. The reaction to the change has been very positive from both clients and professional friends so we thought we should explain the background to the changes...

The turning circle of a supertanker is colossal; that of a power boat is far less, but having a team to manage either enterprise is critical.

So why the change from Leathers LLP to "Leathers the Accountants":-

- Leathers is no longer about an individual with a support act – the support act is already front and centre stage;
- It is about making it clear the work we do and are able to do with the North East of England;
- It is about making it clear the way in which we act for our clients and how we interact with each other.

The way in which our team has developed and works together was a key ingredient in the re-branding process. A number of workshops were held involving everyone in the business to identify the strengths of our business and the characteristics of our approach. The outcome was a name and a strapline which truly represents what we have become, and into which everyone made a contribution.

"Leathers the Accountants" have a strong client following in the south of England, act for clients in France, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany and

the USA but, and this is key, are still perceived by some as being an accounting practice based solely in Durham.

Our vision is to be acknowledged as a team of trusted advisors who are respected in the North East and beyond.

Our change of name reflects the integral part that we play in helping our clients to manage their financial lives. Our existing clients simply say we are "Leathers the Accountants" and they demand, and receive, care of the highest level. That is not to say that we are simply "yes men". We are not afraid to have difficult and forthright discussions with our clients – sometimes good advice is saying what the client doesn't want to hear!

All of that is also encapsulated in the "strapline" – "people who look after people. in business and in life". We provide a very personal service to our clients. We do our utmost to look after them not only in their business affairs but as financial matters impinge on family, we often look after the financial aspects for family members too.

We also regard our responsibility to those less fortunate as highly important and that fed into the strapline as well. Our article in the last edition of Northern Insight covered the Leathers Tour de

Force 2017 team who took part in the 2,100 miles cycle ride around France in support of the William Wates Memorial Trust two years after the 2015 team did the same trip. Around £50,000 has been raised by our efforts across those two years. Not only that we are again sponsoring the North East Charity Awards with the awards ceremony taking place on 28 September 2017 at The Boiler Room in Newcastle upon Tyne and our Managing Partner, Michael Leather will be chairing the judges panel.

So there we have it. A new name which recognises the heritage of our business whilst underlining the strength of our team together with an indication of our approach to client service and to the wider community. We're looking forward to demonstrating our approach to even more clients in the weeks and months ahead.

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people who look after people.  
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If you would like to learn more about how we can help or perhaps make a nomination for the North East Charity Awards please do get in touch on 0191 224 6760 or email at [canwehelp@leatherstheaccountants.com](mailto:canwehelp@leatherstheaccountants.com)





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## UNW ON A ROLL IN 2017

Independent chartered accountancy and business advisory firm UNW has strengthened its payroll team after winning a raft of new work in 2017.

The Newcastle-based firm, which delivers a wide range of outsourced accounting services, has taken on an extra 50 payroll clients in the past six months, processing the payroll of an additional 1500 employees as a result.

UNW offers a fully outsourced and comprehensive payroll service to larger clients including help with pension schemes, general ledger reporting to third party payments and the processing of bonus runs for clients.

Client wins during the first half of 2017 include national tourism agency VisitBritain, qualification awarding organisation NCFE and Ramsdens Financial, the main shirt sponsor of Middlesbrough FC.

The Middlesbrough-based financial services provider and retailer was successfully floated on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) in February 2017.

Kevin Brown, Director at Ramsdens Financial, said: "At Ramsdens Financial, we have a long and successful working history with UNW, and have felt the benefit of their expertise across a wide variety of specialist areas.

"Given the confidence we have in UNW for providing turnkey services, when our in-house payroll clerk went on maternity leave we did not hesitate in outsourcing the whole payroll function involving over 540 employees to UNW and are delighted with the service they provide."

To cope with the rapid increase in new clients, payroll administrators Tammy Farrer and Cristina Gallo recently joined the team, and will help to provide clients with end to end payroll processing, auto-enrolment and finance reports.

Stuart Hogg, Payroll Manager at UNW, said: "The processing of payroll has become increasingly complicated and time consuming due to the

introduction of new employment legislation by HMRC, such as Real Time Information in 2013, workplace pensions in 2014 and, more recently, the apprenticeship levy. It is becoming increasingly difficult for employers to efficiently operate their payroll function in-house and is now, as a result, far more cost-effective to outsource.

"The growth we have experienced within the department has resulted in an extremely busy time at UNW, but also an exciting one. We realised we needed extra capacity to service new and existing clients, and were delighted to get Tammy and Cristina on board. Both have vast bureau experience, and I'm sure they will prove to be vital additions to the team.

"Their arrival has given us that much needed extra resource as we continue to grow and expand our client base."

UNW is an independent firm of chartered accountants that delivers a wide range of accountancy and business advisory service to its clients.

For more information, please visit [www.unw.co.uk](http://www.unw.co.uk)



## NEW CHAIR OF SUNDERLAND BID BOARD



After spending more than 14 years as Director of Age UK Sunderland, sixty-five-year old Sunderland man Alan Pratchett is to take up a new post as the Chair of the Board of Sunderland Business Improvement District.

Alan said: "I have always been very passionate about Sunderland and am looking forward to being able to make an even bigger contribution to the BID. We've had some great achievements so far but now we need to build on those. Our main priorities are to raise the profile of Sunderland. There are so many great changes taking place at the moment and we need to show people that the city really is a fantastic place to visit, eat and play."



## NEW LITIGATION HIRE AT LEADING LAW FIRM

Swinburne Maddison, one of the leading law firms in the North East, has made a new appointment to its litigation team.

With eight years of experience in all manner of real property, landlord and tenant and housing disputes, Scott Cable will be advising on a wide range of property litigation matters such as termination and renewal of tenancies, dilapidations and rent reviews.

Scott said: "I was attracted to the role at Swinburne Maddison because of its forward-thinking approach and fantastic reputation. Looking to the future, I aim to develop the company's impressive client base within the private residential and commercial property sectors whilst demonstrating that companies seeking high quality legal representation do not have to go outside the region."

## KEY APPOINTMENT AT CAVU CORPORATE FINANCE

Fast-growing independent North East dealmakers Cavu Corporate Finance have added a key member of staff to its team.

Sahil Nayyar has joined the Newcastle firm from SGP Technology Group. Sahil is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and graduated from Newcastle Business School with BA (Hons) Accounting.

Leading dealmaker Shawn Bone said: "Sahil has shown his abilities to work creatively with clients and maintain and develop key relationships which will be vital to Cavu's success going forward. The key focus of Sahil's role will be to support the transactional team in various acquisitions, disposals and investments. Sahil joins as a corporate finance executive at a time when Cavu is demonstrating a real edge in the delivery of private equity deals in the region."



## TEAM CONTINUES TO EXPAND THANKS TO GLOBAL DEMAND

Staff levels continue to grow at Alnwick-based Eclipse Translations as it meets increasing global demand for its translation and interpreting skills.

The company, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, has a 200-strong client base including internationally famous brand Pure Fishing and the Global Fund to Fight Aids, which is based in Switzerland.

In the last 12 months, the company has recruited five staff including two that have taken up posts recently.

Managing Director Stuart Carter explained: "We have expanded our interpreting team and our linguistic checking team to cope with the demand for our services. We also have new starters who have joined the translation project management team recently, strengthening our focus on customer service."



## A WELCOME RELIEF

George and Mildred are comfortably off with a large house in a nice area and a cash rich engineering business.

George ran the business but was beginning to take a back seat as he was entering his late sixties and had employed a good manager in the shape of their son, William.

They were concerned about Inheritance Tax (IHT). George had started the business forty years ago and built it up from nothing. They were not keen that HMRC would take 40% in tax on their deaths so they decided to take advice.

The chap from Rutherford Hughes Limited (RHL) sat down with them and asked them about what their fears and concerns were and what they wanted to achieve. The RHL adviser explained more about IHT, the thresholds, reliefs and potential solutions.

George stated, "We would be keen for William to take over the business when I die as he has worked in it with me for some time. Should I give it to him now and hope to last seven years?"

Our man from RHL came back with more questions. "The first question, do you need the income from the business? If 'yes' then you have just cut yourself off from it." He continued, "Do you realise that gifting the business creates a disposal for CGT purposes and therefore a potential tax liability?"

"Further, your business may qualify for Business Relief for IHT."

George replied, "We could draw on our pensions to replace the salary and dividends we receive but I don't like the idea of paying tax at all when William

gets the business. You better tell us more about Business Relief."

Our man explained that the business had to be "qualifying" and had to be owned for a period of two years. Under the current rules it would then be 100% exempt from IHT.

Mildred became excited. "So, we can just leave the shares in the business to William and that's it; he gets it IHT free? What about Capital Gains Tax?"

"Let's deal with the easy one first," said our man. "Capital Gains are wiped out on death so there is no tax to worry about there. However, IHT is still an issue as your company is cash rich. In fact, it is carrying too much cash and therefore, as we speak, has lost its qualifying status for Business Relief."

George and Mildred looked at each other.

Mildred asked, "How can we sort this out?"

"Well you could pay yourselves a dividend which would suffer income tax and would have the money in your estate for IHT purposes. What might

be better is to top up your pensions via a company contribution as this would be immediately outside your estate but that would not reduce the cash sufficiently."

"As a business, it can invest in its own qualifying Business Relief scheme and the money is immediately outside your estates and brings the engineering business back into qualifying status itself."

"Brilliant!" shouts George. "But what if I need the money back in the business?"

"No problem. We can surrender all or part of the investment as needed. It would take a few weeks to get the money back into the business account."

Our chap continued, "Whilst Business Relief investments do try and reduce risks they are still investments and as such their values can go up or down and you might not get all your money back. That said, it will save you a lot of IHT."

The above example is intended to illustrate general principals and must not be construed as advice.



Peter Rutherford

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)

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## KEEP THE RECEIPT

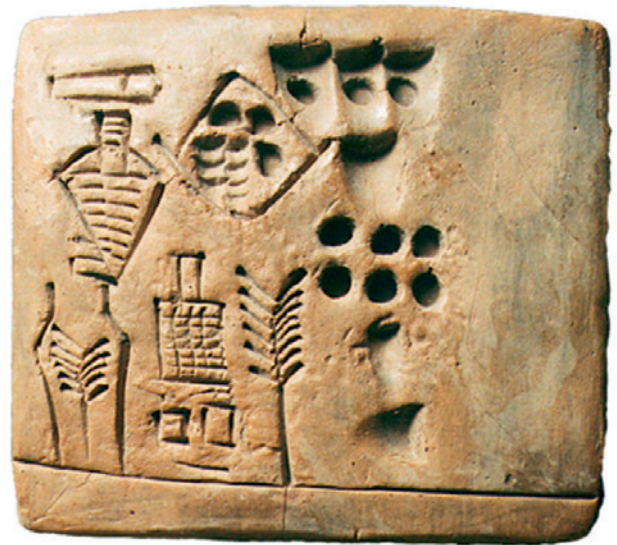
It is a basic principle of accounting that any transaction is supported by evidence. A business raises invoices to customers and in turn receives invoices from its suppliers.

If you pop into Sainsburys for a jar of coffee you get presented with a till receipt. It's all evidence. The document gives you lots of information which can help you analyse how your business is progressing (or not!). It also enables you to track the transaction detail, when you bought something, how much it cost, how much profit you made. Clever reporting can bring together a lot of information just from that basic piece of paper.

And thanks to modern technology you don't have to file volumes of paper. A substantial number of companies send invoices by email so they can be quickly filed electronically and of course if you buy online the record is held in your account. Even your coffee receipt from Sainsburys can be scanned or photographed on your Smartphone and entered straight in to your accounting software.

From April 2019, VAT returns will have to be submitted to HMRC using digital software, you will no longer be able to log into your Gateway account and manually enter the figures. It will also incidentally need to be filed within one month of the end of the VAT quarter in line with other MTD proposals. That additional seven days will have gone. The returns will, as now, not be required to include any detail of the transactions but HMRC stress that there will be a requirement for businesses to keep the underlying records in digital format. And that digital format starts with that little bit of paper whether it's real or virtual. And if you should ever be unlucky enough to be the subject of an HMRC investigation then those basic records are very important.

As far as has been established the first recorded name in history belongs to a guy called Kushim, that's his signature on the tablet above. The tablet dates



back to around 5000BC and says simply '29,086 measures barley 37 months Kushim'. The most probable translation is 'a total of 29,086 measures of barley were received over the course of 37 months. Signed, Kushim.' Far from being a famous king or warrior the first recorded name belongs to an accountant, I always knew accountants could be famous. So make sure you keep that receipt - you could go down in history.

For help in making sure those receipts mean something contact CS Accounting on 0191 4879870 or [info@csaccounting.co.uk](mailto:info@csaccounting.co.uk)

## FANCY A DAY AT THE RACES?

I think it's fair to say we're all just about fully recovered from Ladies Day 2017.

If you were lucky enough to attend, the end of July welcomed the most anticipated day in Newcastle Racecourse's social calendar, Ladies Day. Week2Week have had a lot of positive feedback, and many of the ladies who stopped with us have warned us that they'll be back again next year – watch out Gosforth!

But we say, why should you wait another year?

All of our fully serviced apartments will now come with two complimentary premiere tickets\* for the rest of this year's racing calendar. You can get yourself booked into one of our luxury apartments today, and be back at the racecourse as fast as you can on the 10th August to cheer on your favourite silk.

We have apartments across all of Newcastle, you can even choose to stay close to the racecourse, or as close to the city centre as you want. Could this be the

perfect excuse for you to finally have that weekend away? These events are perfect for your summer to-do list.

The Week2Week team guarantee a spacious apartment to suit your needs and you'll have all the luxuries of a hotel suite, plus all of our own special extras. We really do go the extra mile (or furlong!) to make sure that your stay is comfortable.

We offer the perfect place to stay for your day at the races. So, book your tickets and your Week2Week serviced apartment now and fill your diary up with racing events to keep you occupied until Ladies Day comes around next year.

There are several racing events going ahead at Newcastle Racecourse for the rest of the year, from August 10th until the last event on the 23rd December.



To find out more about Week2Week, or to see our range of fully serviced apartments, you can visit [week2week.co.uk](http://week2week.co.uk) or call us on 0191 281 3129.

\*excludes certain dates, and subject to availability.

# ARE NORTH EAST BUSINESSES MISSING OUT ON £MILLIONS IN TAX CREDITS?



Have you heard about R&D tax? If you haven't then you really should look into it. If you are a UK company that spends money on Research and Development, then you could be entitled to a lump sum back into the business.

But what you may class as R&D might not be the same as the way HMRC classes it. If you spend (or have spent) money doing any of the following, then you could have an eligible claim -

- Designed and developed a new product
- Changed the way you work
- Developed new processes or procedures

The government has seen the need to promote growth and prosperity across the United Kingdom, not have all the wealth concentrated in London and the South East. The Northern Powerhouse project is designed to build transport and infrastructure links that will help the North of England become an economic superpower in its own right. This is backed up by a government minister for Northern Powerhouse and plans to replace the manufacturing and mining jobs of the last century with professions that are more suited to the modern world we live in.

The North East of England is seen as a vital part of this policy and the first visit that the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, made after the last election was to Stockton-on-Tees. But business in the North East needs a boost. There are approximately 147,000 businesses in the North East of England and this figure pales with comparison to London (1 million) and the South East with 900,000. And it isn't just the relative size of the population that causes this imbalance. London has 1,464 businesses per 100,000

residents, the UK average is 1,040 per 100,000 residents and the North East falls behind with only 679 businesses per 100,000 residents. North East business needs a shot in the arm to develop further.

### Is the Northern Powerhouse part of a joined-up strategy?

In some ways, it is. Although the Powerhouse is at a conceptual stage rather than anything concrete at the moment, it is all part of getting the country fit for business. The imbalance between North and South isn't going to change overnight, but with the right policies the future can look better for the country outside of London too.

One area where the government is putting aside billions of pounds to stimulate the economy is R&D tax credits. We are based in the North East and we are proud to be able to help local businesses get their hands on a cash injection from the tax man. The R&D tax system is designed to encourage businesses to invest in their products, processes and procedures to deliver something better. The money comes back through the system to your business. It is the UK government investing in the future competitiveness of the companies in the UK economy. With Brexit on the horizon and the future of trade a little uncertain, it is a good idea for UK business to be as fit as they can be to take on the businesses of the world.

### Which North East businesses qualify?

This is a great question, and one that we are asked

on a regular basis. It is interesting to hear the opinion of North East business when we talk about R&D tax. Many people see it being something that can only be claimed by people in white coats that spend their day in a lab. This is most definitely not the case. We have helped companies with very different business models across the North East of England, and beyond, to successfully claim their share of the R&D pot.

If you have made an improvement to your product, then you can qualify. So, manufacturing businesses are eligible.

If you develop a new software or adapt the one that you are using, then you can qualify. So, companies that use software are eligible.

If you change the way you work to meet a new regulation or requirement, then you can qualify. In fact, there are a host of companies that qualify for R&D tax credits and don't even realise.

In fact, R&D is an integral part of many businesses. Being able to offer something bigger and better to your customers helps you to grow. This can be achieved by developing a new product or adapting your processes. The fact is that your company takes a commercial risk in spending money on these improvements. You allocate staffing resources to it, spend money on outside contractors and often use more materials. But the extra spend is worth it if you get things right for your customers, your team, your company. That is why we do it.



# THINKING ABOUT DIPPING YOUR TOES IN THE INVESTMENT MARKET?



Stephen Sumner, Managing Director at Explore Wealth Management.

It's hard to believe that a whole year has passed since the historic referendum in which the British public voted to leave the EU.

In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, which took place in June 2016, there was a fall in the British stock market, which seemed to confirm fears that a vote in favour of Brexit would be harmful to the British economy. One year on however, the 'Brexit bounce' as it has come to be known has caused a mini stock market boom, which has seen some of our clients' investment portfolios grow by up to 25 per cent in the past 12 months.

The bounce has largely been caused by a fall in the value of the pound compared to most foreign currencies. While this has led to a sharp increase in the price of imports, the upshot of this has been to make the cost of British exports more competitive, so cheaper exports mean more profit, leading to higher dividend pay outs and therefore increased share prices.

Statistics show that since the market re-stabilised, the FTSE 100 Index (this being the index of changes in the values of Britain's top 100 largest companies) has actually grown by 23.8 per cent over this period, causing clients with more speculative investment portfolios to see growth of up to 25.39 per cent, while clients who invested much more cautiously (usually those approaching or actually in retirement) have seen growth of 12.91 per cent over the same period.

Are you thinking about dipping your toes in the investment market or do you have existing savings which you feel are not growing very well? Explore Wealth Management in Cramlington could help you get started.

With almost 40 years' experience in the financial services industry, Explore Wealth Management provides honest, professional advice on investments, pensions and retirement plans.

To find out more, visit our website at [www.explorewealth.co.uk](http://www.explorewealth.co.uk) or call us today on 0191 285 1555 to book your free, no-obligation consultation.



## £11 BILLION LEFT UNCLAIMED, COULD YOUR BUSINESS BE DUE A CASH INJECTION?

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## JOINING THE CLUB?



Groucho Marx once famously said he refused to join a club that would have him as member. However some individuals are being automatically enrolled as members of an exclusive club, known as the “60% tax rate” club.

**The recent focus of successive Chancellors has been to increase the personal allowance, removing more people from the tax paying arena and increasing the take home pay of others.**

However, for those with adjusted income in excess of £100,000, the personal allowance is gradually withdrawn, resulting in an effective tax rate of 60%. This is a good 15% higher than the supposed top rate of income tax of 45% and comes as a surprise to those caught out by its effects.

So how does this 60% tax rate come about? For the current tax year the personal allowance is £11,500. Where an individual has adjusted net income over £100,000 the personal allowance is reduced by £1 for every £2 of the excess. This produces an effective rate of 60% on income within that range. The personal allowance is withdrawn fully where adjusted income is in excess of £123,000 and in fact, those in employment and the self-employed will be suffering a total charge of 62% when national insurance is taken into account, leaving them with only 38p of every pound earned.

So is there anything can be done to mitigate its effect? Well adjusted net income is all taxable income, less certain allowances. So here are a few ideas that are worth thinking about.

Firstly, have you joined the club because of a one-off event such as a large bonus or dividend? Where it is within your control, consider altering the contractual entitlement to the payment to smooth income between tax years.

Another way of reducing taxable income applies if you are married or in a civil partnership. You can normally transfer income producing assets to your spouse without a tax charge. The income arising then becomes their income not yours. This only works of course if they are not themselves a member of the club!

If you are a permanent member of the club, think about replacing taxable income with non-taxable income. This could be as simple as holding investments through an ISA as opposed to directly or more complex salary sacrifice arrangements replacing cash salary with tax free or tax favoured benefits in kind. Although changes to the tax rules from 6 April 2017 severely curtailed the types of benefits qualifying for tax favoured treatment via salary sacrifice, it is still worth considering bearing in mind the tax saving is potentially 62%.

One particularly effective use of salary sacrifice is to replace salary with pension contributions. A salary reduction of £10,000 in favour of a pension

contribution for someone within the club would have a net cost of only £3,800. A significant saving. Even if salary sacrifice is not available, a direct pension contribution is just as effective as it is one of the allowances deductible to arrive at adjusted net income.

Similar to pension contributions, charitable gifts under gift aid qualify as an allowable deduction to arrive at adjusted net income. A gift aid payment of £800 would reduce the tax bill of a club member, making the net cost only £400.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies estimate that 800,000 people will pay the 60% tax rate in 2017/18 and this will rise to an estimated 1,000,000 people in 2018/19. Don't drift inadvertently into a club that Groucho wouldn't have wanted to join. A little planning could go a long way in reducing the impact.





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## UNIQUE ONLINE PORTAL ADDS NEW BENEFITS AND GROWS TEAM



The North East based cash savings company, Cascade Cash Management (Cascade), which developed a groundbreaking service for independent financial advisors (IFA's) and high net worth clients, has invested further in the online savings portal ensconcing its position as market leader.

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**On the back of this investment to incorporate feedback to date from clients using the portal, Cascade has also expanded the client support team to now be 12 strong.**

Cascade is an independent and transparent service created to generate enhanced cash returns and increase protection on deposits through professional cash management.

Cascade has administered in excess of £85m since launching its online savings portal in January of this year, taking the total monies administered to date to over £500m, delivering millions of pounds of additional savings interest for clients.

The portal is the only one of its kind in the UK allowing independent and unbiased cash solutions using the company's proprietary algorithm, meaning that clients don't have to choose only one bank. With the online portal and Cascade's client support team all banks can be accessed quickly and easily, on a daily basis, with daily reporting functionality.

The service is suitable in particular for high net worth individuals tracking their own savings, for financial directors of companies and charities who are cash rich and should be getting returns on their savings, and for trustees, deputies and attorneys charged with the responsibility of looking after someone's

financial affairs. The dataset is the largest of its kind tracking sterling cash rates providing solutions for the widest range of client types including professional solutions too for pensions, client deposits and more.

Cascade also acts as a back-office for IFAs, Accountants and Solicitor, who can fully customise the online savings portal and ongoing reporting to enhance their existing propositions for a range of client types, benefitting from the economies of scale afforded by the central administration team.

Dr Emma Black explains further: "93% of the UK's adults have a savings account but not many of them achieve attractive returns due to the inertia inherent in the savings market. This is especially true when you get to the high net worth cash investments of over £250,000. Time constraints and lack of awareness of opportunity tend to be the biggest challenges for our clients.

"Our portal has individual secure log in details and a comprehensive dataset using our unique optimisation and proprietary technology that can administer bespoke cash portfolios in seconds. It's important to highlight that it is not just all about enhanced interest rates, although this is always a positive outcome for our clients.

"Our optimisation permits clients to set their desired

term structure of their cash (from instant access up to five years) while also allowing for them to ensure that they have the desired degree of protection under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme or European equivalents.

"We have recently added new functionality, new services and new payment structures too that positioning us light years ahead of the nearest competitive product. I'm delighted at the feedback we have received from our trusted partners and clients."

The service has been designed carefully so that power of instruction remains with the client and designated signatories only. This means Cascade clients can have peace of mind that their cash savings are directly held with regulated financial institutions, with no money ever passing through Cascade Cash Management. Advisers and their clients can layer the level of support they desire and a full management service is available too.

Cascade is made up of a team of financial experts, headed up by Dr Emma, servicing trusted partners and their clients across the UK. The central administration support team is based in Newcastle, a hub for the savings administration for many financial institutions.

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More information on the service can be found on the brand new website [www.cascade.co.uk](http://www.cascade.co.uk)

Anyone wanting a demonstration of the portal, please contact the team by requesting a call back on the website or by calling 0191 4813777.

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## BAMBURGH GOLF DAY

Recently, James Cartmell, Gary Fawcett, Charlie Fellowes and their colleagues from Brewin Dolphin led teams out onto the beautiful Bamburgh Golf course for Brewin Dolphin's inaugural Bamburgh Golf Day. Despite challenging conditions and temperamental weather, the guests put in a strong show, with Steve Railton of RSM North East scooping "Best Individual Golfer", and the gentlemen from Blackwell Grange Golf Club winning the putting competition by a strong margin. Until next year!









# HOW MUCH CAN I BORROW?



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

One thing which often surprises our clients is the variety of different things which can affect the amount that they can borrow on a mortgage – and how the borrowing figures between certain banks and building societies can vary. It is a key area where a mortgage specialist can make a huge impact.

We would suggest the earlier that you discuss this in detail, the clearer you can be on what budget figure you can work to. Lenders will assess outgoings according to their own policy, however all of the following can influence the amount of mortgage available: -

- Your age
- Your income
- How many years you wish to repay the mortgage over
- How much deposit you have
- Car finance payments
- Credit card debt

- Student loans
- Bank loans
- Pensions
- Childcare cost and school fees
- Number of and type of dependents
- Your overall credit score

A complex area with a number of variables, so expert mortgage advice is vital; the differences between the amounts that you can borrow on a mortgage from one lender to another can vary hugely depending on your own circumstances.

Why limit yourself to your own bank when we are able to look across the whole of the market place and potentially help you borrow significantly more? It could be the difference between your dream home and second best!

Innovate Mortgages and Loans is a trading style of Innovation Financial Management Ltd.

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

*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.*

## OUT NOW: THE 2017 TAX SALARY GUIDE.

If you don't know the value of your talent, how do you expect to get what your worth?



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# Helping you to see the possibilities



## Working capital solutions for your business

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To find out how we are supporting businesses here in North East, contact

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## ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM ANNUAL SUMMER DRINKS

On Thursday 6th July, the Entrepreneurs' Forum held its annual summer drinks event inviting its members to relax and enjoy a cold drink. Held at the newly refurbished NBS offices on St Nicholas Street, guests enjoyed a reception with food and beverages on offer provided by local bar Bonbar, who supplied a pop-up cocktail bar for the event. Guests mingled in one of NBS's brand new event spaces, the roof top garden, with a fabulous view of the city.







Sarah Wood, CEO of Unruly,  
at Together We Can Take on  
the World Conference, May 2017

## CRAFTING THE RIGHT COMPANY CULTURE FOR GROWTH

By the Entrepreneurs' Forum.

If, like us, you listen to successful business leaders speaking at events and conferences, then there's more than a passing chance they will make a reference to a great company culture.

Every organisation has its own unique culture, even if it isn't aware of it. It's a set of values and behaviours that have a profound effect on how it operates, how individuals within it interact with one another, how people are motivated, and ultimately on its success or failure.

While no two organisations are exactly alike, those with similar purposes and strategies do tend to share elements of the same ethos. For example military organisations, whose purpose has led them to share a culture of command and control; something which fits with their rigid hierarchies and communication structures and helps them to achieve their goals the world over.

To scale-up, modern businesses typically need philosophies diametrically opposite in many ways from the military and other large organisations. Flexibility and the empowerment of employees through strong, two-way communications and the delegation of responsibilities are common principals of many successful enterprises.

The ability of their leaders to communicate the company's vision and values to employees at every level is critical to this; and having employees buy into it is another commonality.

By making it clear to everyone where the company is going and what their specific role in achieving this

is, business leaders can simultaneously motivate their staff and make sure that the company culture they want is propagated at all levels.

At the recent Entrepreneurs' Forum's 'Together We Can Take on the World' conference, Sarah Wood, CEO and co-founder of viral video tech company Unruly, told the region's entrepreneurs: "Communication is one of the most important things to master as you are scaling up. You never want your team to feel like they're being left behind, so to keep our 'Unrulies' in the loop we practice extreme communications. Our philosophy is to share the love. We'd rather overshare than under-share."

In a fast growing business, where the needs of the company will undoubtedly evolve as it grows, its culture will change at the same time.

As part of their role in managing change, it falls upon the leaders of a business to shape its culture as it grows. By managing this correctly, through effective internal communications, a company's growing pains can be kept to a minimum.

A supportive company culture can be helpful when it comes to hiring and retaining the right people. One of the biggest challenges facing growing businesses today is the skills gap. When surveyed North East entrepreneurs consistently rate finding

people with the skills they need as the number one challenge that stifles business growth. Beyond their immediate need of a certain salary, people are more often than not looking for employment where they feel valued.

Much in the way prospective employees do, potential customers also evaluate companies' values and cultures. For some customers this is a conscious process, where they actively look to do business with enterprises that share their world view, while others can make a much more subconscious value judgement. Because of this, companies with strong values and a positive culture can make these an integral part of their promotional message, though this cannot be done by half, customers will quickly see through any attempt to pull the wool over their eyes.

Fostering a growth-friendly company culture may seem like a distraction to an entrepreneur who is working hard in their business, but as any good mentor will tell them, it is important to take a step back occasionally to work on the business.

There is no magic formula for great company culture, but the first step, as Virgin founder Sir Richard Branson advises, is "to treat your staff how you would like to be treated" as that is the way they will treat each other and your customers.

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)





Ian Humpish 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)



# IAN HUMPISH

Managing Director, The Roundhouse

## Tell us a bit about your background

Having spent the latter years of my schooling more focused on sport than learning I was given what turned out to be very wise advice – to go and get a job... I went straight into FMCG, initially with Alcan, selling household foil into all the major multiples, this was at a time when you negotiated individual deals with each store, rather than getting a single listing at head office as it is now.

A key opportunity arose when I was offered the chance to join The Design Group in Gosforth, to establish a new division selling computer graphics, which was a very new field. The product was basically the design and creation of very primitive highly pixelated 35mm slides for presentations. It seems hard to believe that at this time they were considered to be right at the cutting edge!

By chance, as I joined Design Group they let some office space to an emerging advertising agency called Robson Brown, which would go on to be the largest business of its kind in the region. After four years at Design Group, I accepted an offer to join Robson Brown and help to establish their new design division. During this time the company employed a talented designer, Nick Pugh who had moved north from a very successful career in London and was later to be my business partner.

Having attained the position of Managing Director of the design side of the business, and a seat on the board at group level, I felt restless and ready for a change. A number of clandestine meetings with Nick later, and the decision was made to set up our own company, The Roundhouse.

## What was your first business premises?

Our first office was Plummer Tower, which is one of the original towers of Newcastle's town walls, and one of only three still intact. We were there for more than six great years, after which we moved an equally historic and perhaps more conspicuous premises, The Market Keeper's House. This is the old building with the clock tower in the middle of Times Square, at the Centre for Life.

After ten years there we had outgrown our premises again, and we made the decision to move outside of the city centre to Fenham Hall Studios, where we've been ever since. Our office space is still steeped in Newcastle history, as Fenham Hall is a beautiful old house built for one of the city's Lord Mayors in the Eighteenth Century.

## How has the company grown?

In the first six years we'd grown to the level of employing eight or nine people, which prompted our move from Plummer Tower to the Market Keeper's House, and over the next decade we grew to 19, after which we moved again to where we are now. Today there are 29 of us and we plan to keep growing.

Looking back to when we set up the business there was an interesting business lesson in that you invariably reap what you sow. Because of how we interacted with clients and suppliers alike we had built a level of credibility and trust which was hugely beneficial when starting out on our own. From the offset we were treated as an established business rather than a start-up by people we had dealt with, the key benefit of this being trading terms that went a long way towards alleviating any cash-flow issue which, as any budding entrepreneur will tell you, is one of the biggest threats to success.

## Did the recession have a big impact on your business?

I could say we've been fortunate enough to come through the various financial vagaries of the last twenty years, but I also believe that this good fortune was largely down to the solid foundations and good working practices that were established at the outset. The last recession did hit our rate of growth but we were largely protected due to the nature and scale of our clients. While we work with businesses in a wide range of sectors we have created a specialism for ourselves in Higher Education (HE).

## How has the market changed since you started the business?

This might sound a little grand, but if you look at the 22 years we have been in business I don't think there has ever been such a radical change in how the world communicates or in technology, at any other time. In 1995 the web was new technology, since then its evolution, along with that of mobile phones and social media has been absolutely astonishing.

The growth of digital has had a transformative effect on our industry, to the point which we have an entire division of the company dedicated to it. We have built on our strong position in the university sector, specifically offering complex digital solutions and building websites. This has led to a key collaboration with a specialist software company, TERMINALFOUR, a Dublin based company who

offer a specific CMS product for the HE sector.

We have been TERMINALFOUR's preferred design partner on a number of projects, and have spoken at their conferences, and this in turn led to a recent and fantastic opportunity overseas, with the University of Wollongong in Australia. A number of our team members have recently flown out to New South Wales to kick-start what is a substantial and prestigious design and build project, of which they're hugely proud.

## What would you say your unique selling point is?

I think our USP is our mix of technical knowledge and our creative excellence. We feel we're very good at both but when combined we can provide something above and beyond what our competitors offer. We're on-brand in terms of our clients' messages and values, while at the same time we utilise the latest digital technologies to facilitate the online side of their operations and give them the data they need to maintain a competitive advantage. We have a content strategy expertise which brings this together, making sure the right message is displayed to the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

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

This has definitely changed over time, it's in no way less but it is different. When you run a small business you can't stop pedalling. Nick loves design and still has a huge involvement in the creative output of the company, so he always has plenty to keep him motivated. Something that I find very motivating and a big positive is seeing the talent of the young people that work for us and them doing well and advancing in their careers.

## Has mentoring been part of your entrepreneurial journey?

I've never had a formal mentor but I have always been ready to learn from people I work with, when something is a good idea I don't need to be told twice. In terms of mentoring others I have really enjoyed helping with the development of my fellow directors, whether they consider it the passing on of great wisdom or interference is perhaps a question for them.

## Care to tell us about any future plans?

Quality and growth. We've always strived for the former and the latter seems to follow naturally and will hopefully continue.



# ARE YOU READY TO COMPETE FOR THE BEST EMPLOYEES?



Bryony Gibson, Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, talks about the importance of a recruitment strategy if you want to attract the very best people.

Zig Ziglar said "You don't build a business, you build people; and then people build the business."

If you agree that people are a company's biggest asset, but often struggle to attract the right ones, then now is the perfect time to review your recruitment strategy.

Throughout the summer candidate availability reduces and interviews become more difficult to schedule; making this the right moment to pause and map out your future employment needs against your projected business performance.

To resource a growing company well, you must first identify any weak links in your team and pick out those you believe are most likely to leave in the short-term. Performance and attitude are key here, but perhaps most importantly is an employee's acceptance of your company culture and values.

Once you know who you can count on, what needs to change and where your skills gaps are, you can build a plan of attack; but your strategy doesn't end there.

You need to review your recruitment process. If you haven't done this recently, it may be that the reason you struggle to fill vacancies is because your methods no longer match your market.

My recruitment specialism is tax and accountancy

professionals and I increasingly see excellent candidates end up with multiple job offers because of the high level of demand. In these cases it's the businesses who don't sell themselves during the interview that end up losing out.

We all know first impressions count, but throughout the entire recruitment process, while you're assessing them, prospective employees are forming opinions about you and your business.

If you're aiming to attract the best people then you need to ensure you give them clarity of purpose and demonstrate a clear vision for the business from the outset; and that begins with a well-crafted advert and job description.

The way you respond to each enquiry is critical; as is the time the process takes. This all creates an impression of you.

Who is the face of your company? Who meets potential new employees the first time they enter your office? From the initial reception greeting to the interviewer themselves, you must make sure everyone creates the right impression and is capable of selling your business.

The interview should be treated as a two way process - a meeting to establish a common interest. It gives you the opportunity to assess a person's suitability, but you must also make an effort

to sell yourself.

No one buys from people who don't believe in what they're selling, so you need to have the right individuals in the room; those who embody your brand values and can explain simply why someone should want to work for you.

Like any sale, if you know what they want it's easier to become the solution, so it pays to be prepared. You'd expect prospective employees to research before an interview, so you ought to do your own due diligence too.

You should carefully plan your interview technique. A scripted list of questions is useful, but to sell your business effectively you need to listen and be fluid with the probing questions you ask and how you tailor the benefits of working at your business to the candidate's motivations.

There are many potential touch points and it often feels difficult to find the time to work out how you can manage them all, but if you can qualify your applicants thoroughly you shouldn't need to interview lots of people.

That way you can spend your time more effectively, ensuring you make the most of the opportunity you have with each person. After all, the better the people you recruit, the more successful your business will become.

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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*This is a unique gathering of the North East's leading business people, featuring a leading speaker over lunch - created by the Exclusive Business team and Northern Insight Magazine.*

*Events will take place the last Monday of the month, starting at 12 noon with lunch served promptly at 12.30pm. Speaker and questions after the main course, wrapping up at 2pm. Time for guests to stay and engage until 3pm.*

## Upcoming Lunches

**Monday 25th September - Charlie Hoult - MD - Hoult's Yard, Chair - Dynamo**

Innovation and fresh ideas are key to keeping a fourth generation family business relevant

**Monday 30th October - Chris Paton - MD Quirk Solutions**

Building a team to cope with complexity

find out more - book a place - email [Linda@exclusivebusiness.net](mailto:Linda@exclusivebusiness.net)





## ASSESSING YOUR TRAVEL RISKS

### The assessment

A travel risk assessment should always form part of your corporate duty of care processes when considering sending business executives overseas. Furthermore, this assessment should ensure that all potential factors of risks are covered, concentrating on the country or region that the traveller may transit through or destined for.

All travel risk assessment critical data will enable either travel or security managers to identify mitigation concerns and adapt organisational internal policies. Additionally, this identified information can effectively allow training workshops to communicate and discuss potential concerns through an open forum.

### Awareness

Duty of care and corporate responsibility is the overriding factor for protecting employees that conduct travel on behalf of any organisation, conducting a risk assessment should always be the primary function of critical information sharing. This information may cover a vast array of risk factors that any traveller may face during their travels, such as:

- crime and security, health (endemic diseases)
- environment, travel, accommodation,
- political risk

The very nature of all the above categorised risk factors may become extremely complex with a snap of the fingers, therefore all efforts to foresee any eventuality through extensive research, planning and awareness training (including communicating) are vital. A travel risk assessment addresses both the issue of the traveller's risks and aides the corporate framework for communicating all potential risks clearly.

### Best Practice

Producing any risk assessment, it allows you the opportunity to educate and train employees through best practices for safe travels, incident response and crisis management. Having the knowledge and understanding of how to deal with any incident from losing your passport whilst overseas to a theft or robbery, will empower the traveller and organisation with confidence and underline additional steps towards corporate duty of care.

Prior planning and implementing a pre-travel risk assessment will allow the various organisational departments to start communicating with travellers, thus installing reassurance that both the traveller and organisation can rely on each other to overcome travel risks. This best practice allows the organisation to fulfil all legal obligations towards all employees and mitigates any potential internal and external risk such as financial loss and reputational damage.

### Development of a travel risk assessment

A simple search and click via the internet will allow you to stumble across a number of travel risk assessment templates, and all have a common theme! The sub-headers below allow travel/security managers to understand the key areas to consider prior to implementing their plan into any corporate risk framework:

#### 1.Pre-planning factors

- a.Type of travel
- b.Emergency contacts
- c.Adequate insurance

#### 2.Transport factors

- a.Is the individual(s) travelling alone?

- b.If they are driving, is their personal driving license conform to destination regulations?

- c.What are the potential health issues when travelling (jetlag etc)?

- d.Is adequate insurance cover in place?

#### 3.Security factors

- a.Does the traveller understand the organisations alone working policy?

- b.What is the level of security & crime at the travel destination?

- c.Is the traveller carrying critical data (IP) or large amounts of cash?

#### 4.Environmental Factors

- a.What are the environment conditions? (extreme heat or cold, monsoon season etc)

- b.What is the likelihood of a natural disaster? (Earthquake, hurricane, avalanche)

- c.Basic water and hygiene issues

#### 5.Health Factors

- a.Is the traveller required to have additional inoculations?

- b.Is a basic first aid kit going to be issued?

- c.Health condition of traveller (pre-existing conditions)

During the assessment development, the travel/security manager may establish other factors to take into consideration, which may relate to the specific task in hand, however during each assessment phase the report should clearly explain the potential risk and how to mitigate them.





## IT CAN BE SAVED.

Enjoy more of what you get. If you'd like to have a different perspective on improving profit management for your business and personal lifestyle planning, email [chris@theaureapartnership.com](mailto:chris@theaureapartnership.com) to arrange a meeting. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

[theaureapartnership.com](http://theaureapartnership.com)







## SINTONS SUMMER SOLSTICE

Senior healthcare professionals from across the North East attended an event held by law firm Sinton's. The specialist healthcare team at Newcastle-based Sinton's held their Summer Solstice drinks at Wylam Brewery, in the city's Exhibition Park. Guests from across the region's NHS and medical sector came along and enjoyed a selection of Wylam's beers alongside various 'street food' dishes. Sinton's work nationally with NHS Trusts, GPs, dentists and medical organisations and are one of the most highly rated and highly-esteemed healthcare teams in the North of England.





# EXCLUSIVE

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## BUSINESS LUNCH CLUB

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Exclusive Business & Northern Insight announce the Launch of our

**NEW**

Business Lunch Club

### Join us for Inspiring conversation over a fine lunch

*This is a unique gathering of the North East's leading business people, bringing the great articles from Northern Insight to life, introducing an inspiring speaker over a fine lunch.*

*Events will take place the last Monday of the month, starting at 12 noon with lunch served promptly at 12.30pm. Speaker and questions after the main course, wrapping up by 2pm, guests can stay until 3pm to network.*

#### Each month the Business Club will feature:

- Unique insights from a leading business speaker -
- Limited number of high quality attendees -
- Enjoy, conversation, insightful speakers and questions over a fine lunch -

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**Venue** - The Crowne Plaza, Stephenson Quarter, Newcastle upon Tyne

**Date** - Monday 25th September, 12 noon

**Price** - £35pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee

#### Speaker - Charlie Hoults

Charlie has written headlines and made headlines, endured as many career highs as he has lows and today operates as an investor and entrepreneur in the IT sector, chairing Dynamo and has reinvigorated Hoults Yard. 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)

Next event Monday 30th October - Speaker Chris Paton of Quirk Solutions Ltd  
Building a team to cope with complexity

November - Speaker Simon August of 2XS Films Ltd  
Director/Senior Cameraman at 2XS Films Ltd. Adventure & Motor Sports Specialist



# TOP 5 BOOKS TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL AGENCY

By James Blackwell, CEO, Ronald James

As an entrepreneur I strongly believe in the importance of personal development. Investing time into self improvement is vital; I currently read a book a week and fully agree that you are what you read.



This said, I want to share with you what I consider to be the top 5 books you need to read to run a successful digital agency.

**Small Giants: Companies That Chose to Be Great Instead of Big.**  
*Bo Burlingham*

*Small Giants* explores fourteen privately held companies, all of which took different routes to success. The author explains how the four businesses chose to focus on being great at what they do, as opposed to growing their company in size- deflecting the pressure of continuous growth. Within this book, the author truly captures the essence and spirit of small business entrepreneurs, and showcases the true meaning of being the best at what you do. *Small Giants* highlights new directions, new ideas and new considerations, to help any business owner make their company successful.

**Built To Sell: Creating A Business That Can Survive Without You.**  
*John Warrillow*

For any entrepreneur who has or is even considering starting a business, I would recommend this book. John Warrillow explains that the biggest mistake made by entrepreneurs, is building a business that is too heavily dependent on them.

Warrillow explores three key areas to ensure the

success and sellability of his business: Teachable, Valuable and Repeatable. These areas cover every important aspect of the process and ensures your business is reaching its maximum profit potential. He tactfully explains how to add value to your business, whilst training it to run continuously- regardless of your presence.

**The Go To Expert: How to Grow Your Reputation, Differentiate Yourself from the Competition and Win New Business.**  
*Heather Townsend and Jon Baker*

A prominent challenge that every business owner faces is differentiating yourself from the competition. There are 100s of authors offering solutions, however this book provides you with clear, no-nonsense advice on how to make yourself stand out in a saturated marketplace.

*The Go To Expert* gives you the simple strategy to ensure you optimise your transition from 'another business' to being widely recognised as the 'go-to business'. If you need guidance on how to make clients choose you, or how to market and sell your business, then this book is a must.

**The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It.**  
*Michael E. Gerber*

*The E-Myth* (The Entrepreneurial Myth) states

that most individuals who start small businesses are entrepreneurs. This book explores the 'fatal assumption' that those who understand the technical work of a business, are able to successfully run a business that does the technical work.

Gerber identifies and analyses how common assumptions can prevent individuals from running a successful business. The author exhibits a step-by-step process, guiding you through the correct paths to ensure your business succeeds. The true value of this book however lies behind the exploration into the difference between working on your business and working in your business.

**Think and Grow Rich.**  
*Napoleon Hill*

*Think and Grow Rich* is a financial insight into 40 millionaires, in which the author explores the steps they took to make them who they are today. This book gives you the foundations to success, as Hill provides you with everything you need to understand to position yourself above the competition.

This book stands out as it is the text all successful entrepreneurs use. The theories Hill explains are still as true today as they were when it was written, and many authors simply try to replicate what he has written. For a concise, straight-forward and logical approach to becoming a successful entrepreneur - you must read this book.

Contact James at: [james@ronaldjamesgroup.com](mailto:james@ronaldjamesgroup.com) or call 0191 3006501



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## MULTI-MILLION POUND TRAINING SUPPORT FOR NORTH EAST BUSINESSES

Gateshead College is teaming up with the region's top 25 training providers to deliver £15m worth of funded training to North East entrepreneurs and businesses.

A range of fully funded and bespoke workforce development schemes are to be offered to North East entrepreneurs, start-up companies and established businesses of all sizes to build and widen their skills base.

The Go>Grow programme was launched by the college following a successful bid for £15m of funding from the European Social Fund through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

This programme has been specifically designed to help identify and tackle the skills gaps in the regional economy.

As lead on the project, the college has teamed up with 25 other top training providers within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area to deliver courses designed to help entrepreneurs meet their business growth plans. Training needs are identified via a specially designed online survey on the newly launched website [gogrow.org.uk](http://gogrow.org.uk) followed by a face-to-face meeting with a college business adviser.

A bespoke training programme is then developed

around the identified needs and business aims and delivered at any of the Go>Grow training provider sites, or within the premises of the individual businesses. Support is available up until July 2018.

Melanie Thompson-Glen, business development manager at Gateshead College, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for entrepreneurs and companies to create and develop new skills within their business through the fully funded bespoke training scheme Go>Grow.

"Businesses of any size can take part, from a one person operation to a large and established organization. We can cater for a huge range of training needs. The fully funded training allows businesses to really benefit from the scheme, providing opportunities which some may not have otherwise. We want to upskill the region's workforce to encourage the growth and development of local businesses.

"The college has been working closely with carefully selected partners and local organisations including the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and North East England Chamber of Commerce to

create more employment opportunities and boost the growth of SMEs, which are crucial to the economic prosperity of the North East."

Thanks to the ESF funding and Go>Grow programme, Blaydon-based CF Motoring Services teamed up with Gateshead College to train its workforce in how to repair and restore electric and hybrid vehicles safely. On completion, the employees will become qualified EV and HV technicians and gain a level 2 or level 3 qualification recognised by the Institute of the Motor Industry.

Bill Foreman, compliance manager at CF Motoring Services, said: "Thanks to the ESF Funding and the Go>Grow scheme we are able to have a team of skilled, knowledgeable staff and remain a leader in our field.

"We're proud to have a trusted training partner in Gateshead College and their expertise is now allowing us to broaden our skills base in the EV and HV market. That will help us to secure more business in the future and increase our standing in the industry."

For further information on how to benefit from the Go>Grow scheme, please e-mail Melanie Thompson-Glen at [melanie.thompson-glen@gateshead.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.thompson-glen@gateshead.ac.uk) or visit [gogrow.org.uk](http://gogrow.org.uk)





Adrian Waddell

## NE BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE THEIR SAY ON TfN TRANSPORT PLAN

On the same day as NE1 with Muckle, hosted a Transport for the North business briefing, The Times carried the headline '£1bn Roads Revolution Launched'.

Whilst the article largely dealt with ring-fencing car tax for road repairs and bypasses what we heard from TfN CEO, David Brown, was of considerably more interest and likely to have significantly greater impact on our region's economy.

The TfN 'area' stretches from the border with Scotland to Cheshire, across to the Humber and everything inbetween. Later this year TfN is set to become the first 'sub-national' statutory body for Transport; this will embed it for the long term in the Nation's political and economic landscape. Their job is 'to drive transformational economic growth in the North of England by intelligently developing our transport infrastructure'. TfN's plans, they say, can create 850,000 new jobs and add £97bn to the North's GVA by 2050.

Well, 2050 is over 30 years away and, like many I suspect, one tends to view such bold pronouncements with a degree of scepticism. And, as I know from many years soldiering, no plan survives contact with the enemy, but then

the importance of having a plan in the first place is that you can adjust from it, hopefully winning through. The mood music in the room – and there were some 40 senior business leaders present from all sectors – was really very positive. I think they liked what David Brown had to say and what he was proposing does look good; get the priorities right, communicate these effectively and then collaborate to deliver. It makes sense to have one organisation speaking for the North, which is able to pull together into one cohesive programme plans for road, rail and air investment – and set this into an economic context that can justify spending on grounds of resulting economic growth.

Here in the North East we're impacted by geography; rivers, hills and mountains have dictated routes and we still use corridors today put in place by the Romans and Victorians. We see this legacy as we move around the country – that's why it's still easier to go North-South than East-West. It's vital, too, that links within the North also include links out to European and other international markets.

This is of particular importance in the North East as we seek to develop opportunities in Northern Europe, with Newcastle the obvious jumping-off point for this. TfN have ambitious plans and have made an excellent start laying out their case.

NE1's role in this is helping to draw together the supporting business voices which will make the TfN plan a compelling one for the Government. At the meeting, we had senior representation from Virgin Money, Leibherr, Greggs, UK Land Estates, Zerolight and Brewin Dolphin, plus the CBI, Swedish and German Consuls and many others. Whilst NE1's funding comes directly from Newcastle City Centre businesses, our influence stretches more widely; it stands to reason if the region is doing well then people working, living and travelling within it will also be visiting Newcastle. That works for us and our members. So we were very happy to help TfN reach an important and influential cohort and look forward to helping shape their transport infrastructure investment plans as these develop.





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## BUSINESS STUDENTS HELP SMALL HOLDER SOW THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS



Hexhamshire Organics, a family-run fruit and vegetable producer, recently teamed up with students at Newcastle Business School to explore ways to develop the business.

Having gone to great lengths to earn and ensure the organic legitimacy of their farm and produce, husband and wife team Bob and Ann Paton were determined to make this status a priority in any future direction the business might take.

"We spent a number of years setting up Hexhamshire Organics and, although we had been successful before, once I retired after 38 years in the technology industry and joined the business full-time, we really had to make this work for us as our main source of income" says Bob.

"The Business Clinic service was a great opportunity to get consultancy input from a local university with a great reputation which could help us with our plans for growth."

The Business Clinic, which is part of the Business School at Northumbria University, is an education scheme whereby a group of business students form a 'consultancy firm' to provide free advice for clients.

The service is available to all types of businesses and sees students tasked to analyse the problem they are presented, consider potential solutions

and provide a detailed report and full presentation of their recommendations to their client.

Undergraduate team Matthew Lynn, Niamh Whelan, Jonathan Dineen and Andrew Fleming took up the challenge of exploring potential areas of growth which would fit with Hexhamshire Organics' very specific company values. Using a range of research methods they examined possible options, impressing Bob and Ann with their dedication and hard work.

Bob has already begun to put the students' advice into practice and is very positive about the whole experience.

"One of the main issues identified was our lack of presence on Facebook. We have the website and social media channels but research showed that Facebook pages were important to our target market, and we're working on ours now. The students are kindly helping us to get these off the ground. I would 100% encourage other businesses to work with the Business Clinic. The students' insight has been a great help to us and will continue to be a great help going forward."

Since the Business Clinic started four years ago, the total value of the students' pro bono consultancy advice and reports has been estimated by 145 client organisations to exceed £700,000.

Nigel Coates, Director of the Business Clinic, said: "It's been a pleasure for our students to work with such a passionate client and to be championing organic farming. The whole experience has been fantastic and we're all wishing Bob and Ann every success in the future.

"Since 2013 our students have assisted a range of organisations with consultancy advice. Our client organisations include local and national, from the smallest to the largest, from the newest to some of the longest established companies in the UK. We're hoping to help many more in the years to come and would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in working with us."

The Business Clinic's consultancy services are available to all types of businesses from SMEs and multinationals through to not-for-profit organisations.

If you feel the students may be able to help your business and would like to find out more, you can get in touch by email: [nb.consultancy-projects@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:nb.consultancy-projects@northumbria.ac.uk)



## FINANCIAL EXPERTS RAISE OVER £7000 IN 24 HOUR CHALLENGE

A team of North East financial and property experts have raised nearly £7400 for Macmillan Cancer Support by climbing three mountains in just 24 hours.

Lead by Ian Morl of Inveniam, the team was made up of colleagues from four companies including Tier One Capital, Muckle LLP and Cascade Cash Management.

Ranging in age from 24 to 58, the team trained for just a few weeks, before the challenge attempting just one peak.

Ian said: "I think it was one of the hardest things I personally have ever attempted and without the support of the amazing team working together, there were many moments most of us would have given up. Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in just 24 hours is no mean feat. Even the travelling between base camps was exhausting."

David Redhead, who heads up the Tier One Capital projects Pendower Hall in Newcastle and Commerce House in Middlesbrough says it took a long time to recover:

"It was a real physical and mental challenge that tested emotions and strength of characters too. The team was a mix of men and women and we all pushed our boundaries, to raise funds for an important charity that has such positive impact for so many, in such trying times."

The team was made up of Ian Morl, Nav Mattu, Michelle Talbot, Jess Swindells, Stephen Black, Ian McElroy, Stewart Watson, David Redhead and Neil Marshall.



Stephen Black of Tier One Capital, said: "From the team of us climbing plus the two drivers and two guides, most of us have been affected by cancer either personally, or through family and friends.

"Macmillan Cancer Support has played a huge part in many of those life-changing events and comes to the aid of so many people, so it has been a real privilege to challenge ourselves to show them support.

"Ilan set up a Just Giving page and we have raised an amazing amount of money – however people can still donate to the cause now we have completed the challenge. We would love it if everyone that either knows us or wishes to thank Macmillan Cancer Support could give generously...it would make all the pain involved in climbing those three mountains worth it!"

To donate, visit Ian's Just Giving page at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Ian-Morl2](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Ian-Morl2)

Cascade Cash and Commerce House are now also supporting Cash For Kids 2017 so keep an eye out on news on how to help with that challenge on their facebook pages.

## 3, 2, 1 MONTHS RENT FREE AS PHASE TWO COMES TO COMPLETION

Developer Rewards Entrepreneurialism with Free Office Space

**In the last year over 800 companies have been set up in Teesside. Many others have grown, meaning they need larger offices. The hardest thing these businesses experience is finding affordable office accommodation right in the city centre so one company is stepping forward to offer office space for free!**

The management team at Commerce House have decided that as a tranche of their office space is due to be completed in the next five weeks, 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 leaving the city centre.

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.

Works are due to be completed on phase two in just five weeks so over that time, there will be a sliding scale of how many months free you may receive. Christine Huntington, Facilities Manager on site explains:

"This week with three weeks to go, you will have a massive three months free. That's three months in a fully furnished office with broadband included with nothing to pay!

"Next week this will drop to two and so on until the office space is officially opened and tenants can move in.

"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!"

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.



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.

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

# THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



One of the proudest moments and greatest achievements of my life was being appointed a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in June 2014 by Her Majesty the Queen. To be honest, I didn't even know what one was up until that point.

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire was established in 1917 by King George V to reward both civilian and military wartime service, although currently the honour is bestowed for meritorious service by the government in peace as well as for gallantry in wartime. This Order was created to recognise those individuals that had gone over and above the call of duty for their community and the United Kingdom.

Being a member does not necessarily confer any special rights or privileges, other than the use of post nominals - CBE, OBE, MBE and BEM letters after your name - or if you are lucky enough to be Knighted, to use Sir or Dame before your name. However, what becoming a member does is, engender an incredible sense of pride that further propels you to do more. Ask anyone that has received a medal how rewarding this makes them feel and drives them on to make a bigger and better difference.

At any given time there are over 100,000 living members of the Order across the globe. Each and every member has made a significant and extraordinary impact in their own area of expertise or community. The awards are inclusive and equal with a broad range of recipients recognised every year.

Over the past 3 years, I have actively supported a number of local and regional submissions being made on behalf of worthy individuals. Seeing more and more local people being recognised is fantastic and further encourages these people to make an enhanced effort to help transform our country for the better. It is worth noting that the recipient of the award is totally unaware they have been nominated, unless they are successful and not until just before the Queen announces the award.

In May this year, it was the 100th anniversary of the Order and I was invited to say a prayer at the

Order of Service at St Pauls Cathedral in front of 2000 people including Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip. This was both one of the scariest and equally exhilarating events of my life. I actually experienced butterflies sat 7 seats along from Her Majesty at the front of St Pauls, and then standing in front of the congregation sharing a prayer with everyone present.

Given the turmoil, divisiveness and desperate state of affairs currently within the world we live in, the Order provides a sense of hope for everyone. That there are good people who want to help fellow humans, unreservedly and absolutely unselfishly, should give us all cause to celebrate. For me the Order offers a great opportunity to tackle some of the issues affecting society and encourage the Best of British in us all.

*May the force be with you, and long may the Empire Strike Back at all that is Evil.*

Ammar Mirza CBE is a North East LEP Board Member and Chairman of ABC, alongside holding various other public and private sector positions. Email [ammar@ammarm.com](mailto:ammar@ammarm.com)





## Following on from the hugely successful ABC 2017 Awards and Dinner Ceremony ABC is proud to present:

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## THE PIE PROJECT GRADUATION CEREMONY

On Thursday 13 July, The Discovery Museum played host to the BIG PIE Challenge graduation and awards ceremony.

The competition, which is run by The PIE Project Charity, was held across the North East of England. The first round of the enterprise competition involved over 1600 pupils who took part in STEM and enterprise-based activities. Seven schools fought off fierce competition to go through to the second stage which involved creating, developing and selling their own

products, and completing a formal qualification. The graduation and awards ceremony was an opportunity to celebrate the pupils' wonderful achievements. Speakers included Bill Midgley OBE, HM Lord Lieutenant Susan Winfield OBE, Steve Gittins, Rob Kleiser, Dean Jackson, Barbara Gubbins CBE DL, Imran Khaliq, Andrew Hodgson OBE and Sir John Hall. Businesses, schools and communities

came together to applaud the successes and enjoy a wonderful afternoon tea. The top three enterprising schools in the North East were revealed as Richard Coates C of E Middle School, Ayresome Primary School and Kibblesworth Academy.

The PIE Project Charity is wholly dependent upon donations to deliver its work.

If you would like to help in any way please get in touch on [info@pieproject.org](mailto:info@pieproject.org)



## KEEPING WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY SPIRITS HIGH

At AkzoNobel we share and celebrate successes across the team through our 'Winning Together' initiative while our commitment to corporate social responsibility ensures we're good neighbours to the communities in which we operate. These principles underpin everything that we do at AkzoNobel and play an important role in the day-to-day running of our manufacturing units.

"Like the cogs and components in our state-of-the-art production lines, each individual at AkzoNobel has an integral role to play," said Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel in Ashington.

"By working hard to ensure that we celebrate the successes of our people and actively promoting a 'one team, one voice' mindset throughout the business, we have brought a whole new meaning to the word teamwork. Everyone is immensely respectful of each other's work and we are more productive as a result of it."

Although AkzoNobel is first and foremost a place of work, we do like to have fun; whether we are celebrating a win for the business, as we will be later in the year when we officially open our new manufacturing facility at Ashington, or whether we are fundraising for one of our nominated charities.

Each year we ask our employees to nominate a local charity to support, to which all funds raised during our various activities throughout the year will be donated.

This year, AkzoNobel's Ashington facility voted to support the Nicole Rich Foundation which supports the two young daughters of an AkzoNobel employee who have sadly been diagnosed with the rare neurodegenerative condition, Batten Disease.

"We are incredibly proud to support the Nicole Rich Foundation," said Jill Johnston, site support coordinator at AkzoNobel in Ashington.

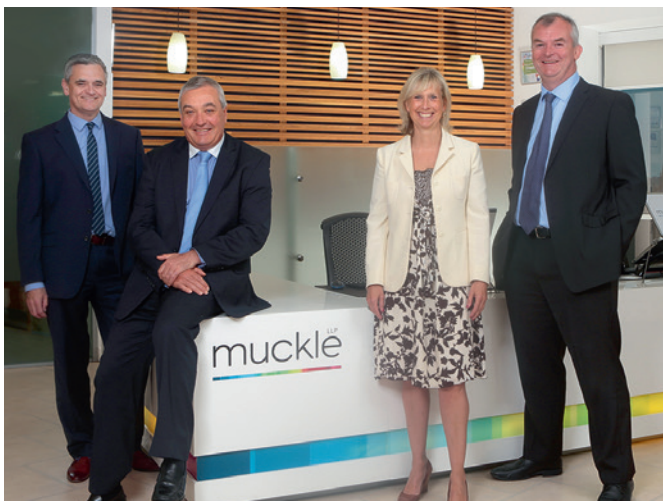


"The Foundation is working alongside the Batten Disease Family Association (BDFA) to help raise awareness and vital funds for medical research to help find a cure for the disease.

"So far, our fundraising activities have helped to raise over £6,000 for the charity, far surpassing our original target for the whole year."

To find out more about AkzoNobel, visit [www.akzonobel.com](http://www.akzonobel.com) or for more information about the Nicole Rich Foundation, visit [www.thenicolerichfoundation.org.uk](http://www.thenicolerichfoundation.org.uk).

## FIRST CLASS RESULT FOR MUCKLE LLP



**Muckle LLP has successfully beaten competition from some of the country's top national and international law firms to win a place on the prestigious national education panel.**

The North East's leading independent law firm for businesses has been allocated the maximum three places on the Higher Education Procurement Consortia. It is also one of only ten firms to be appointed to the highly sought after One-Stop-Shop legal services panel.

It means that Newcastle-based Muckle LLP can offer its full range of services to scores of higher education organisations across England and Wales, without being restricted to particular disciplines.

In addition to the One-Stop-Shop panel, Muckle LLP can also provide specific property (including construction) and commercial legal services through the purchasing consortia framework agreement for at least the next three years.

The win follows Muckle LLP's successful appointment to the London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) panel in 2014, where it was the only law firm outside London to be selected.

The latest appointment to the Higher Education Procurement Consortia panel is another great win for Muckle's Education Team, led by Tony McPhillips, and builds on its extensive experience and reputation in the education sector.

Tony McPhillips said: "This is a significant milestone for our Education team and is suitable recognition for the hard work we have been delivering in this sector. This appointment as a preferred supplier on the panel, will further strengthen our credentials in this sector and serve to widen our reach across England and Wales.

"We are also extremely proud to be the only regional independent law firm, operating from a single site office in Newcastle, to have gained a place on the national panel."

Jill Christiaens, Senior Contracts Manager for the Higher Education Procurement Consortia panel added: "We believe the framework agreement, resulting from a collaborative exercise between the Higher Education Consortia, has an excellent panel of capable firms."

Muckle LLP is currently working with the University of Newcastle on a number of developments at Science Central, a £350m development that is one of the biggest mixed-use, urban regeneration projects of its kind in the UK. Its lawyers also helped create a joint venture LLP between the University of Newcastle, Legal & General and Newcastle City Council, bringing together academia, the public sector, communities, business and industry.

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MARRIAGES DON'T LAST LONG?



A recent divorce case has brought a change in the way that courts view short-lived marriages. Jonathan Flower, Partner and Head of the Family Law team at Ward Hadaway, has more.

**A recent Court of Appeal case has prompted a change in the approach the courts are likely to take in short marriage cases.**

In the case - *Sharp V Sharp* [2017] EWCA Civ 408 - the parties were in their early forties, had been married for a short period of time and did not have children.

Both had their own careers and had kept a degree of their finances separate. The wife had been paid substantial bonuses during their time together.

At the time of the hearing, their total assets amounted to £6.9 million.

Since 2001, the courts have approached financial remedy cases on the basis that matrimonial assets should be divided on a 50/50 basis. This has become known as the 'sharing principle'.

The High Court Judge at first instance in this case awarded the husband £2.725 million, representing half of the assets that had accumulated during their marriage (known as the 'marital assets').

In calculating the marital assets, the Judge excluded the couple's first joint property as it was purchased prior to their marriage and he deducted an additional figure in respect of other pre-acquired assets giving the husband half of the balance.

The wife appealed to the Court of Appeal. It was her case that there should not be a 50/50 split of the assets on the basis that this was a short marriage with no children, that both the husband and wife had careers and had kept some of their finances separate.

She argued that this justified a relaxation of the sharing principle and that fairness should lead to a different approach depending on the length of the marriage.

She argued that the husband should get one half of the value of the two jointly owned properties but have no claim on her other capital.

On appeal, the husband's award was reduced to £2 million. The first joint property was ordered to be

transferred to him and, in addition, he received a lump sum.

The award was based on the husband retaining half the value of the two joint properties and an additional lump sum to take account of:

- the standard of living during the marriage
- a modest amount to enable him to live in the property he was to retain
- a share in the assets held by the wife.

The Court of Appeal agreed that as this was a short marriage, with no children, dual careers and the parties had kept some of their finances separate, this was "one of the very small number of cases" where these factors justified a departure from equality and the 'sharing principle' to achieve fairness between the husband and the wife.

Whilst each case is different on its facts, this case highlights a change in the way the courts may consider the 'sharing principle' in short marriage cases and highlights the importance that all the circumstances of the case should be considered.



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## GIFTS FOR THE BIG DAY



With 'wedding season' now in full swing with couples taking advantage of the summer months - and hopefully some accompanying summer weather - guests will be starting to consider what gifts to give the happy couple to celebrate their big day.

**Increasingly these days, couples already live together before their marriage, meaning they will most likely have all of the household items that were so popular as wedding presents in days gone by.**

Nowadays, one of the main types of gift given to newlyweds are gifts of cash – as well as being frequently requested as wedding gifts, this comes with the added benefit to the donor that it will be exempt from inheritance tax (IHT) providing it is given on or shortly before the date of the wedding or civil partnership.

The level of tax relief varies depending on the relationship between the person who gives the gift and the recipient. Each parent, including step parents, can give up to £5,000 tax free. Grandparents can each give up to £2,500, and other relatives and friends can each give up to £1,000.

All taxpayers are eligible to take advantage of an annual IHT gift allowance of £3,000 per financial year and records should be kept of all gifts given, including wedding gifts.

In addition for those making smaller cash gifts, there is the Small Gifts Exemption that can be taken advantage of, which allows as many gifts of under £250 to be made as you wish - they will all be exempt.

Alternatively, there is also the ability to give away an unlimited amount provided it is out of 'excess income'. This is a means of preventing your estate from increasing in value. Many people use this means of inheritance tax planning to give money to children and grandchildren on a regular basis but these gifts can be given to whomever you want. If making gifts in this it is essential that comprehensive records are kept to show that after paying your living expenses you are able to make

the gift without compromising your lifestyle.

If you wish to make gifts over and above permitted allowances then you would need to survive the gifts by seven years for the value to fall outside of your estate and not affect your individual tax free allowance which is currently £325,000

With regard to the bride and groom themselves - if, to mark their wedding day, they wish to give a gift of cash to each other, it will be completely free of IHT and Capital Gains Tax (CGT). With further regard to CGT, if couples who plan to marry both own properties, they risk running into complications once they become husband and wife. The main residence exemption for CGT applies only to one property per married couple, so it must be decided which property will be the 'main marital home'.

If any further clarity is required with regard to your IHT or CGT liabilities, expert advice should be sought.

Sophie Robinson is a Wills and Probate specialist at Newcastle law firm Sintons. To speak to her about this or any other matter, contact Sophie on [sophie.robinson@sintons.co.uk](mailto:sophie.robinson@sintons.co.uk) or 0191 226 7812.



# BIRTHS, SICKNESS AND DEATH - DEPENDANT CARE LEAVE EXPLAINED

By Claire Rolston, Solicitor, Director, CLR Law

Many employees will have requested, at some point, time off to deal with a poorly child, an injured partner or a parent who needs their help.

## What are their rights in respect of this?

Legislation provides that employees are entitled to take reasonable, unpaid time off to care for dependants in order to take action which is necessary:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant; or
- to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly during the time the child is usually at school.

Further, "unexpected" does not mean sudden. So, an employee who has advance notice of the disruption may still be able to take time off, although the more notice the employee has, the

harder it will be for them to establish that the time off was necessary.

## Who are dependants?

Dependants include:

- a spouse or civil partner;
- a child;
- a parent; and
- a person who lives in the same household as the employee (but not as an employee, tenant, lodger or boarder).

## What should your employee do?

They must tell you the reason for their absence as soon as reasonably practicable and for how long they expect to be absent.

## How much time can they take off?

The legislation is aimed at allowing employees to deal with the initial situation, rather than entitling them to time off to provide the care themselves. Depending on the circumstances, one or two days is likely to be considered reasonable.

It is usually beneficial to have a policy covering this entitlement so that expectations are managed from the outset and confusion avoided.



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

# THE DAVIDSON'S - A NORTHUMBERLAND DYNASTY

Gordon Taylor is a name familiar to many of Northern Insight's clientele as writer and photographer for the magazine.

What many of the readership will not know is the fact he is also a writer with two novels and a ghostwritten autobiography on Terry Miller, winner of ITV's Hell's Kitchen to his name.

As a voracious reader, he decided a few years ago to throw himself into the circle of authors by writing his debut novel, 'Cometh the Man', a historical adventure and romance work concerning the Davidson's, a well-to-do family in Northumberland who live in the fictional estate of Thistlebrough in the county. As the first in a trilogy of works, the original is set between 1820 and 1854 between the county and South Africa. The main protagonist in this the first in the series of books, is Nathaniel Davidson, son of the family. A series of family disagreements force the sixteen year old to abandon his kin to seek his fortune in the African country. It's a decision fraught with complications and troubles which stretch the young man to extremes.

"I felt I had the wherewithal to write this type of novel, having a passion for both our part of the world and history in general. The book was originally written to satisfy my ambition and when Austin & MaCauley of London decided to publish, it seemed to vindicate my belief," advises the author, "Getting a publisher is a notoriously difficult thing to achieve, particularly when you don't have an agent, so I was doubly delighted when the company decided to invest in my work."

Since the success of the first book, Gordon has followed up with number two in the series, entitled,



"Blood Ties." In this instalment, Nathaniel's son Toby, an officer serving in the army during the Crimean War, is forced to desert and makes it his mission in life to reclaim the family estate of Thistlebrough, which was lost by his Grandfather, Sir Toby Davidson in 'Cometh the Man'. A unique set of circumstances conspire to thwart his ambitions and Toby's character is forced to change dramatically throughout the story.

"Since the realisation I could write successfully, I have been surprised to hear of many people who have either written works but not had the confidence to send to a publisher or individuals with good concrete

ideas for novels but have never got around to laying words on paper. My experience has taught me that success in writing can be achieved but it is the power of self-discipline and the ability to overcome that bogey of the writer, writers block which often distinguish the difference between achievement or not," advises Gordon.

It's worth remembering, you may not be William Shakespeare or Charles Dickens but you just might be William Dickens or Charles Shakespeare.

Gordon is planning to begin the third part of his trilogy very soon, entitled 'And in the End', which will complete the series between 1901 and 1939. In the meantime he is underway with two historical novels, 'The Kings Spies' set in the court of Henry V111 and a novel set in the heart of the Northumberland fishing community in the early part of the twentieth century.



Cometh the Man and Blood Ties are available on Kindle E books priced at 99p and £1.93 respectively.



## NEW HOME FOR TEAM VALLEY-BASED COMMERCIAL SOLICITORS PG LEGAL

2017 is off to a great start with continued growth, a refreshed brand and a new Head Office for the PG Legal team.

Team Valley based commercial solicitors PG Legal have completed their move to new premises, just a stone's throw from their former offices in Team Valley. In line with a recent rebrand and the launch of Teesside meeting rooms, the move marks the start of an exciting new chapter in the firm's history.

Established in 2011 by Commercial Solicitor Phillip Dean, PG Legal has enjoyed continued success and significant growth, with 29 staff and consultants under their new roof. Working with clients across the region, throughout the UK and internationally, PG Legal provides commercial legal services to businesses of all sizes and sectors.

Phillip says, "Our recent move reflects an ongoing commitment to our clients to provide them with effective legal solutions and services in a comfortable, accessible environment. We're committed to taking a different approach to commercial law, cutting through jargon to provide clarity and certainty".

Partner Jonathan Fletcher, who has been with PG Legal since joining Phillip in 2012, adds 'The feedback we have received from clients on the new premises and brand has been very positive. PG Legal focuses on delivering real-life, practical solutions for businesses. Our new facilities include dynamic meeting rooms and a dedicated training

centre to ensure an exceptional level of service today and continuous improvement as we build for the future."

Earlier in 2017, the firm launched its innovative Directors Individual Legal Support solutions, providing comprehensive support across a wide range of areas to help directors plan for their own future, their family's future, and the future success of their business.

PG Legal provide a wide range of professional legal services, covering dispute resolutions, employment law, corporate solutions, commercial property services and fixed fee debt recovery.

For more information on any areas, visit [www.pglegal.co.uk](http://www.pglegal.co.uk)





PG LEGAL OPEN MORNING - NEW OFFICE LAUNCH





# NORTH EAST LAW FIRM STRENGTHENS OFFERING WITH NEW APPOINTMENTS



Gordon Brown Law Firm (GBLF) is building upon its talented workforce and service offering with a number of new appointments and an internal promotion.

Following a successful 12 months, GBLF has promoted Louise Ottaway to associate within its residential conveyancing team, while Trevor Gay and Jennifer Beadle join the firm as solicitors in the family and commercial teams, respectively.

Louise Ottaway, 34, from Chester-le-Street, has stepped up as associate to the firm's 35-strong residential conveyancing team from her previous position as team leader. Louise's new role will see her focus on operational management, budget forecasting and overseeing the four residential conveyancing team leaders. She will also continue to lead on training members of the team and supporting their development.

Louise said: "Having been at GBLF for over 10 years it's fantastic to see how the firm is developing. When I first started in the residential conveyancing department there was only three of us in the team so to now have 35 people is a great achievement.

"The firm is very encouraging of internal development and I appreciate the trust shown in me by the partners. I'm looking forward to

being more involved in GBLF's growth plans and contributing to and implementing new systems of working."

The announcement of GBLF's two new recruits comes as the firm continues to broaden its skill base and enhance its service offering.

Joining GBLF's commercial team is Jennifer Beadle, 27, from Burnopfield. She joins from Kingswalk Law where she spent four years, after studying Law at Hull University and completing her studies at Northumbria University.

Jennifer added: "Having qualified at a relatively small firm I felt the time was right to move to a bigger firm where I could draw on the experiences of those around me and where greater opportunities are available. I was really impressed by everyone at GBLF and it was exactly the role that I was looking for at this stage of my career."

Trevor Gay, 38, from Cullercoats, joins the family team bringing with him over 15 years' experience, including three years as a partner at a Bedfordshire law firm. He said: "GBLF has a great reputation

and the firm had certainly been on my radar for some time prior to my appointment. The culture and values of the team fit in with my own and I am eager to help the firm with its growth moving forward."

With offices located in Newcastle and Chester-le-Street, GBLF offers a range of legal services and advice across all areas of family, residential conveyancing, wills and probate, dispute resolution, corporate and commercial law.

Managing Partner at GBLF, Kathryn Taylor, said: "It's great to be able to welcome Jennifer and Trevor to the GBLF team and recognise Louise's hard work with her promotion to associate.

"As a firm, we are focused on strengthening our service offering and the appointment of Trevor and Jennifer will add to the outstanding range of skills that as a team we already possess. We are always keen to see our colleagues who have shown that they are ready to progress develop alongside the firm and Louise has certainly done that in her time with us."



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# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA



The use of social media is now an established fact of life. Technological advances with easy-to-use apps on smartphones and tablets together with high speed internet links via home PCs and workplace computers, enables all of us instant access to online forums and facilities 24 hours per day (should we be so inclined).

**In a working relationship context, it should not be overlooked that whatever one posts on social media, whether it be via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other discussion forums either in the form of words or pictures, could have serious repercussions for our working relationships.**

There are numerous cases which have been reported from the Employment Tribunal establishing that it should not be overly difficult to fairly dismiss an employee who has made derogatory or negative comments about their employer or their work colleagues on social media. This principle applies irrespective of whether the individual intended to cause offence or not. It is the public nature of the media platform (global in most cases these days) that creates a significant risk that private comments made in a public forum could amount to gross misconduct. In some cases there may be examples of discriminatory conduct as well in the form of the expression of extreme political views.

A client of mine recently had cause to terminate the employment of an individual as a result of comments made on social media which resulted in the client's customer refusing to allow that

particular individual on-site. They removed their security pass and our client did not have any alternative work available for the individual to carry out at any other site with the result that there was no realistic option other than to terminate that individual's employment.

The lesson to be learned here is that comments made via social media can be seen by your customers as well as by your work colleagues.

In order to ensure that you have the best possible chance of successfully defending any claims for unfair dismissal from a disgruntled employee who has been sacked for making inappropriate or potentially offensive comments on social media, you should implement a clear and unambiguous social media policy which should apply not only to the use of company IT systems but also to comments made by an individual when they are not at work. Some may say that such an approach is Orwellian and smacks of Big Brother but in the modern world, there is no such thing as strictly private comments should those comments be made on a public social media forum. The expectation that an individual will not engage in

offensive and discriminatory conduct outside of the workplace is not an unreasonable standard of behaviour for an employer to expect these days.

Some claimants in Tribunal cases have sought to rely on the principles set out in the Human Rights Act 1998, particularly Article 8 which gives a right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence as well as referring to the principles of Data Protection Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to argue that their communications via e-mail or social media should be treated as being sacrosanct on the grounds of privacy. It has to be said that in most cases where there is a clear breach of the standards of civil behaviour and where there are expressions of offensive content it will normally be the case that an employer will be able to dismiss an employee and will be able to successfully defend that action at an Employment Tribunal. Essentially, the right to privacy and the rules regarding use of IT systems does not provide a shield or a hiding place for those who choose to express themselves in offensive and discriminatory ways.

If you require any advice and guidance on how to effectively implement a social media policy then please give me a call on: 0191 282 2870 or email [paul.johnstone@collingwoodlegal.com](mailto:paul.johnstone@collingwoodlegal.com)



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## SANDERSON YOUNG LEAD THE FIELD ON SOCIAL MEDIA



An iconic building, for sale through Sanderson Young, has gone viral on social media.

The Turrets in Gosforth, a stunning detached home built in the 1930's, has a prominent position set back from Kenton Road. The property was purchased by the current owners in 2004 when the whole site was redeveloped to create two new houses.

After sharing the property link to their Facebook page, over 400 members of the community shared their stories about the house, including one lady whose grandparents were the former owners of the property.

Sue Tomlin, Media Manager of Sanderson Young, explained: "We are extremely lucky to be handling the sale and marketing of such a well-known home. We actively monitor the exposure of our social media campaigns and this has to be the most successful yet, with over 56,000 people viewing the full property details direct on our website."

Managing Director Duncan Young also commented: "The Turrets is a charismatic and beautiful house in a superb area. I am delighted that the team have been so successful in the promotion."

## CHARTERED SURVEYOR PLOTS HIS OWN COURSE

A Chartered Surveyor and Land Agent, who has worked for two of the region's leading property consultants, has started his own business in his hometown.

Jonathan Wallis from Barnard Castle specialises in providing advice on rural and specialist commercial property and business matters. His new business, Jonathan Wallis Chartered Surveyors, will include independent advice on the selling and purchase of rural and commercial property, rural grants and subsidies and promotion of land for development.

Jonathan said: "Most of my work revolves around value and making a difference for my clients. I like to engage with people and find that making relationships and building up rapport and trust is so important. I would rather spend a few hours explaining what I'm doing for a client than simply sending an email. I've always been diligent and thorough and believe in delivering the right result. I don't stop until I get the right result. I care about my clients and like to build long term relationships with them."



## ARCHITECTURE AMBASSADOR ROLE FOR JDDK



Newcastle-based architects JDDK Ltd have been inspiring pupils at St Teresa's School in Heaton through the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Architecture Ambassadors programme.

Designed to inspire a passion for architecture in the next generation, the programme has involved JDDK's Principal Architect Alison Thornton-Sykes, with fellow architect Sam Dixon, linking with the school to talk about their work in a special workshop on Linking Structures. They have also set Year 5 pupils a brief to create their own structure which would link aspects of the natural or built environment.

The programme has involved various out-of-school visits to both their forest school and The Sill, Northumberland National Park Authority's new National Landscape Discovery Centre at Once Brewed in Northumberland.

The scheme supports creative partnerships between RIBA members, teachers and young people to deliver creative, hands-on experience in classrooms across the country. Thanks to funding from Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners, the RIBA National Schools Programme has engaged more than 4000 school children in England since September 2015.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kingfisher Approved Damp proof contractors</li> <li>● HETAS Registered installers of Stoves &amp; Liners</li> <li>● Fully Trained GRP roof installers</li> <li>● Extensions</li> <li>● Plastering</li> <li>● Roofline – Gutters, Fascias &amp; Soffits</li> <li>● Stone Masonry</li> <li>● Plans can be sent via PDF to our email address</li> <li>● All areas covered and all other building services offered</li> </ul>	<p>Ian Arkle – 07710693861                  Stuart Arkle – 07710693860                  Home – 01665 574604                  Email – <a href="mailto:arkleandsons@gmail.com">arkleandsons@gmail.com</a>                  Website – <a href="http://www.arkleandsons.com">www.arkleandsons.com</a></p> <p><b>"A true local family owned business"</b></p>
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## Hallbank Newcastle Road, Corbridge

Hallbank is an exquisite detached family home set within its own private gardens and grounds of approximately 1 acre with magnificent views across open countryside. This stunning country house has been extensively refurbished and benefits from a separate studio/cottage.

**Price Guide: £2.45 Million**

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## Old Orchard House High Buston, Alnmouth, Alnwick

This outstanding country house benefits from iconic coastal views and 6120 sq ft of luxury accommodation including leisure suite with heated pool. Externally are landscaped gardens, a stable block, manege, two paddocks and an orchard site with development potential.

**Price Guide: £1.9 Million**

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## LINTZ GREEN HOUSE, LINTZ GREEN, ROWLANDS GILL



## PRICE GUIDE: £1.195 MILLION

Lintz Green House is a highly impressive Grade II Listed property with a five bed roomed principal wing, a three bed roomed independent coach house and extensive outbuildings. Built in 1828 and greatly improved in recent years, this beautiful home provides very fine country living with outstanding features including windows with operational shutters, stripped wood doors, and period fireplaces. It currently provides four reception rooms and five bedrooms and there is an enclosed staircase to the attic store rooms with excellent storage and additional living space if required. The coach house is ideal for an independent relative and the range of outbuildings currently incorporate a snooker room, hobbies room, gymnasium and storage areas. Lintz Green House is set in a fabulous private site extending to 2.5 acres and has development potential to divide into three homes if required.



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)



## DEAL ME IN

Janet Hopkinson of Sanderson Young looks at one of the fundamentally important issues in selling or buying a property - the deal.

There is currently an awful lot in the news about negotiating. In Europe, the Brexit negotiators are sharpening their pencils while on the other side of the Atlantic President Trump would have us believe that he is the best negotiator who ever walked the earth.

In fact selling houses has more to do with negotiating than just about anything else - the better the negotiator you have on your side, the better the deal you get. The trouble is most people aren't too comfortable negotiating the purchases and sales of their own homes. That's why they get someone to act for them - an estate agent.

Negotiators should never be confused with hagglers. Anyone can haggle. The government, we hope, will not be haggling our future away with the EU. Instead they should be carefully and painstakingly figuring what the EU wants most and then trying to work out how we can give them what they want at minimum cost and maximum benefit to ourselves. At the same time the UK team should be making demands that are realistic, as unrealistic demands just annoy the other side and then no one gets anywhere.

In the end both sides will compromise a little here and a little there. Neither side will end up with all



that they want - although each will claim that they have. But both sides will reach an agreeable level of what they do want. Everyone will come away happy - or acceptably so.

At first there will be a few threats - or sanctions - as those in the negotiating business call them. These will reach the press. Most headline arguments will be limited to the first initial skirmishes - just to show serious intent. But this is also sabre-rattling theatre for the sake of the folks back home. Then tentative proposals will be put to sound out the other side. This will lead to counter-proposals.

Slowly, point-by-point, day-by-day, progress will be made. Each side will review and confirm what has been agreed as it goes along so there will be no doubt or question in the future. Watch the Brexit negotiations carefully. They will unfold this way. All negotiations do.

Good negotiators have years of experience during which they learn the tricks of the trade. Whether the negotiation is for world peace, releasing hostages, buying or selling business conglomerates or simply debating which film you will go and see with your partner or friend on Saturday night, all negotiations run in roughly the same way - argument, proposal, counter-proposal, agreement. We are all good at negotiating to some extent - children perhaps best of all, as they never back down and tears make a good sanction. But how good are we at multi-hundred-thousand-pound deals when it's our own money at stake? Then it can often get too personal. That's where many do-it-yourself negotiations break down - over small points of petty principle which prevent both sides from following a clear and dispassionate path to the desired end.

So why is a good estate agent so important? Because he or she will be a skilled negotiator. Without a skilled negotiator an already complicated house selling process can fast become an impossible one. If you think that buying and selling a property is hard when you use an estate agent, just wait until you try to do it without one.

Janet Hopkinson, Operations Director, Sanderson Young. T: 0191 2130033 E: janet.hopkinson@sandersonyoung.co.uk

## MOVE QUICKLY TO SECURE AN IDYLIC HOME IN WYNYARD PARK



David Wilson Homes North East's The Grove development, located in the prestigious Wynyard Park estate, recently launched its two new show homes following unprecedented levels of interest and reservations. David Wilson Homes is urging buyers to move quickly to avoid missing out, as only seven plots now remain following 16 reservations in the run up to the launch of this popular site.

With prices starting from just £277,995, the development offers luxurious two, three, four and five bedroom homes set within 885 acres of stunning estate. The semi-rural location offers the peace and quiet of the countryside combined with easy commuter access to surrounding towns and cities, perfect for professionals and growing families.

Buyers will be able to explore The Bradwell, a spacious three bedroom home with integral garage. Perfect for families, the property features a contemporary kitchen and breakfast area, and a bright lounge with dining area, bathed in

natural light from the French doors. The first floor comprises of a spacious master bedroom with en suite, two double bedrooms and a family bathroom.

Also launching is The Glidewell, a five bedroom home with an impressive entranceway and a large, open-plan kitchen and breakfast area, dining room and study. Complete with a spacious lounge, the property offers a single bedroom, three double bedrooms, one with en suite and an impressive master bedroom, also with an en suite and dressing area.

Tracy Clark-McCabe, Sales Manager at The Grove, commented: "We've had a huge amount of interest in this development and a lot of the plots have already been reserved due to its excellent location and the stunning family homes on offer. We would urge anyone who is looking for the perfect balance between country living and access to schools, culture and leisure facilities to move quickly to avoid missing out."

To find out more, or to book an appointment, please visit: [www.dwh.co.uk/new-homes/cleveland/H676001-The-Grove/](http://www.dwh.co.uk/new-homes/cleveland/H676001-The-Grove/)

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Completed in 2012 and built to the highest of luxury specifications, Little Holmside Farm is a truly superb home offering a wealth of generous accommodation arranged over approximately 6,000sqft. As you approach the property you are lead to an extended driveway allowing generous parking and access to the double detached garage block. You are immediately aware of the beautifully landscaped gardens and panoramic views that surround the property and the architectural wonder that has created such a wonderful opportunity to call home.

Price Guide £1.75 Million

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Price Guide £1.1 Million

Contact Jan Dale at URBAN LUXE. T: 08456431186





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## BELLWAY LAUNCHES THE WEDMORE SHOW HOME AT FIVE MILE PARK

Visitors to the Five Mile Park development just north of Gosforth can now view Bellway's latest show home, the four bedroom detached Wedmore.

Providing over 1,600 sq ft of living space the Wedmore makes a stunning family home. The ground floor comprises a large kitchen dining area with French doors to the rear of the property. A central hallway links you to a living room measuring a comfortable 11' 8" x 20' there is also a separate study area and downstairs WC.

The first floor comprises a master bedroom with ensuite and its own dressing area, bedroom two also includes ensuite facilities and a family bathroom serves the remaining two bedrooms.

Rob Armstrong, Sales Director at Bellway, said: "Five Mile Park is a terrific location where we have been phenomenally successful. The development is appealing to a cross section of house hunters, who can choose from a wide range of house types starting from £339,995. Residents can enjoy all the benefits of Gosforth and for commuters and city workers, there are a variety of transport modes into Newcastle which is only five miles away."

As well as the Wedmore design Bellway also has available its Haydock, Goodwood and Coleridge designs which all offer spacious four bedroom accommodation and a variety of floor plans to suit family requirements.

Locally, Wideopen's amenities include a library and health centre, post-office, with primary schools - Hazlewood and Greenfields and Seaton Burn Community College and Sixth Form under a mile away. Local shopping includes the Cooperative, while Gosforth offers an Asda Superstore and Sainsbury in the High Street's shopping Centre.

Residents at Five Mile Park have access to a bridleway which links the development in one direction to Weetslade Country Park providing walkers and cyclists with panoramic views towards the Cheviot Hills, the city centre and the coastline. In the other direction residents have access to Gosforth Park via Sandy Lane.

Buyers can choose to take advantage of the Help to Buy scheme which only requires a five percent deposit and enables a buyer to take advantage of a five year twenty percent interest free Government loan which helps to reduce mortgage repayments during the first five years of ownership.

For buyers with a home to sell, Bellway can help out with their popular Express Mover Service, where they will use their experience to market and sell your old home on your behalf, free of charge. Alternatively, Bellway will also consider part exchange arrangements.

For commuters, the development is ideally located and is only 1 mile from the A1, providing easy access to the regions road network. Local buses connect to Newcastle and the Metro system just a few minutes away at Gosforth's Regent Centre.

For more information, visit [www.bellway.co.uk](http://www.bellway.co.uk) or call the sales centre Tel: 0191 236 3513

Opening hours: 11:00am – 5:30pm Monday, 11:00am – 7:00pm Thursday and 11:00am – 5:30pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday.  
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# CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN OFFICE MARKET IN NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE



Tim Aisbitt, Associate Director at leading North East property firm Bradley Hall, discusses the positive outlook on Newcastle's city centre office market.

During the first half of this year Bradley Hall has experienced a significant increase in investment and demand for office space in the region's capital.

We recently welcomed to the market several impressive refurbished office schemes in Newcastle City Centre. Landlords are identifying that the city centre is an ideal location to invest in high quality and well located office space, with continually changing attitudes towards the space we work in.

Investors are also benefitting from reliable investment yields, with sustained rental growth continuing in light of the lack of supply of available office space in the city centre. A contributing factor is the large number of traditional office buildings being converted into student halls of residence.

Prime rents have modestly increased by 1.4% in comparison to last year thanks to the slow and steady increase in demand. Despite wider economic uncertainty, the North East remains resolute and optimistic.

As well as proving a popular location with both local and national investors, Newcastle also offers good opportunities for businesses who want to expand in an attractive and vibrant city which offers one of the lowest occupational costs of all the major UK regional cities.

The city is also benefitting from major investments and significant funding being directed towards



the tech sector and sciences, including ground breaking developments like Science Central which is continuing to gather pace.

More traditional office stock is continuing to be popular and the owners of The Collingwood Buildings, on Collingwood Street, have invested over £300,000 in updating the boutique offices, which boast luxury amenities all within a stone's

throw of the train station. A collection of 35 of the 130 fully furnished offices are currently available, ranging from 125sq ft to 2,000sq ft, and include great modern facilities in an attractive period building.

Other offices in the heart of Newcastle which are set to undergo significant investment and refurbishment include 18-24 Grey Street, following its multi million-pound purchase by Adam Thompson. His firm, Stessa Commercial, part of Stessa UK, purchased the building and is now set to further invest in the Grade II listed office space on one of Newcastle's most iconic streets.

Our most recent appointment is to market offices within 26 Mosley Street, a fabulous building and originally the National Westminster bank, based above the popular Miller and Carter steakhouse. The property spans across three floors, totalling approximately 9,000ft<sup>2</sup>, with a range of stylish and refurbished spaces available to let. Landlord, HMC Group, have invested significantly in an 18 month long project to modernise the space in preparation for new tenants, and works are set to complete in the late summer of this year.

In addition to office space to let, we have a range of office investments available both on and off market.

For more information on Bradley Hall's commercial and residential services, please visit [www.bradleyhall.co.uk](http://www.bradleyhall.co.uk) or call the Hood Street office on 0191 232 8080.



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## CENTRAL NEWCASTLE OFFICE UNDERGOES REFURBISHMENT AFTER MULTIMILLION- POUND ACQUISITION

Iconic offices in the heart of Newcastle are set to undergo significant refurbishment following a multimillion-pound purchase.



The Grade II listed building which spans 18-24 Grey Street has been acquired by North East based investment firm Stessa Commercial, an investment company set up by former Utilitywise director Adam Thompson.

Stessa Commercial forms one part of the Stessa group of companies set up by entrepreneur Adam. He launched the Utilitywise energy consultancy firm alongside his father Geoff Thompson 11 years ago, leaving the company in 2014. He now oversees the Stessa Group which has an impressive portfolio of investment properties, including large student accommodation sites and other properties in the region, as well as a leisure division.

The newest investment by the company, which spans seven floors, is set to undergo a significant investment and refurbishment to modernise the property in preparation for new tenants. The offices are currently available to let through leading North East property firm Bradley Hall.

Surrounding occupiers of the building include several national businesses including Royal Bank

of Scotland, NRG Recruitment and Sanderson Weatherall, alongside a range of popular retail and leisure facilities playing host to many well-known restaurants such as Harry's Bar, Las Iguana's and Browns as well as Grey Street Hotel and The Theatre Royal.

Adam Thompson, Director of Stessa Commercial Limited, said; "We are delighted to bring a number of Grade II listed offices on the iconic Grey Street to the market.

"The offices provide mainly open plan suites over part raised flooring and allow for a variety of configurations including open plan, modular and cellular formations.

"The space is very versatile and would be an excellent location for a number of businesses to create a base. We have already had interest from a variety of different businesses and expect to fill the suites soon."

The suites, which are available to let separately, boast modern fixtures and fittings, an impressive ground floor atrium, a grand direct street entrance

offering access to reception, seating areas and two 10 passenger lifts which serve all floors.

As well as its excellent location for occupiers who enjoy the perks of the city, the property is also close to local transport links including Newcastle Central Station and Monument Metro Station.

The property, which is also managed by Bradley Hall, has benefitted from a recently completed lease renewal and negotiations are ongoing with other existing tenants to extend their occupation.

Neil Hart, Managing Director at Bradley Hall, said: "Thanks to this investment the landlord is set to create an attractive office space for prospective tenants. Its location is fantastic with excellent transport links and a well presented interior and exterior.

"The landlord is also set to reduce rents, making it excellent value. We don't expect the property to be vacant for very long as many businesses are looking for a presence in the city centre, especially in such a popular location as Grey Street.

For more information please call the Bradley Hall Hood Street office on 0191 232 8080.



Michael Gramshaw meets

## HANNAH LAMB

Director, Charles Lamb Sales & Lettings

### Did you always envisage a career in property?

Not at all, initially I always wanted to be a primary teacher and work with children. The idea of working in an office, stuck at a desk 9 to 5, bored me! Even when my parents opened Charles Lamb's in 1995 and I was still at school, it was the last thing I wanted to get involved in however, after working Saturday mornings for them and seeing how the average students dress back in the 90's with tie dye clothes and doc martin boots, I decided that University wasn't for me and started working in retail. It wasn't until after a serious health condition made me have to give up full time work for 12 months that I entered into property with my first job at Cooke & Co Estate Agents as their office junior, 12 months later, I joined the Charles Lamb team and it has been property ever since.

### Tell me about your current role?

Well, after over 16 years at Charles Lamb's I became sole owner and director of the company, following on from the full retirement of my parents in late 2016. As most people know, this has been a family run business for over 22 years and having recently returned from maternity leave after having my first child, it all kind of came at the right time. I've pretty much done every role in the company over the last 15 years and still get involved in the day to day aspects of managing sales and lettings, but my main role is to oversee staff and look for new business opportunities. I also introduced the sales side of the business in 2015 assisting my landlords with the purchase and disposal of their investments.

### How has the market changed since you started your career?

Anyone who has worked in property over the last 20 years cannot answer this question without mentioning the housing crash of 2008. I had taken employment with Grainger PLC in 2007, working on their company acquisitions and almost overnight, my daily routine was changed to something completely different. They just stopped buying property, as did the majority of people. It was at the announcement of redundancy's at that time that made me evaluate my position and I resigned from my role and went back to working at Charles Lamb's. It was also in that time that you saw estate agents going out of business on a weekly basis and the only way for most of them to survive was to set up lettings departments. Our business went from being a specialist field, to being available by everyone who was trying to survive. Obviously, this had a massive impact on our business too, but we survived and have gone from strength to strength since.

### How would you advise people looking to buy property?

Before you do anything you need to get some good financial advice. It's the key to avoid further complications and disappointments further down the



line. Since the property crash in 2008, those relying on a mortgage for their purchase have some many more hoops to jump through and the criteria is so much more complex. What people think they can afford and what the lenders want and will give you are sometimes poles apart. Having this information in advance means you can look for the perfect property safe in the knowledge that it's within your reach. We work alongside Mortgage Pathways who have not only overseen mortgages and given advice to my clients, they even helped me with my last property purchase.

### What's the most exciting thing you are working on?

At the moment I'm still in my first year as sole owner of Charles Lamb Sales & Lettings. My number one priority is to ensure that my current clients remain happy and my service levels remain as high as they were when my mother and father ran the company. This first year is about finding my business style and building on that to grow the company. Our sales department has been a slow burner, mainly supporting our existing clients but I want to open that door to all potential vendors and make that as big as the lettings and management departments.

### What is your fondest career memory?

I think my proudest career moment has to be the day the company was signed over to me after 16 years of dedication and hard work. That came after 5 years of running the company single handedly after my dad (Charles) was diagnosed with cancer. I cannot call this time a "fond" memory for obvious reasons but it was definitely a huge turning point in my career and a massive personal challenge which I will never forget. It was a time that tested me to the very limit in all aspects and showed me that I was far more capable than I ever gave myself credit for.

### What are your career aspirations?

My biggest aspiration is to start buying investment

property and build a portfolio of my own. I've watched my clients and family members do it and as I know how to do all aspects of lettings and management, building my own portfolio makes perfect sense both professionally and personally.

### Where is the best place to live in the North East?

I was born and raised in Gosforth so to me, that will always be home, but I am very fond of Tynemouth, Morpeth and in particularly, Warkworth. Warkworth is now home to my parents but before they left Gosforth, it's where the Lamb family holidayed most weekends, in a cosy caravan, lit by candlelight and eating fish and chips out of a box whilst breathing in the fresh sea air. Newcastle and Northumberland have some beautiful places and I am very proud and lucky to call Newcastle Upon Tyne, home!

### Tell me about your team?

My team are knowledgeable, hardworking and dedicated. We are a small team but a strong one and that was evident last year as I was lucky enough to have a dedicated office manager who allowed me to relax and enjoy my maternity leave that I wouldn't have been able to have without her. Alecia Layton has been with my over 3 years and runs the entire office and accounts department and keeps me in line when I need it. My clients and I have a great deal of respect for her and the work she does.

### How do you like relax?

Relaxing isn't always something I get time to do. I have a very active 18 month old daughter that keeps me busy around the clock and I take a Friday off to spend as much time as possible with her while she is still young. On weekends, Scott, Sophia and I try and plan fun things to do to spend as much quality time together as a family but our favourite is usually popping up to Warkworth for a Lois Lamb Sunday lunch and a Charles Lamb car wash.

## “REPORTS OF MY DEATH HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED”



Everyone loves a scandal...And so stories of the “Death of the High Street “are always headline news in both the regular press record (both Tabloid and Broadsheet) and of course business publications. But is it really true, and if it isn't, is the High Street at best in mortal decline?

We certainly had some shake ups recently. Store 21 has gone into liquidation very recently. In the meantime both Brantano shoes and Jones the Bootmaker went into Administration, as has Jaeger (that's mucked up the author's preferred suits). So who will be next?

Whoever or whatever is next, it's very clear that a number of factors are influencing retailers, and it's time for landlords to be realistic. On behalf of one landlord, I've just accepted a £4000 reduction in annual rent on the shop in Whitehaven (I've also negotiated £4,000 off a rent, together with a rent free and a refurbishment, on behalf of a Tenant in Chester le Street) and an increase in McDonald's has been limited by the simple question:

### “Can the business sustain this rent?”

As implied by the recent work outlined above (and I'm entrusted with rents across a commercial portfolio worth in excess of £15 million) I'm not here just to fight the tenants' corner. However I am here to say that no amount of analysis of rents based on historic trading or comparables will outweigh the simple question above and below -

### “Can the business sustain this rent?”

If you are a tenant, before you agree a rent (even if your surveyor told you it is worth it), take a long hard look at the situation. If you had reduce prices to maintain sales quantities, or your sales volumes were dropping and you can't reduce prices, how long would you survive? Really look at your break even point and see how far away from that that you really are. Make sure you have an adequate 'comfort zone.'

I asked my biggest client why they engage me, and they said “You tell us what we need to hear, not what they want to hear”.

**Be realistic and stay in business.**

Are you finding my articles informative and useful? I've had some positive feedback via my LinkedIn page ([linkedin.com/in/philipbowe](https://www.linkedin.com/in/philipbowe)). Anything you want me to write about? If it's advice you want, contact me at [phil@bivbowes.com](mailto:phil@bivbowes.com)

## THE AWARDS YOU CANNOT ENTER

We are shortlisted for another award which is always a joy, but this is an award with a difference – it is one you cannot enter. The Estate and Lettings Agency of the Year Awards run by Property Academy and sponsored by Rightmove is quite unlike any other award in our sector and possibly any sector.

Savvy business people know exactly how awards have operated in the past. Usually sponsored by a trade body or magazine, the call goes out for submissions. Cue calls to the PR agency who will write the submission then polish it until it glows. Then the big players book a couple of tables for ten at the £400 a head awards bash at the Dorchester. One big agency used to send its submission to all judges on an iPad with a friendly note saying “keep the iPad”. No surprise that their annual dilemma was which director would get up on stage to collect the award.

Property Academy had enough of this questionable gravy train and came up with a new formula. An award you cannot enter because you do not know you are being judged. The award panel conduct extensive investigations into 30,000 UK letting and estate agencies. Mystery shoppers contact them all and narrow the field down to the top 20% which is where we are happily sitting today. Our prize thus far is inclusion in the Best Estate Agency Guide.

Then things get serious. The top 20% are mystery shopped in person and on the telephone up to nine times. We had a sneaking suspicion something



Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

strange was going on. Tenants do not usually ask questions about arcane property law. A landlord may be interested in our dispute resolution process but few spend half an hour interrogating us on it. But hey, our tenants and landlords are entitled to ask whatever they want so we simply provided

the information. At no time did we guess we were being judged from afar.

This new approach is refreshing for a number of reasons. We are being judged on what we do all day, every day rather than on a glossy PR presentation of what we do. The Estate and Lettings Agency of the Year Awards levels the playing field meaning the big boys cannot simply throw money at the award and expect a return. The awards favour the innovators and those smaller agencies who realise absolute quality of service is the only way they will thrive and grow.

The denouement is also a refreshing change. Rather than pay a fortune to watch industry fat cats collect their gongs from a B List Celeb, Property Academy has organised an exhibition to showcase the latest innovations and a conference with key industry speakers from the UK and around the world. Yes, there is a black-tie dinner when the winners will be announced but like the awards itself, this is invitation only.

So, having got through to the finals of an award we never entered we are all very much looking forward to the announcement of the winners in September. But none of our team will be resting on their laurels. To quote the American actor Alan Alder, “Awards can give you a tremendous encouragement to keep getting better”. We enjoyed a small glass of Franciacorta Brut to celebrate having come this far, then it was back to doing the everyday things that got us noticed in the first place.



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# THE GOLDILOCKS QUESTION: TOO BIG, TOO SMALL OR JUST RIGHT?



It's safe to guess that most readers will be aware of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. It's a tale I recall from my childhood, with, as we'll remember, the central characters being Goldilocks, the three bears and of course those big, small, and just-right bowls of porridge.

It's an analogy I use for consultations when advising clients, and this week has been no different. A new contact broached me with a 'little project' – a domestic extension to an existing property.

"I've spoken to the neighbours immediately adjacent, who we've always got on really well with, and they're okay with it. Is that enough?"

The 'that' he was referring to was his consultation approach. It's a relatively small job in terms of footprint, programme and budget, but for those footing the bills, and those who live in the same road as the applicant, it's a big deal. Which is why I advised that he approach it in the same way a consultation on a much bigger project would be.

"Use the same principles as if it was a 1,200 unit masterplan," was my advice. "Put yourself in your neighbours shoes and consider what you would expect to happen if they were turning your road into construction site."

The site in question was within a crescent of properties, with neighbours adjacent either side and to the rear, with shading from trees in the rear garden. Although the neighbours to the immediate left and right had been consulted for their thoughts, those beyond and elsewhere in the crescent had not, but they would potentially be impacted by

construction traffic, noise and dust – coincidentally the most-commonly cited concerns of consultees on projects of a much larger size.

My advice to clients is to ensure the consultation is in context with the proposal, and sized up or down to be appropriate to the proposals, and in line with the guidance provided by the local authority.

There is no single document available within the planning system which sets out in clear, unequivocal terms, what the applicant, developer or consultant must do when carrying out pre-planning consultations. The best anyone can do is to ensure that everyone who may be affected by a development proposal can be involved, and if they choose to be involved, that the consultation is open, accessible, informative, and engaging. Engagement is a multi-directional relationship, but there are some fundamental must-dos which every consultant should bear in mind:

1. Map your stakeholders. Who will be affected (at all) by what you are planning?
2. Invite them to come and find out more about the proposals
3. Be prepared to hold a small event – an event room in your local pub will suffice, or, it's a domestic project, consider holding it at the

house where it is planned for, so neighbours can get an in-context idea of size and impact. (It's also a good chance to get to know your neighbours better)

4. Keep a record of who engages with you about the project, and what they say
5. Be open to concerns and questions about the project - and prepare answers for the questions you expect to be asked (traffic, noise, periods of work, timescales, access, dust and dirt, etc.)
6. Prepare a report to accompany the planning application to demonstrate that you have engaged and consulted, and that, where possible, mitigated against concerns by tweaking the proposal
7. Be prepared to maintain dialogue and the relationships with stakeholders through the planning and construction phases
8. Remember that your proposal is an application which may not be granted approval. Appeal is a costly process - both in terms of time and money - but can be avoided by engaging as early as possible and in the most appropriate manner to reduce or avoid objections against your proposal being lodged during the statutory consultation.

Results Communications provides independent community and stakeholder engagement services to public and private sector clients. If you need help smoothing your path through planning, you can reach us via [hello@resultscommunications.co.uk](mailto:hello@resultscommunications.co.uk)





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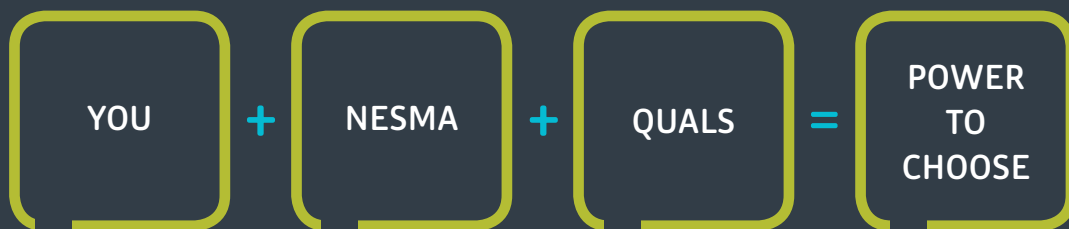
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# ROUNDHOUSE GET DIGITAL DOWN UNDER

Roundhouse Digital, based in Newcastle, has been appointed by the University of Wollongong in New South Wales to produce their new responsive website designed to boost student recruitment and engagement.

Roundhouse Digital now work with over thirty of the UK's universities, delivering online and offline projects. Newcastle University, University of Liverpool and Lancaster University are among the many top educational establishments who have seen the benefit of Roundhouse's state of the art digital work.

The team, led by Director Michael Armstrong, visited Wollongong in Australia to scope out the project and cement the relationship with the University. Michael said: "I am delighted that the team has been appointed to carry out the project. We are very proud to have beaten not only UK competition, but also competition from the global market."

Paul Robinson, Marketing Communications Manager from the University of Wollongong, said: "We were really impressed with the exciting and innovative work that Roundhouse Digital presented. We are delighted to be working with an agency that is leading the field in responsive web design."



# W NORTH ADDS TO ITS GROWING NEWCASTLE PR TEAM



Newcastle-based PR agency W North has made two key appointments.

Based in Ouseburn's Toffee Factory, W North, which opened its doors less than three months ago, is the Newcastle arm of London's W Communications, a PR firm recently recognised by The Holmes Report as one of the world's top 10 fastest growing agencies.

Becky Beaumont has joined as Account Manager whilst Bridget McClean has joined as Junior Executive. Becky joins W North with a wealth of experience across business and consumer

communications. In her previous role at NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI), she delivered the communications strategies for the business tourism and inward investment departments, while working with a range of clients.

Former journalist Bridget is graduating with a Master's degree in PR from the University of Sunderland. She completed her undergraduate studies at University of Leeds and brings experience in both PR and journalism, having worked as an executive at Creo Communications and as a reporter at the Hexham Courant and Grimsby Telegraph.

# LEADING PROPERTY FIRM GETS AN ONLINE PROFILE BOOST FROM RETOX DIGITAL

North East-based digital marketing and web design specialist Retox Digital has been appointed by a leading property company.

Sales and lettings consultancy Walton Robinson has invested significantly in a new website designed and created by Retox Digital, in order to strengthen its position at the forefront of the region's property market.

Walton Robinson specialises in property investment, sales and lettings for professionals, families and the student market. Following a rebrand, the firm wanted to create a new online presence that would

better reflect the business and appeal to its client base as a whole.

The website, which showcases all of the properties Walton Robinson currently has on the market, is accessible in a range of languages to enable the business to communicate with the region's vibrant overseas community.

Mark Walton, Managing Director of Walton Robinson, said: "We are very pleased with the outcome and it is great to be working with Retox, who are an ambitious and growing North East business like ourselves."



# JAK HQ WELCOMES NEW WEB CLIENTS

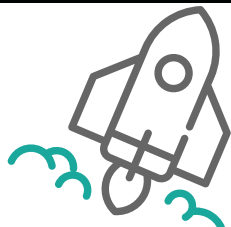


North East creative agency Jak HQ is welcoming new clients to its books, after winning web design and development contracts with Lanchester Garden Centre and Durham Autoclaves.

Lanchester Garden Centre has appointed Jak HQ, based in Chester-le-Street, to refresh its brand identity, including the design of a new logo, stationery and website, while Durham Autoclaves has commissioned the agency to develop a new website that will transform how the company functions.

The clients join as Jak HQ unveils a new brand identity of its own, reflecting the changes at the agency since it was taken over by entrepreneur Benjamin Kerry in 2016.

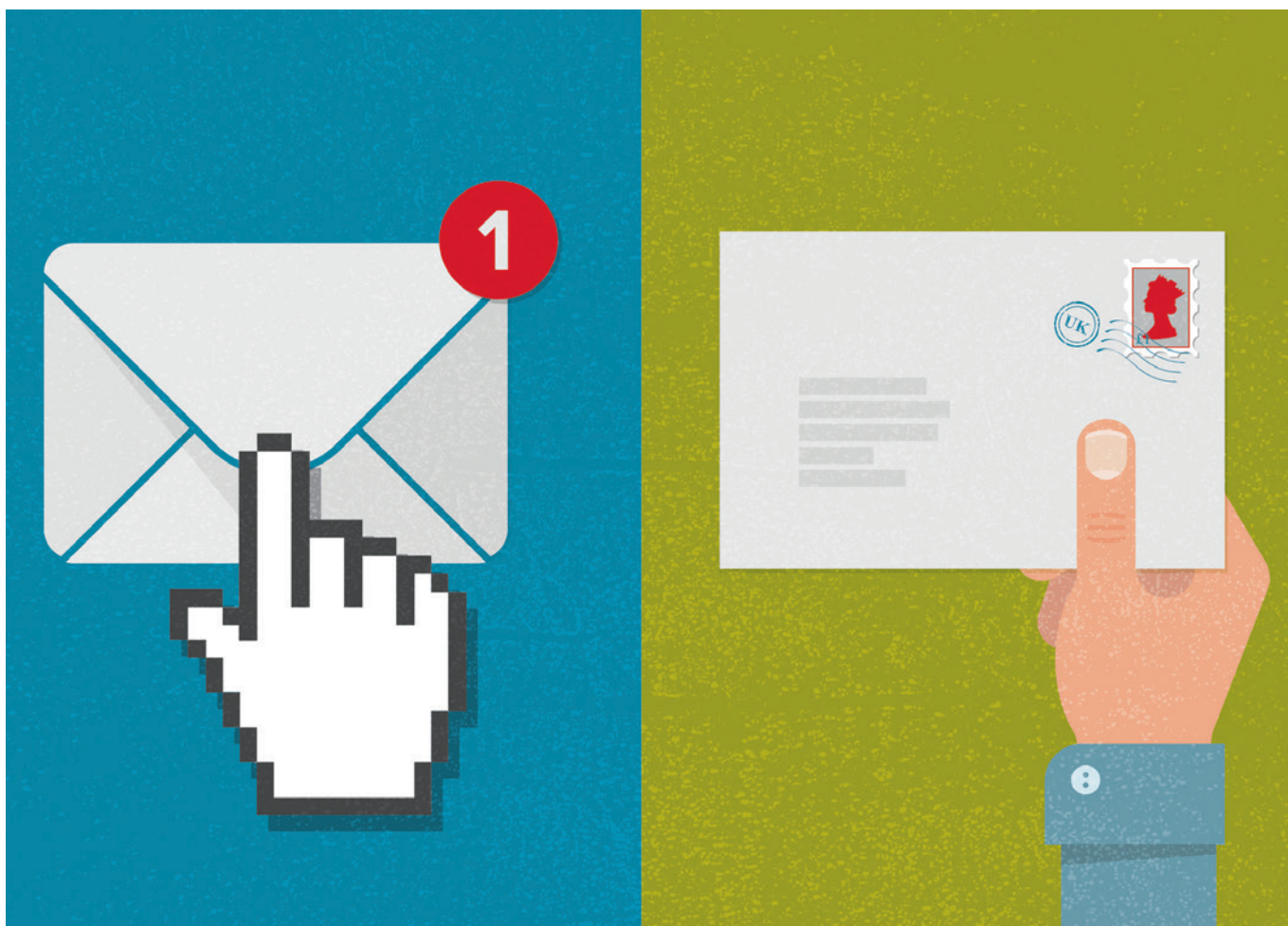
Speaking of the new clients, Benjamin said: "We're looking forward to working with Lanchester Garden Centre and Durham Autoclaves on their web design and branding projects. It's a great opportunity for us to show off the skills and creativity of our team, having recently welcomed a fantastic new web developer to the fold."



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## HAVE WE BECOME TOO FOCUSSED ON DIGITAL?

Full service marketing, advertising and digital agency The Works have recently expanded their digital service portfolio. Here, they discuss why despite expanding their digital services, they still believe traditional media is just as important as digital media in today's marketing mix.

Last year, UK advertising spend grew for the seventh consecutive year, topping its pre-recession peak, a surprising stat when you think about the recent uncertainty caused by Brexit. Undoubtedly, and unsurprisingly, this record was driven by digital media, but not just in the form of internet based advertising like you might think. What were once known as traditional media channels (such as outdoor poster sites and TV advertising) have evolved with the growth of digital, meaning usage of channels such as animated, rather than static, outdoor poster sites and video on demand advertising, rather than live TV advertising, last year increased by 34.5% combined.

When we started out more than a decade ago, most of our campaigns focused on printed ads in newspapers and magazines, direct mail pieces, TV and radio. However, whilst important, these tools are no longer the workhorse of every campaign we do- they're part of a much broader mix. Yes, it's undeniable that we now live in a digitally focused

world, but, contrary to popular belief, that doesn't mean we should all choose digital media over traditional media channels.

Naturally, our clients' priorities have moved into how their content works digitally first, but we must still consider how content works across more traditional methods. There never has and never will be a one-size fits all approach to advertising - it's all about what works for the audience you're trying to target.

If a print advert or direct mail piece is the right way for you to communicate with your target audience, then it's likely that you'll get more stand out now than you would have done previously. And it'll more than likely be at a lower price than it would have previously cost too, so in some cases it's a win-win situation.

Many of our clients have started re-sending out direct mail pieces to their customers and several of them are seeing greater response rates than they have done previously plus an increase year-on-year.

Could this be put down to the lower competition and greater stand out? We would have said so!

For one of our clients, increasing spend on door-to-door leaflet distribution has significantly impacted on both sales and profitability as customers responding to the leaflets have been high margin converters. Encouraging sales for one client in 2015 resulted in a first half, like-for-like, increase in leaflet volume of 44% in 2016. This year, volume has increased a further 28% on last year- as they say, the proof is in the pudding!

Without a doubt, digital's grip on advertisers' purses will continue to tighten over the next few years. Indeed, this year, for the first time, internet advertising alone is expected to contribute to over 50% of total advertising spend and it certainly won't stop there. Nevertheless, we need to remember not to throw the baby out with the bath water – successful campaigns are always going to need an integrated media mix and that's something that isn't going to change any time soon.

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





## PR VENEER WONT MAKE YOUR TRAINS RUN ON TIME

Did you read about the 15-year-old work experience kid who took control of the Southern Rail twitter account a few weeks back?

Eddie of #AskEddie fame was disarming, honest, witty and a refreshing human touch in an otherwise hammered twitter feed. Southern Rail is arguably the most reviled of all the train operators for its repeated incidences of awful service, persistent delays and union clashes.

It's hard to be that angry with a 15-year-old work experience kid if you're stuck on the platform again wondering when you're ever going to get home. A smart move for some temporary respite, but what are the long term outcomes?

Just two days after #AskEddie started trending, Southern Rail's owner was slapped with a £13.4m fine for its poor service. It was a reminder of Southern Rail's real issues. No amount of teenage Twitter japes are going to placate years of underperformance. PR veneer can't fix that.

However, PR can be your conscience, your eyes and your ears. It can listen intently to your customers and audiences. Your communications strategy is the

perfect place to inform and dictate needed changes in your product or service. Remember, your brand is what your customers say it is, not what you hope it is. Southern know that all too well.

Some questioned whether #AskEddie was a pure, cold and calculated PR move. Well, naturally. But how authentic was it? An unscientific twitter poll of my followers revealed that almost half believed Eddie to have done all the work himself, closely followed by 40 percent having the suspicion that Eddie got some help from his seniors. Only 14 percent believed Eddie was a complete fabrication.

I'm with the 40 per cent. I think while he was largely given free rein, I dare say the comms chiefs were watching quite closely over his shoulder offering some 'on message' advice now and again.

Regardless, Eddie handled himself with aplomb. Resulting appearances and news interviews, not least a cracking job on The Last Leg on Channel 4, will likely have the PR chiefs high fiving each other

on a job well done. A career in comms beckons for Eddie.

My concern is that everyone thinks putting a 15-year-old in charge of your communications platforms becomes the answer. It is not. Handing the social media accounts to the junior because they're native to the platforms is generally the wrong move and is fraught with danger.

Locally, Tyne and Wear Metro tried pulling exactly the same stunt a couple of days later on their twitter feed with #AskCharlie. It was a poor copy, opportunistic and disappeared pretty quickly. Get your own ideas.

The days of PR polishing the proverbial turds are gone. Customers strive for authenticity and honesty. It's why it worked for Southern Rail for a few days. I imagine, however, the usual social media managers there would love for a few more trains to run on time.



# STAYING POWER...

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

This month we chat to...

## JOHN DIAS

Managing Director, Silver Bullet Marketing Ltd

### **Did you always envisage a career in the industry?**

Absolutely not! Like so many of my generation, I left University with no clear idea of what I wanted to do. I'd been accepted for a Masters in Soviet Studies at Glasgow and needed funds so went up to Aberdeen and gained work on the rigs, supposedly temporarily but stepped off an old semi-submersible as Senior Driller in Vietnam some 15 years later after drilling for oil around the world. With two young children, it was time, I thought, to get a proper job! I'd written for several trade magazines on downhole tools and other wonders of drilling technology and freelanced for a local agency which I joined, becoming PR Director before leaving to start Silver Bullet in 1999.

### **What is your favourite aspect of the job?**

I'm so lucky in that I work with great people in an atmosphere where creativity is encouraged. There's no such thing as a typical day in an integrated marketing agency as every day has its own challenges dependent on client campaigns. In-house marketing doesn't give you the same buzz or variety of opportunities to really think outside the box and try different ideas and techniques.

### **What has been your career defining moment?**

Meeting Gemma Waller, our Creative Director, and later Victoria Borrowdale, another fantastic designer who gave us in-house design. The decision to mortgage our home to buy our own offices in the Ouseburn certainly focused my attention but we've never regretted it - we were one of the first agencies to settle here, refurbishing a redundant workshop, and I'm proud of the part we played in its revival.

### **How do you measure success?**

Usually by the feedback from clients. We don't produce work for its own sake to win industry competitions - we produce campaigns to exceed our clients' wildest expectations and when they do - and they don't always - and you know you have been partly responsible for that client's success, it's a great feeling.

### **What has been the biggest changes in the industry since you started?**

The digital revolution - without a doubt. I was lucky (or old!) enough to start in the industry before digital technology - whilst not exactly 'Mad Men' days, it was the last pre-digital days of posted press releases with photographic prints, massive studios of artists, designers and artworkers, old colour separated film technology, chromalins and newspaper reps constantly waiting for advert film in the reception area of the agency. Macs were being introduced but some designers actually didn't like them, the Internet was in its infancy whilst e-mail communications, web sites, social media and many other of the everyday techniques we take for granted now were yet to come. But this experience in the pre-digital era was absolutely invaluable as many modern marketers rely far too much on just technology - good design, for example, doesn't come packaged with the latest version of InDesign software, but rather from years of training and experience whilst the value of good copywriting is timeless whether it be for social media content or corporate brochures.

### **How has your skill set developed accordingly?**

We have to assimilate so many technical advances in everything from digital technology to social media that the pace of change within the industry is mind-boggling.

Fortunately my colleagues, particularly Victoria, are far better at this and keep me up-to-date on a need to know basis!

### **Are you a risk taker by nature or are you more conservative?**

I think everyone in the creative industry is a risk taker. Gemma and I gave a fairly radical rebrand presentation to a board of around a dozen people with increasingly shocked expressions and no feedback at all. After the 20 minute presentation to silence one of the Directors asked us to step outside whilst they discussed it and on being recalled, we came into a sea of smiling faces because we were the only company who had dared to push the boundaries and present something completely different - It doesn't always work, but it's great when it does!

### **To what would you attribute your success?**

Keeping an open mind to new ideas - Harold Wilson once said, "He who rejects change is the architect of decay." It's so true in our industry, you have to be flexible and embrace change. In addition, a healthy dose of stubborn self belief and bloody-mindedness hasn't gone amiss!

### **What is your biggest weakness and how have you managed this?**

Impatience - I haven't.

### **How do you remain motivated?**

I love what I do.

### **Would you prefer to be like or respected?**

Everyone wants to be liked whether they admit it or not - respect is earned and that's up to other people to judge.

### **I'll retire when...**

I feel I'm no longer contributing anything to the company.







# SNAP MAP - SNAPCHAT'S LATEST OFFER AND A POTENTIAL PRIVACY THREAT

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

Snapchat first burst into public consciousness six years ago as the 'sexting app' with messages that self-destructed after a specified number of seconds.



Contentious, yes, but since then Snapchat has grown into a large social network in its own right. It has over 300 active million monthly users, of which 70% are female and 71% are under 34 years old.

If your teenager has a smartphone, they'll almost certainly be on there.

Snapchat is popular because of the ephemeral nature of images and videos, its array of overlays and geo-filters (allowing you to change how you look and showcase where you are), the ability to access 'Stories' from people in your community and well targeted branded content.

Now its latest offer is Snap Map – a new feature that allows users to show other users where they are and what they're doing on a world map.

In Snap's own words: "We've built a whole new way to explore the world! See what's happening, find your friends, and get inspired to go on an adventure!"

While it sounds just another fun way to share activities and location, without the right settings enabled and a full understanding of what this means, there are privacy issues that it's worth spending time to get up to speed with.

### How it works

The first thing to know is that Snap Map is an opt-in feature which lets users share their location publicly or with select friends only.

A so-called Ghostmode allows people to appear on the map without being seen by anyone else. You can choose this when setting Snap Map up or change your mode while viewing the Map by clicking on Settings in the upper right hand corner.



Heat modes show where lots of snaps are being taken, for example at a big music event or tourist destination. If you choose to add your Snap to 'Our Story', Snapchat says whatever you see (if amazing enough) could be added to the Map – a strong incentive to share publicly.

Users appear on the map as a cartoon avatar, described by Snapchat as an Actionmoji and their location is updated every time they open the app. If they don't open the app for a while, after eight hours the Actionmoji fades from view and precise location data is deleted.

### Where the issues lie

What users and their parents may not realize is that every time the app is opened, their location is broadcast to everyone on their friends list. The update doesn't solely happen when the person's focus is on the Map. The individual only needs to answer one Snap (message from a friend via the platform), post a Snap or check out what their friends are doing for their movements to be tracked and published.

Through this, it's possible to identify where the user is, for example home, or what they're doing, e.g. swimming at the local leisure centre. Location sharing comes with a huge risk.

It also makes it easy to see what others in a community are doing - potentially upsetting for someone if their friends are together and they weren't invited.

Advice from the UK Safer Internet Centre is clear: "It is important to be careful about who you share your location with, as it can allow people to build up a picture of where you live, go to school and spend your time.

"Given how specific this new feature is on Snapchat - giving your location to a precise pinpoint on a map - we would encourage users not to share their location, especially with people they don't know in person."

### The opportunity

In terms of public relations and marketing, there are always opportunities around location-based services and it will be interesting to see what the response to Snap Map is, bearing in mind the initial concerns around personal safety.

However what it also offers is a chance to sit down with your children, especially teens, to understand the platform fully and explain the risks attached so it can be used safely and in an age appropriate way. Internet safety talks should remain a regular part of family life.

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# HOW GOOD DESIGN CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

As we enter a golden age of design, more businesses than ever are recognising the value of building a strategy around their brands, investing in strong visual identities and understanding how they connect with customers. With companies like Apple and Starbucks leading the way, organisations large or small are realising there are compelling reasons to prioritise design to improve their chances of success and growth.

Here we provide our top 5 reasons to invest in good design;

## 1) First impressions last

You know what they say, you only get one chance to make a good impression, and that is so true when it comes to your brand. It is thought people only require around 50 milliseconds of time to form an opinion of whether your company is right for them or not. Given such a tight window of opportunity and with so much competition in the marketplace, it is essential that people 'get' who you are straight away, the markets you operate in and the products and services you provide. Aligning this into the right visual identity can sometimes be tricky but get this right and the results can be very lucrative.

Think about what kind of first impression you want your customers to have. Want to be fun and interesting? - try bold colours...professional and trustworthy? - ensure a clear, uncluttered layout that is easy to navigate.



## 2) Stand out from the crowd

With so much noise and competition in the marketplace, good design is another way to help you stand out from the crowd. Out of the veritable flood of brands people are exposed to every day, there are very few organisations that individuals find appealing enough to form a connection with. It is important to consider that often when consumers are faced with companies offering similar services, features or

benefits they will opt for the one they either recognise or the one that has more attractive design. Consider your brand's USP and communicate that within your visual identity.

## 3) Connect with your customers

Design is a powerful way of connecting with customers, conveying key brand messages, values and building loyalty. Colour, layout and smart font choices can help you make an emotional connection with your audience in an impactful and memorable way. Design should also support the values that your business is built on.

## 4) Boost business

It goes without saying that good design can help boost business prospects. The key is being able to invest in design that connects and holds your customer's attention for long enough, giving them enough dwell time to learn more about your products and services. Google analytics is an effective tool in helping you measure the time customers spend on your website. Understanding current performance is fundamental in getting future performance right.

## 5) Review, evolve, grow

Already have good design? Don't rest on your laurels. We always recommend that as brands evolve, they regularly review their creative strategy to ensure it is still effective. This can be completed with the support of a design specialist who can help you start the review process with a simple brand audit.

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

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Our aim is for our clients to see us a vital and integral part of their business.

## ASK SILVER BULLET



“Just how do I get my company’s website onto page 1 of Google results?”

**The short answer here is invest in SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation, which is the process of improving search traffic for a website and increasing the website’s online visibility, but rather than just leave it at marketing speak, let’s look at how this can be done practically.**

The first point to stress is that whatever claims SEO companies may make, very few people outside Google itself know the exact configuration of the Google algorithm which constantly evolves. What is known is that there are over 200 factors that determine an individual page’s score – and remember, SEO works on individual pages, not websites as a whole.

It’s common knowledge that given a substantial budget, any site can achieve Google supremacy by Pay Per Click (PPC) paid advertising and many organisations find this a proven way of attracting customers - look at the paid for adverts of the car insurance, energy, telephone and other price comparison sites. Whilst this obviously works well for such mass traffic sites and gives a good return on their investment, it can prove prohibitively expensive for many organisations dependant on the popularity of the key words they use – the more obscure, the cheaper they are as less organisations are bidding to use them.

Google Adwords is perhaps the most common platform, with your web site then featured in the paid for advertisements sections at the top and right hand side of the Google results. The costs vary

enormously dependent on the phraseology chosen for the search. Once decided, advertisers can then set their budget that will determine how many times the advert appears and is clicked on to direct traffic through to their own website.

Is it successful? Well, given that it is Google’s main source of revenue, creating an eye-watering \$19.1 billion in 2016, you’d have to say overall, yes, but it is expensive, making it difficult for companies with more modest marketing budgets to compete with the big boys who can bid higher and longer for the key words required to increase online visibility and drive traffic.

The alternative, and to ourselves, highly preferred method is organic SEO, whereby relevant keywords and content integral to the site will be picked up by search engines. Links to and, especially from, other sites are also important to increasing the site’s ranking as is the frequency of updates but at the end of the day, and this can’t be over emphasised enough, content is king - your website has to be fresh, interesting and relevant. If it is, it will move up the pages over time, but this doesn’t happen overnight.

So, there are a few basic rules of thumb here for successful organic SEO. Firstly, and ironically seeing as we’re talking about an algorithm not Artificial Intelligence, is that your pages have to gain Google’s trust – they have to be what they say they are and if you try to scam Google, your SERP (Search Engine Ranking Page) will suffer. Secondly,

your site has to be responsive to different devices – Google made a massive change in 2015 to rank responsiveness very highly to reflect the growing percentage of Internet views from mobile devices – if your site isn’t responsive now, you’ll probably be throwing your money away on anything but PPC.

Thirdly, content is and will always be king – your site has to be fresh and interesting to visitors. Google’s stated aim is to increase the quality of information available on the web and it ranks quality content very highly. Fourthly, keywords and here it’s not only exact match keywords but also what’s known as LSI or Latent Semantic Indexing keywords – for ourselves, for example this would mean ‘marketing’ as a key word but also ‘promoting services’, ‘creating sales’ and other LSI phrases. If our content stressed ‘marketing’ in every other word, the article would not only be unreadable at best or gibberish at worst, but it would also be picked up by Google’s Penguin algorithm – a filter specifically designed to detect sites which are spamming Google’s search results - which could decimate our ranking.

Finally, never forget links to and especially from other websites – there is a direct correlation between the quality and quantity of links to your pages and your SERP.

The quality of the links are especially important with referring sites such as .gov.uk or other ‘blue chip’ organisations especially valuable to your SEO.

Do you need some assistance with your marketing? Do you need to review your strategy or do you have another marketing question we can help with? Talk to us. Email your questions anonymously to us today [hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk](mailto:hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk) or Tweet us (not so anonymously) @SilverBulletPR.



## A RECORD MONTH FOR JAK HQ IN DURHAM!

"Sales at award-winning creative agency Jak HQ have rocketed to an all-time high in June, thanks in part to a couple of large contract wins, including the rebrand and website development for the popular Lanchester Garden Centre."

I'm delighted to say that the team here at Jak HQ are seeing unprecedented growth month-on-month; the guys in the office really deserve everything that's coming their way – recently nominated for a design award and hopefully with plenty more nominations to come in 2017 and beyond, I'm proud to be the owner of such a forward-thinking company.

We're a small team, we don't have 30 staff nor do we have thousands of pounds to spend on advertising, but we do work with every single client to maximise their growth; after all, if they grow, we grow! It's a perfect partnership that I believe every business owner should look for when seeking out creative services from an agency; whether web design, graphic design, SEO, PPC, social media management, copywriting or print – the extra attention a smaller agency like Jak HQ can provide is imperative to growth.

We haven't reached where we're at through overcharging or being complacent, quite the opposite; we're affordable not just because we're small (less than 15 employees). We invest in our partnerships with clients because if your company



sees success, then you're more likely to stay with us and possibly invest more into your growth – and why wouldn't you, if you're seeing results?

I used the word 'partnership' above because that's what we see our relationships with our clients as; partnerships. We work together to make the project

the best it can be, ensuring every client gets the personal touch only a smaller agency can provide.

**Thinking of rebranding or changing your website? Give us a call or pop in for a coffee and a chat. We'd love to see how we can grow together.**

Benjamin Kerry, Managing Director, Jak HQ. Unit 4, Station Road, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3DY  
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## SO YOU FANCY A JOB IN MARKETING AS YOUR FIRST OR SECOND CAREER?

Marketing is one of the most popular career destinations...but if you want to land yourself a job in this industry, you're really going to have to stand out!

Whether Lidl to Louis Vuitton, Black Cats, Magpies or Falcons, public sector or private sector there is no area in business that does not require effective marketing or communications know how.

One of the advantages of working in marketing and communications are the numerous opportunities to specialise in certain areas such as market research, product management, customer relationship and customer experience management, internal marketing, public relations, group marketing, global marketing. The charity and not-for-profit sectors need this as much as the big brands.

The industry is fast paced and can never be called pedestrian; it can involve planning, event management, travel, networking - at times glamorous, but always hard work.

You don't need a degree in marketing to

progress in the industry. We have graduates ranging from anthropology to zoology who have studied with us and developed their marketing expertise. Often scientists and healthcare professionals, for example, cross the divide and bolt on marketing qualifications to improve their commercial value to their employers.

Year on year we see new sectors evolving and sharpening up their marketing skills. Latterly in our region, there has been a noticeable growth in the leisure and hospitality sectors and the auto retail sectors who are working in highly competitive markets with low margins and where supreme customer service is key.

We can help you with developing your marketing, public relations and digital marketing skills at every level. The topics of our courses range from marketing principles to digital strategy; customer experience to innovation and leading change to business growth.

Now it's down to you to consider whether you think investing in such studies would improve you or your company's competitiveness.



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

Whether it's working on your current skill set or exploring a new area of expertise, nesma has all your marketing and communication know-how covered. [www.nesma.co.uk](http://www.nesma.co.uk) [hello@nesma.co.uk](mailto:hello@nesma.co.uk)

## TRUST ME, I'M A DOCTOR

By Anne-Marie Lacey, Filament PR's Managing Director



Why is it if you're feeling unwell, you visit your GP, and trust this person to prescribe you the right course of action to nurse you back to health?

Perhaps it's because you know, as a GP, that person has gone through years of training, has a lot of experience under their belt, is governed by a strict code of conduct and has professional ethics at the heart of what they do.

Now think about the same situation but this time in terms of PR. As a business leader, the reputation of your brand is one of your most valuable assets. You engage with a PR practitioner and you trust they are a safe pair of hands to look after your most prized possession. But is that the reality?

The fact is, public relations is not a regulated industry like doctors, lawyers and accountants, so you can't always be guaranteed you're getting the best guidance and strategic advice to protect and preserve your brand's reputation.

So, what can you do? At Filament PR, we're members of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). Personally, I'm a Chartered PR Practitioner and a national award-winner. It means we're qualified in what we do, and as well as having years of experience while investing in our own CPD, we're also governed by a Code of Conduct.

We don't have to be members of the CIPR; we choose to. Professional integrity is everything. It means when working with us, you can be safe in the knowledge that we're always one step ahead of the curve, we have ethics at our core, and you can rely on us to take the very best care of your reputation.

***Trust us. We're not just PR practitioners, we're PR professionals.***

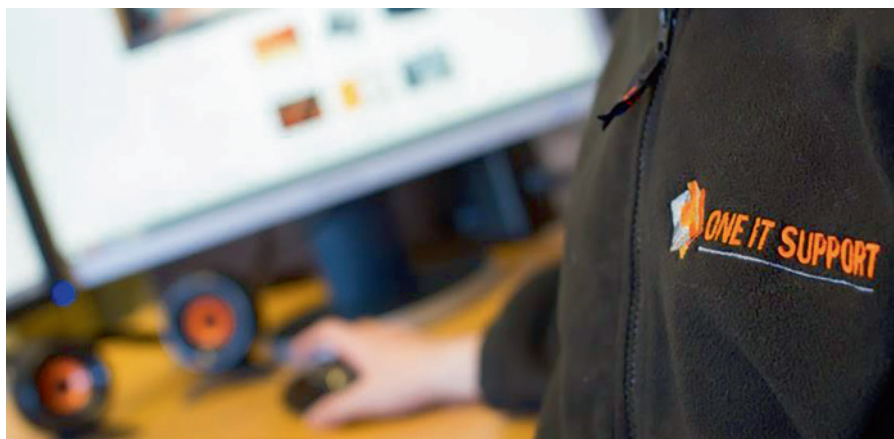
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## BUILDING ON SUCCESSES WITHIN THE IT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT SECTOR

IT services and solutions, data recovery and installing a Windows server can sound very daunting to the less tech-savvy of us. So for those who struggle with the technical aspects of IT and communication, fear not, you're in good hands. We are One IT Support. Our company is situated within Tynemouth and we're proud to serve and offer assistance with business IT solutions courtesy of our well-equipped team of experienced IT consultants and technicians.

At One IT Support, we're currently celebrating our fourth year of successive growth since 2013. The company has gone from a starter business to one which has grown substantially over the past four years and has continued to deliver frequent growth and success within the IT and business support sector.

Within 2013/14, One IT Support's growth margin rose substantially by 64%. Within the successive year following, the company's growth margin topped its prior year's record with a growth of 78%. Maintaining constant growth successive to the year prior is a fantastic achievement and our company growth continued to increase within 2015/16. The business maintained a company growth of 14% and then again by 13% in 2016/17. The company Managing Director, Richard Eyles



spoke of planning ahead and the future of One IT Support.

"We're heading into the company's seventh year of activity and moving forward we plan to treble our work force within the same time it's taken for us to get to where we are now."

With the company continuing to expand, Technical Director, Piers Davies-Smith also spoke of his intentions for expanding the business further.

"I want to help grow the business as much as

possible and leave the shop front style office to expand into a professional and official office the company deserves."

As the company begins working on its seventh year of business, the future and growth of One IT Support looks bright as we begin to work furthering ourselves to and expanding our services.

For businesses in need of IT support, we offer compressive proactive monitoring and an average response time of under 15 minutes.

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



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## SUCCESS FOR MEDIAWORKS AT BIG CHIP 2017



North East digital marketing agency Mediaworks added yet another prestigious accolade to their growing trophy cabinet at Big Chip 2017.

After taking home the Digital & Social Media Award in the regional final of the North East Business Awards, Mediaworks was keen to continue their success on a national scale. Founded in 1997, the Big Chip Awards is the UK's longest running digital awards celebration, and arguably one of the most prestigious.

The agency continued their winning streak, scooping the esteemed Best Use of Search award — a highly competitive category that recognises the campaigns that harness the power of search to increase traffic, boost conversions and ultimately ensure digital success.

Mediaworks was shortlisted as a result of their work with national bus operator, Stagecoach. Throughout the on-going campaign, Mediaworks has fully supported the brand's digital transformation project, undertaken as a reaction to the growing

number of digital-enabled passengers.

As part of this digital transformation project, we supported the migration of the Stagecoach website, creating optimised content around high-volume search phrases whilst using targeted outreach to direct relevant traffic to the site. Using paid search, we used both search and display ads to increase brand awareness, support ticket sales and promote the Stagecoach app. We created a short animation outlining the benefits of the Stagecoach app, which we then promoted socially as part of our overall campaign.

It was this innovative approach to search that saw the judges naming Mediaworks the clear category winner, commenting: "The entry from Mediaworks demonstrated a well-executed, brand-led campaign that worked well in conjunction with the off-site aspects of the campaign."

Speaking of the win, Mediaworks Managing Director Brett Jacobson said: "To win the prestigious Best Use of Search Big Chip Award is a huge achievement for us. It is a testament to the dedication of our team and the incredible results we deliver. The success has continued what has been a superb year so far for Mediaworks."

Lynne Harrop, Head of Marketing and Customer Experience at Stagecoach added: "We worked closely with Mediaworks on the promotion of our improved digital tools, including a revamped website and smartphone app, to a range of audiences. This award is thoroughly deserved."

With more industry awards on the horizon, Mediaworks is hoping to continue 2017 with yet more success, flying the flag for our region on a national scale.

If your app or website is failing to deliver, Mediaworks can help. Contact us on 0191 404 0100 or email us at [info@mediaworks.co.uk](mailto:info@mediaworks.co.uk)



# INSURANCE

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## & RISK MANAGEMENT

Cyber-crime is one of the biggest threats to businesses, causing over £1 billion of losses in the past year alone. With organisations increasingly becoming more and more tech dependent, it is unsurprising that Action Fraud reported an increase of 22% in cyber-crime cases\*.

Cyber-attacks are no longer just a possibility; they are an inevitable part of running your organisation. A robust cyber policy can help to protect your business and this is where we can help.



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\* UK businesses reported losses of £1,079,447,765 according to figures released by Get Safe Online and the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting center Action Fraud relating in a 22% increase. Figures obtained in 2015.

## SYNERGI INTRODUCES NEW TALENT

North East technology company Synergi continues to strengthen and expand its workforce by adding three new recruits.

Having previously worked as a SharePoint Consultant for the last 10 years, Kevin Houston has vast experience of the Microsoft SharePoint and Nintex landscape, including On-Premise, SharePoint Online and more recently with Office 365.

Commenting on his recent appointment, Kevin said: "I have always been a big advocate of Nintex, and I'm really excited to be able to progress my career within an award-winning partner. I hope to excel with Synergi and continue with their excellent success."

Aiste Jakonyte and Isabella Slater have been appointed as new members of the Marketing and PR team. They will work together to drive Synergi's marketing efforts forward and increase brand awareness.

Both students from Newcastle University, Isabella has just completed a year in industry gaining various experience in digital and social media marketing. Aiste has recently graduated with a degree in Fine Art and will bring valuable image and video design skills to the team.

Aiste commented: "I am excited to share my skills with the company and look forward to gaining invaluable experience in marketing and PR."

Isabella added: "I am very much looking forward to working with the company to enhance their current marketing and PR strategy. I've found the team to be really friendly and look forward to coming up with a creative and innovative approach to improve the current strategy."



## NEIL STEPHENSON SPOTS GAP IN THE MARKET

South Tyneside entrepreneur Neil Stephenson has launched his much-anticipated first venture following the sale of the Onyx Group last year for £65m.

Tetrad Recruitment Group, which will break with convention by only employing people with no previous experience in the recruitment sector, will be an industry disruptor aiming to achieve revenues of £10m in three years.

The company will focus on sales, marketing and technology, the three areas that Neil has specialised in during his career to date. It will initially concentrate on the North East market but will scale up to become a national business.

Neil, 45, explained: "Having taken some time out, I identified a gap in the recruitment market which I aim to fill. Onyx was

fundamentally a tech business that we grew very quickly and I believe that the knowledge and experience I gained in growing that operation can be transferred to other business models, such as the one we have in place for Tetrad."

With five staff currently working for Tetrad, the ambition is to have 10 by the year end and 100 in three years, as the business rolls out across the UK.

Neil continued: "Our goal is to be a disruptor in the sector. Traditionally, recruitment companies have one team that looks after everything but we believe the way forward is to have two separate teams - an internal team focused on talent identification and an external sales team working with businesses that need talent."



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# BUSINESS INTERRUPTION CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, AND NO ORGANISATION IS IMMUNE TO ITS EFFECTS

By Garry Sheriff, Managing Director, ITPS



In a survey of almost 1000 businesses by the Business Continuity Institute, 12 percent said their organisation lacked any kind of workspace recovery arrangements, and 35% of those respondents said workspace recovery plans are not a priority for their organisation.

**Let's think about that for a moment. Hands up who could manage without any staff in the face of an interruption to business? With almost two decades of high level ICT sector expertise under our belts, we know that effective business continuity relies heavily on the human factor. If your staff cannot do their jobs then your business cannot run.**

So what would a disaster look like to your business – an hour, a day or even a month's downtime? Do you know how long you could survive, and what every hour's downtime would cost you?

Having an up to date business continuity strategy in place is the insurance that protects you against the risk of unexpected downtime. A key element of that strategy is workspace recovery, which gives you a location in which to house staff, and promotes fast recovery to systems and data.

When we created a new £4m enterprise-class data centre in County Durham, we asked our clients what extra features they wanted to see. A fully equipped, state of the art workspace recovery centre with affordable, fixed cost pricing was at the top of the list, so that's exactly what we included.

Our centre has hundreds of seats ready and waiting to give staff access to all the tools available in their usual work environment such as networked PCs,

familiar systems and data, high speed connectivity and unified communications.

Our onsite network operations experts operate a constant test and review cycle to maintain a secure, managed environment that is 'always ready' should a client need to invoke its disaster recovery plan. In short, we have everything your people need to get on with business as usual.

Of course workspace recovery centres can be used for much more than a safe and secure environment when disaster strikes. They can also be a useful short or long term addition to existing office space. For instance when one of our clients needed extra space to house a specific project team for six months, rather than searching for premises to rent, they moved the team into our workspace recovery centre.

This became an extension of their offices, with dedicated meeting rooms, kitchen and breakout areas plus high capacity project and build space, and the project team members were able to communicate with colleagues in just the same way as if they were on their own site.

One element of business continuity our clients often ask for help with is creating both a strategy and a plan. Continuity and recovery is about more than just detailing how you are going to

recover systems and data, this is only half of the equation. If you cannot access the information fairly rapidly then the fact that you have a copy of your systems is immaterial, they are pretty much redundant without communications. As our workspace recovery centre is housed in the North East's premier data centre, providing connectivity is relatively easy, it can be incorporated into any disaster recovery plan, and is easily and quickly scalable.

When you are creating your continuity strategy, don't forget to make staff aware of what arrangements are in place. The BCI survey referred to earlier in this article showed that although only 12 percent of businesses actually lacked any workspace recovery provision, over 30 percent of their own staff believed their employers did not have any recovery arrangements in place. That is potentially a lot of staff unaware of how their own business would cope in the event of an interruption.

Keeping the wheels of your business turning does not happen by accident. Don't assume you will be able to muddle through if disaster strikes. Speak to one of our disaster recovery experts to see how we can help you plan and protect your business against the unexpected.





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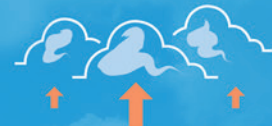
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# OPENING THE IoT BOX OF DELIGHTS



Calibre's Steve Nelson (right) says the Internet of Everything offers much for SMEs

Steve Nelson, Operations Director at Calibre Secured Networks Ltd, believes SMEs have a lot to gain from the Internet of Things (IoT), offering a tantalising glimpse of one possible future.

The IoT is seen by many as the next step in the evolution of smart objects – powering the connectivity of things in which the line between the physical object and the digital world is increasingly blurred. So it's not hard to extend our thinking to visualise a future where the IoT segues into an ultra network of super powerful, superfast highways where billions, even trillions, of superfast connections create unprecedented opportunities.

The impact of the IoT cannot be overstated: an omnipotent world in which people, processes, information and things are brought together to make connectivity more relevant and valuable than ever before. Perhaps scary but nevertheless a glittering allure – an enriching learning experience that paves the way for hitherto undreamt of chances for North East SMEs, a brave new world that will transcend current perceptions and limitations.

Indeed, a global survey of 1,000 organisations showed that while companies of all sizes cited improved operational efficiencies as the key benefit expected from deploying an IoT solution, SMEs were ahead of the curve when it came to seeing the riches on offer.

So, in what practical, beneficial ways could IoT become manifest? SMEs will see improvements in energy efficiency as increasingly advanced systems come on line that enable heating and lighting to be monitored and controlled remotely, generating financial savings. Adopting these tools can ensure the way owner/managers use the services they are paying for is efficient, and that their premises are adapted to your business needs.

The use of smart home-style sensors goes beyond simply keeping an office warm – they can ensure consistent production quality. For businesses operating across various locations or mixed environments, where conditions need to be monitored and regulated (for example, niche agricultural producers, bio-meds or hi-tech manufacturers), IoT infrastructures enable them to maintain consistent production quality at many places at the same time.

OK, so you can't physically be in two places at once but the application of IoT can help; allowing business people to travel more freely, while keeping them abreast of stock and deliveries through advanced track and trace capabilities. By introducing security sensors connected to your smartphone, for example, goods can be delivered to

your workplace without you having to be present. You can simply verify remotely at the click of a button.

The advance of traffic-tracking smartphone apps will enhance resource planning and allow small businesses to make smarter choices about when to bring in extra people to cover busy periods, or making sure existing staff are fully employed. The result is a reduction in wasted time, improved customer service and, consequently, a rise in revenue.

Small technology businesses that are interested in developing IoT solutions themselves can use support programmes to better understand what's required, what applications are needed and where the demand for IoT lies. Alongside public platforms, there are those hosted by major players in the market such as Cisco's Innovation Challenge that offer insight and a tantalising glance of the future.

The IoT in business may still be a while away for many SMEs, but it is always best to stay ahead of the trend and keep up-to-date with the latest technology to ensure you're prepared and equipped when it does arrive.

If you'd like to invest in IoT technology for your business and require advice, help is at hand. Calibre provides IT solutions, working across the UK and Europe with clients building long-term strategic relationships to deliver added value solutions, which provide lasting user benefits.

More at [www.calibre-secured.net](http://www.calibre-secured.net)



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# HAZY SUMMER HOLIDAYS

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster, Durham School



The long stretch of the summer holidays are in full swing as you read this and children all over the country will be enjoying if not the glorious weather, at least the opportunity to relax and get on with the business of being children.

We can all remember how they seemed to last forever when we were young and the various japes and scrapes we found ourselves in along the way. Kids these days are no different; perhaps they don't climb trees or use the hoop and stick as much as we did – or they should – but they need their time to unwind and take a breather from the hustle and bustle of school life. However, despite our recollections – and perhaps the frustrations that harassed parents have trying to occupy youngsters – the holidays will come to an end and thoughts soon return to the new school year starting in September.

For some pupils the autumn sees the start of a new phase of their life: tiny tots starting nursery or reception; youngsters moving from primary to secondary; older boys and girls moving into the Sixth Form. For all of those, September will bring a mixture of excitement and nervousness. It's true that the same feelings will be experienced by their parents. It's always a stressful time when things change, and parents perhaps perceive this more keenly because they are one step removed from

it; when a son or daughter crosses the threshold of school it can feel like the situation is no longer under your control.

So what can you do as a parent to manage your own feelings? First, make sure you take advantage of all the help your child's school will offer to deal with transition. Whether your son or daughter is entering the school for the first time or just moving from one section to another, your school will do its best to help them. Induction days, information evenings, new parents' socials: it is vital that you do your best to go along to them both to find out more about your child's first few days but also to meet the other parents and pupils in the same boat. One of the biggest worries parents have during the transition phase is whether their child will make friends and be happy in the new environment; this is as true for a child starting a new school knowing no-one as for a child who moves through with friends to a larger school. Meeting some of the parents of your child's new colleagues helps to reassure you and them that the nervousness they have is common to everyone.

Once your child has begun at the school, the first few days and weeks can be a balancing act by a desire to constantly check that things are going well for them and a proper need to let them stand on their own two feet. Stand strong; it is not unusual for there to be tears and tantrums in the adjustment to the new environment but don't assume the worst. Keep in contact with your child's class teacher or form tutor – pick-up times are good for this – and let them know how your child is feeling. In the vast majority of cases, some words of reassurance and encouragement from them to your child can be all they need to get over their worries. Be prepared too for some quick changes of friendship; a week is a long time in a child's life and playground groupings can be fickle and frenetic. Again, keep in touch with your child's teacher to nip any issues in the bud.

It can be difficult watching our children grow up; however, these changes in life are all part of what will shape them as young adults. Each change is a move toward independence and the resilience they will need to move out into the world.





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Following the success of recruiting 39 sponsors in various forms for the 2017 season here at Rothbury Golf Club, a fantastic sponsors day was held on Friday 21st July. 34 sponsor teams played meaning 136 players enjoyed the delightful views of Rothbury Golf Club and the impressive changes both in and around the clubhouse. PGA Professional and Club Manager, Paul Stancliffe organised the day and welcomed all the players personally. The day was won with a great score of 103 points by Steven Lee's firm of Barrier Ex.

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# ARE PROMS POINTLESS?

By Ken James, Headmaster, Red House School

Last month Red House School held its prom. I wasn't really looking forward to it and have often said - loudly - that I'm not a great fan of proms. They were an American invention and, until very recently, the U.K. had managed to avoid them. The closest the children came to attending one was watching re-runs of American movies set in the 50s. Until I joined Red House, I'd also only worked in schools with sixth forms. Therefore, I've never felt the need to host a huge celebration at the end of Year 11.

Alas, proms are here to stay. Children across the country look forward to marking the end of their GCSEs with a pre-party, prom and post-party. Hundreds of pounds are being spent on gowns and hours are being spent in the hairdressers. The children take longer to get ready for the event than they do at the venue. Boys seem to spend less time getting ready; their energy goes into deciding the best mode of transport instead!

But at Red House, the prom really does serve a purpose. All the boys and girls are leaving and heading to numerous establishments for their sixth form years. Many have been at the school together since they were three. The prom marks a milestone in their 13 year friendship and the prom is possibly the last time all the children will be together.

Ours was a joyous event. The children mixed easily with staff and reminisced about their time at the



school. Many staff had also been on a 13 year journey with the children and it was fitting that they should be together at the final function.

Most importantly, the children had fun. Whether it be singing karaoke, dancing or merely watching the

dubious dance moves of their teachers, the children mixed easily with colleagues. This can be attributed to two reasons: the strength of the relationship between the children and their teachers and the social skills which have been encouraged in the children.

The relationship between the teachers and the pupils at Red House is second to none. The mutual disillusionment with the new GCSEs has worked to strengthen the relationship between the children and their teachers; they have been in it together. Discipline is also not an issue at school so colleagues can put their energy into helping the children rather than perpetually disciplining them. Small classes too mean the children have a huge amount of individual support; almost a bespoke education.

This individual support and close relationship encourages the children to be independent thinkers with the social skills to articulate their opinions and discuss matters with adults. From presenting assemblies to touring with prospective parents, our role is to turn out well-balanced, confident young people who easily mix with adults and children.

So whilst I've never been a great fan of proms before, I enjoyed my first prom at Red House School. It was an excellent way of celebrating the achievements of the children and transitioning them into adult life. And the karaoke was fun too!

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# ALL-NEW EIGHTH GENERATION FIESTA ARRIVES AT JENNINGS FORD SHOWROOMS



Barry Fearon, Sales Manager at Jennings Ford in Gateshead with the all-new Fiesta.

Jennings Ford branches across the region have taken delivery of Britain's best-loved and best-selling car – the all-new Ford Fiesta.

**The eighth generation all-new Ford Fiesta supermini replaces the current Fiesta model, which made its debut in 2008.**

Jennings Ford, part of the multi-award winning Jennings Motor Group, operates branches at Eslington Park in Gateshead, Yarm Road in Stockton and Cargo Fleet Lane in Middlesbrough - where the latest model has taken centre stage.

Fully trained members of sales staff are available across the group's Ford branch network to give advice, arrange test drives on the latest model and other models in the range, and talk customers through the purchasing process and finance options available.

Barry Fearon, sales manager at Jennings Ford in Gateshead, said; "We are delighted to be able to offer the all-new Fiesta model, which is expected to maintain its domination of the supermini market, as a result of offering improved space, better specification, smart styling and greater safety."

Retaining its familiar front grille, the all-new

Fiesta has inherited the same tail light design that currently features on the Focus model, and despite its size being similar to that of the current seventh generation model, passengers can take advantage of additional head and leg room inside the cabin.

Available in a number of derivatives, customers can choose from the entry-level Style, rising to the Zetec and Titanium models, and the range-topping Vignale and hot ST Line versions.

Those considering opting for the entry level model can take advantage of standard specification such as, body coloured bumpers, manual air conditioning and an AM/FM radio with a 4.2-inch TFT screen and Bluetooth connectivity.

A suite of driver and safety assistance features, including lane keeping assistance, hill start assist and automatic headlamps, has also been fitted in the entry level model.

Zetec and Titanium models come with Bohai Bay Mint or Chrome Copper interior trims, and include a design-focused B&O PLAY sound system including

10 speakers, a subwoofer and a central speaker on top of the instrument panel. These models also get an upgraded 8-inch touch screen infotainment system and sat nav.

Customers can choose from a wide range of engines, with Ford's 1.0-litre three-cylinder EcoBoost turbo petrol offered in 99bhp, 123bhp and 138bhp. A six-speed manual gearbox ensures CO2 emissions are kept as little as 95g/km. There is also a six-speed automatic option with steering wheel paddles for the 98bhp model.

Other models available in the Ford range include the KA+, Focus, B-MAX, EcoSport, C-MAX, Grand C-MAX, Kuga, Mondeo, Mustang, S-MAX, Galaxy and Edge. There is also a variety of range-topping Vignale models - Ford's premium car range.

Customers who purchase a new car at Jennings Ford branches can also take advantage of a range of aftersales facilities, with service, MOT, accident repair and parts departments' available at all three dealerships.

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Ford contact Gateshead on 0191 4607464, Stockton on 01642 632200, Middlesbrough on 01642 240055, or visit [www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk](http://www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk)



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# NEWCASTLE THEATRE ROYAL ANNOUNCES AUTUMN 17/ SPRING 18 SEASON



Breath-taking dance, thought-provoking drama, feel-good musicals and family shows are all aplenty in the new Autumn 17 / Spring 18 season recently announced by Newcastle Theatre Royal.

Big musicals this season include Kay Mellor's *Fat Friends – The Musical*, *Cilla – The Musical* and Tim Firth's *Take That* musical *The Band*.

West End and Broadway hit *Jersey Boys* will also hit the stage (31 Jul – 11 Aug '18). Winner of 57 major awards worldwide, *Jersey Boys* tells the true story of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks who wrote their own songs, invented their own sound and sold 100 million records worldwide.

Dance fans will also delight this season with the legendary Rambert (6 - 8 Feb '18) who will return with probably their most popular work, *Ghost Dances* & other works. Visually referencing the *Day of the Dead*, audiences will witness 'death', in the form of the iconic ghost dancers, interrupting the daily lives of ordinary people. The show features

Rambert's trademark quality of combining virtuoso dancing with live music to create a thrilling effect.

Following the sold-out success of *The Red Shoes* earlier this year, Matthew Bourne's multi award-winning New Adventures company will return with one of their most beloved productions, *Cinderella* (17 – 28 Apr '18). A thrilling love story set in London during the Second World War, the show transports the audience into the heart of Prokofiev's magnificent score and the sights and sounds of war-torn London.

Also sure to be a sell-out is the first ever theatre show of the iconic, world famous *Teletubbies* in *Teletubbies Live* (10-11 Feb '18). A treat for all pre-schoolers, this a show full of love and laughter. For slightly older children, an exciting new adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's family classic *The Jungle Book* will come to life (27-31 Mar '18). This show is packed with memorable characters, new songs and brilliant storytelling.

Heart rending and unmissable, *The Kite Runner* (30 Apr – 5 May '18) will also come to the Theatre Royal. Direct from the West End and based on Khaled Hosseini's bestselling novel, this haunting tale of friendship follows one man's journey to confront his past and find redemption.

Agatha Christie's *Love from a Stranger* (12 - 16 June '18) will also tell the tale of Cecily Harrington, who is swept off her feet by a whirlwind romance with a handsome and charming stranger. Audiences can expect Christie's trademark suspense and a biting twist with this brand new production.

Two comedy greats complete the new season. The unstoppable David Baddiel (11 Mar '18) will bring his Olivier-nominated one-man show *My Family: Not the Sitcom* to the stage. North East's Pete Peverley will also return with his touching, heartfelt and hilarious celebration of the life of comic legend Bobby Thompson in *The Bobby Thompson Story* (16 & 17 Mar '18).

Tickets for all new shows can be purchased online at [www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk) or from the Theatre Royal Box Office on 08448 11 21 21.



## SON OF A PREACHER MAN



Directed and choreographed by Strictly Come Dancing's Craig Revel Horwood, Ian Reddington will join Diana Vickers and Debra Stephenson in new musical *Son of a Preacher Man*, which will come to Sunderland Empire (19-23 Sep 17).

Featuring the soulful music of Dusty Springfield, *Son of a Preacher Man* reminisces over the Preacher Man, the swinging 1960s Soho joint where the Preacher Man dispensed advice to cure the loneliest of hearts. In this show, all that remains are the memories until three strangers, all in need of help with their hopeless love lives, are drawn to the original venue.

Tickets are available from the Box Office on High Street West, via the ticket centre 0844 871 3022 or via [www.ATGtickets.com/Sunderland](http://www.ATGtickets.com/Sunderland).

## STATUS QUO ANNOUNCE CHANGES TO 2017 TOUR



Status Quo recently announced their long-planned 'Aquostic' tour of the UK. The shift to 'Aquostic' was deemed necessary as the inevitable rigours of the Electric set were too much for the late Rick Parfitt to take on, yet demand for Electric shows was undiminished. Taking into account all changed circumstances, such as Rick's passing, a decision was recently made to plug back in. The renamed 'PLUGGED IN – Live and Rockin!' tour will now be fully Electric. This change applies to UK dates only.

Status Quo will now play Newcastle City Hall on Wed 6 Dec 2017 as part of their 'PLUGGED IN – Live and Rockin!' tour. Tickets can be purchased at [www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk) or from the Theatre Royal Box office on 08448 11 21 21.

## RECORD OF THE MONTH - PAUL HEATON & JACQUI ABBOTT 'CROOKED CALYPSO'

The former Beautiful South pairing return with their third album which is another absolute corker. A prolific songwriter for over 20 years, Heaton penned the album in usual fashion between spells in Holland and Gran Canaria. Lyrically, he tackles themes of inequality in British society exploring racial politics on *The Lord Is A White Con*, the rich/poor divide on *People Like Us* and the obesity crisis on *The Fat Man*. As ever, Heaton demonstrates a sharp wit and a knowing eye for social observation whilst his smooth, mellifluous vocals harmonise flawlessly with Abbott's. A good three or four of the tracks are influenced by calypso music yet the album is typically tuneful, upbeat and melodic in sound. *Crooked Calypso* is a toe-tapping and thought-provoking offering from a duo who still have a lot to give. Also a highly-acclaimed live act, Heaton & Abbot are set to play the Sunderland Empire on 23rd November this year.



## WHAT'S ON THIS AUGUST?

### A Judgement in Stone

August 1-5

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

### La Cage Aux Folles

August 1-5

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

### The Geordie Rat Pack

August 1-5

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234  
[www.customshouse.co.uk](http://www.customshouse.co.uk)

### Derren Brown

August 7-10

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121  
[www.theatreroyal.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.co.uk)

### Joe McDerry

August 10

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 265 5020  
[www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

### The Antics

August 11

O2 Academy Newcastle T: (0191) 260 2020  
[www.academymusicgroup.com](http://www.academymusicgroup.com)

### Legally Blonde

August 11-13

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234  
[www.customshouse.co.uk](http://www.customshouse.co.uk)

### Heroes, Villains & Mortals

August 12-13

Live Theatre T: (0191) 232 1232  
[www.live.org.uk](http://www.live.org.uk)

### Roy Chubby Brown

August 17

Whitley Bay Playhouse T: (0844) 248 1588  
[www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk](http://www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk)

### Paw Patrol

August 19

Metrorado Arena T: (0844) 493 6666  
[www.metroradoarena.co.uk](http://www.metroradoarena.co.uk)

### End of The Pier

August 22-26

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234  
[www.customshouse.co.uk](http://www.customshouse.co.uk)

### Rayne

August 25

O2 Academy Newcastle T: (0191) 260 2020  
[www.academymusicgroup.com](http://www.academymusicgroup.com)

### Mac DeMarco

August 29

O2 Academy Newcastle T: (0191) 260 2020  
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# ONE NIGHT IN AUGUST

Little Comets Bassist Matt Hall chats Chase Park Festival 2017



The bassist of one of the North East's most celebrated indie rock bands Little Comets has urged their legion of loyal followers to attend this year's Chase Park Festival as the band looks forward to another memorable homecoming show.

Matt Hall, who is still reflecting on the success of the band's major arena supporting tour with rock high-risers Catfish and the Bottlemen, has said this year's gathering at the new location of Saltwell Park will be one of the highlights of their 2017 calendar and he cannot wait to hit the main stage alongside a lineup that boasts the likes of The Coral and fellow North East acts Cattle & Cane and Boy Jumps Ship.

The North East's "Festival For Everyone", which has gold level access for both disabled music fans and musicians, will take place on Saturday 26th August set to the backdrop of Saltwell Park's Victorian splendour, and with tickets selling fast, Matt believes it's an all-family event that the region's musos can't afford to miss.

He said: "I'm going to be a dad very soon so I'm hoping that Chase Park Festival will be my Son's first gig.

"If my first gig had The Coral on the line-up and my Dad's band, I would be pretty happy with that!

"I think he will just be chilling backstage with his Mam while we're doing our thing, I doubt he would make it onto the stage, it might be a bit loud. Just knowing that he can hear us play will be amazing.

"I get the feeling that this year's festival is going to have a bit of something for everyone. The other bands that are playing are all fantastic. I've not had a chance to attend the festival before, I've missed the last couple of years because we've been on the road performing at other festivals but I'm very excited to see how it all goes down this year, and with the new location, it should be extra special."

Little Comets, who's festival friendly hits include the likes of 'One Night In October', 'Worry' and 'Jennifer' released their fourth studio album "Worhead" in 2017 to critical acclaim and have been doing what they do best ever since, wowing crowds and playing the world's festival circuit.

The hard-working Tyneside 'kitchen sink indie' five-piece first burst onto the scene in 2008 having signed a major record contract with Columbia Records and have gone on to be one of the UK's most respected independent bands since their formation.

Matt Hall, adds: "We have been playing with Catfish and the Bottlemen on their massive arena shows over the last couple of months. It's been great to see the boys doing their thing. We've been playing some boutique festivals through the summer but

it's been relatively chilled by our standards.

"I think we are always pleased with the reaction amongst our fanbase when we release an album and Worhead is no different. Everyone seems to have different favourite songs which is always cool. We really enjoyed the recording process of this one too. Sometimes it doesn't really matter how it's received, just that we can write and record music and have people listen to it would be enough.

"The last tour was a lot of laughs. We played some really great rooms and every night the crowd were fantastic but coming home is always special so we can't wait for Chase Park.

"We are currently working on some new merchandise so hopefully that will go down well. I think we are going to have some new music at the start of next year. We are out on the road supporting a band called the Pigeon Detectives in October and also have something special lined up before this year is through. Stay tuned!"

**Tickets for Chase Park Festival at Saltwell Park are on sale now. General admission is £12.50, £7 for people with disability (carers go free), under 16s £7 and a family ticket (2 Adults / 2 Children) is £33.**



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A glittering charity evening of 1920's nostalgia to celebrate the annual Jessica Sarcoma event, took place recently at the Gosforth Park Hotel. The evening was a huge success raising £5,030 for the charity with superb entertainment provided by two phenomenal singers, along with a fantastic disco.

Sadly Jessica Robson died of a particularly virulent form of cancer, Alveolar Sarcoma on 16th May 2014 and this annual ball, held by Jessica's parents provides funds for other teenage cancer charities as well as the Jessica Sarcoma charity.

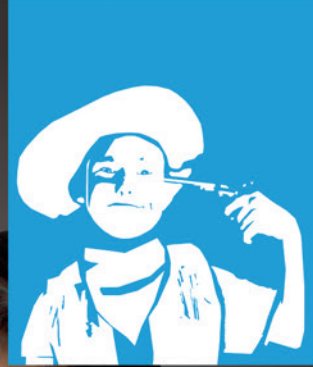




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If you like going underground, for example, there's York Minster crypt, the Roman bath house under a pub in St Sampson's Square, the York Dungeons for a spooky experience, the cellars of the National Trust's Treasurer's House with its ghostly legends of Roman legions, and a cold war bunker in the care of English Heritage. Here the Royal Observer Corps would have plotted nuclear explosions and survived underground for up to 30 days after nuclear war began. The bunker is outside the city centre, 1 ¼ miles from the station, easily walkable along the Acomb Road or you can alternatively use local bus No.1.

All of the other attractions are to the east of the station, except the free to enter National Railway Museum which is best reached by the footbridge and footpath from all platforms. Afterwards it offers a half-hourly dotto train (a train which is really a tractor pulling rubber-tyred carriages) to a stop on Duncombe Place close to the Minster. The Minster charges for admission, but if you wish to avoid this the best way is to attend a service. Evensong is sung most afternoons by the choir and you get a much better experience taking part in the worship than paying to walk round. Of course, the plate goes round at the end, and you'll probably wish to make a voluntary donation.



The more energetic might try a free walk around the walls, which takes around two hours around the 45 towers, including Micklegate Bar where children will be entranced to hear the sad story of the little girl who lost the keys to the City. Wall walking is not wise in icy weather, but should be ok in August!

York offers plenty of opportunity for eating and drinking and staying over. Chocoholics will love the story of chocolate in King's Square. I have used the Bar Convent at Bootham Bar, where the Catholic nuns are most hospitable, even to an Anglican. The chain hotels can be expensive though: on a recent trip from London to Scarborough I tried to book a Premier Inn close to York station and the best price was £130, yet I obtained the same standard

of accommodation at a Premier Inn close to Doncaster station for only £31.

For a relaxing trip on the River Ouse, try City Cruises York, which have recently taken over the York Boat company for £2.5m, sailing from the Lendal Bridge near the station.

Have a think about going to York on Bank Holiday Monday 28th August when the full Monday train service is operating, but the fares are at off peak rates all day. We can promise, for example, a day return trip to York from Chester-le-Street at £17.90 with railcard discounts too, for anyone going on the 0815 or 1013 trains direct to York on the bank holiday, returning any time on TransPennine trains. That compares with the published online fare day return of £37.80 you might buy on the internet, and good value fares are available from other stations too. Just ring us to book on 0191 387 1387 and we'll post tickets out to you. Bear in mind that the Chester-le-Track team each spend nearly two thousand hours a year finding the best deals in booking tickets, so they are likely to do it quicker and more effectively than someone spending, say, four hours online a year doing the same thing. Take advantage of our experience.

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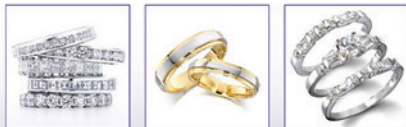
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## BLEISURE - WHEN THE LINES BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LEISURE TRAVEL BLUR

By Anne Bromley, Joint Managing Director of Travel Bureau

For many professionals, it's as though their working life is increasingly invading into their personal time. With 24-hour access to emails via smart phones, many feel as though they can never truly 'turn off'.

However, when it comes to travelling, the reverse is fast becoming a trend, with more professionals choosing to enjoy some leisure time whilst travelling on business or adding on an extra couple of days to experience the destination beyond the meeting room.

Bleisure, a blurring of lines between business and leisure, is the buzzword and it's booming.

It's no secret that modern workers, particularly millennials, are seeking that elusive work-life balance and none more so than today's road warrior, the constant business traveller whose lifestyle is often perceived as glamorous when, in reality, it can be stressful, tiring and demotivating as one city, one hotel merges into another.

A study into the travel practices of business people conducted by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) found that almost half of travel managers had seen an increase in concerns about work-life balance, with around a quarter asking for extra holiday as compensation. Throwing bleisure into the mix can help head off these concerns.

The idea of mixing business and pleasure is not a new one and bleisure offers an opportunity to turn business travel into a much more rewarding and enjoyable experience,

benefitting all parties. Looking forward to a couple of days 'me-time' at the end of a hectic trip can help keep employees motivated, improve their job satisfaction whilst creating a sense of appreciation and wellbeing.

In addition to the pastoral side, there can be cost advantages to extending business trips e.g. where lower air fares can be achieved with a Saturday night stay, employees may be encouraged to stay on for the weekend but this can impact further on their private life. Depending on the destination and/or the traveller's interest, perhaps there is the option to bring along a friend or family member to share the experience, eradicating any resentment that is felt by those remaining at home.

So, what should businesses do if they want to join the bleisure revolution?

Bleisure, while a great motivator and a potential cost efficiency tool, could cause issues if not properly managed. It is important to ensure that company procedures and policies provide clarity for both employers and employees alike, remove any grey areas and mitigate any associated risks.

Specific concerns to address may relate to the company's duty of care to its employees,

where does this begin and end and will the company insurance policy cover the employee (and family where applicable) if the trip is extended for personal holiday?

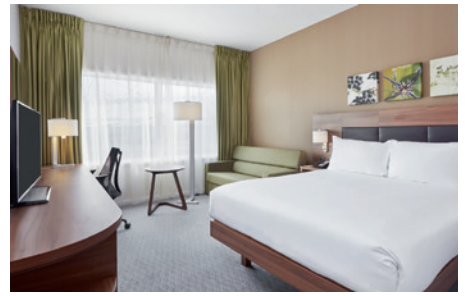
A professional Travel Management Company, Travel Bureau included, will be able to assist with incorporating the bleisure phenomenon into your business travel policy. A TMC's expertise and experience, can ensure bleisure is clearly defined, tailored to suit the needs of the individual company, its clients and employees.

Corporate Travel is renowned for last minute changes and cancellations, the impact and responsibility of any penalties in cases of trip extensions must be duly considered and accepted in advance of any travel arrangements being made.

If you would like to learn more about how to incorporate bleisure into your business travel programme or have any concerns relating to your business's travel policies and procedures, please get in touch with Travel Bureau. Our free travel health check, identifies areas of inefficiency, highlighting where time and costs can be reduced and recommend ways of simplifying the complexity of business travel.







## GARDENING LEAVE

By Michael Grahamslaw

Not long back from our annual Summer jaunt, Lisa and I were feeling restless again. Summer 2018 feels like light years away so we decided to sate our appetite for a night away with a tootle down to the Hilton Garden Inn in Sunderland.

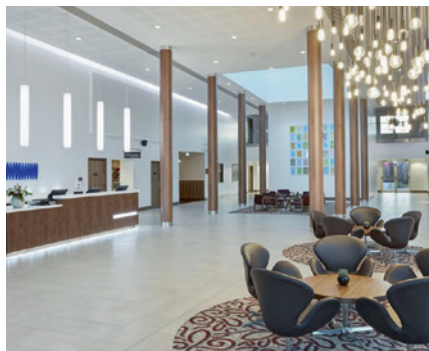
We've had some great nights "owa the watta" in recent times so we were keen to continue in a similar vein.

The 141-bedroom hotel is Sunderland's only 4\* establishment and has offered much to the region since opening just over a year ago. Being a part of the Hilton stable, consistent quality is always assured and on past experience, its rating is probably nearer the 5\* star standard because the brand always strives to go the extra mile for guests' comfort.

Geographically, the hotel is located at the entrance of the Stadium of Light village site and is well-placed to explore local leisure attractions such as the National Glass Centre, Sunderland Empire Theatre, Penshaw Monument, Sunderland Aquatic Centre (right next door!) and of course, the gorgeous sandy beaches of Roker and Seaburn.

From a business perspective, the hotel is in close proximity to a number of local office blocks and business parks not to mention the stadium itself which is a key hub for conferences and events. Indeed, the Hilton Garden Inn appears to have been designed with the modern business executive in mind. Guests can even use the complimentary 24 hour business centre which comes complete with telephones, wi-fi, dictaphones, photocopiers and other audio/ visual equipment.

Upon arrival, we were greeted warmly and I must say that these were some of the friendliest reception we've encountered in recent times. Sadly



I've found in my profession that this isn't always a given which means that good service always stands out – which it certainly did here.

We were checked *in* with a flourish then and were soon checking *out* our spacious accommodation. All rooms are characterised by that classy Hilton style and panache and ours was clearly of the highest order.

The hotel bar does a tempting selection of craft beers and cocktails and because I don't really get out much (yeah right) we headed down for a quick livener before taking dinner in the Karbon Grill restaurant.

The "Karbon" name is a reference to the area's rich mining heritage and its much-vaunted "Josper Grill" has really established the restaurant as a go-to, foodie destination in its own right. The décor possesses a timeless charm whilst the menu offers

superb choice, many with little pan-american inflections.

Lisa kicked off with that old Hilton staple Prawn Cocktail whilst I tucked in to the moules marienere in a creamy, white wine and garlic sauce served with some toasted hunks of ciabatta.

I followed this up with the Karbon ranch chicken; Breaded chicken fillet topped with chilli jam and ranch dressing whilst Lisa chose the 10oz imported New York Strip Steak. This was grilled to smoky perfection on the Josper and was served in true American style with chunky chips and double fried egg.

Throughout the meal, the service was attentive, enthusiastic and friendly – just what you'd expect from well-trained Hilton staff.

Feeling comfortably full, we spurned desserts in favour of finishing off a good bottle of claret and even lingered into the night with coffees and liqueurs (well, only because I don't get out much) before collapsing in to bed for a very rare eight hours sleep.

The HGI also has an extraordinarily well-equipped fitness suite. Feeling refreshed, I took full advantage the following morning with a quick blast in an attempt to appease the calorie gods!

My efforts were soon undone however by a mind-bendingly good full English breakfast yet that couldn't knock the gloss of what had been a hugely enjoyable overnight stay. Hilton's Sunderland outpost continues to go from strength to strength.

Hilton Garden Inn, Sunderland is located on Vaux Brewery Way, Sunderland.  
For more information check out their website [www.hgi.hilton.com/sunderland](http://www.hgi.hilton.com/sunderland)



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## TIME TO EMBRACE LEBANESE WINE

More than 3,500 years ago Phoenicia was a civilization centred on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and included modern day Lebanon. The Phoenicians were great seafarers and traders with their influence extending all around the margins of the Mediterranean. One of their major trading commodities was wine; they took wine and wine-making skills to modern day Greece, Italy, Spain and France.

At first sight Lebanon's arid climate might seem way too hot and too dry for quality wine production but there have been vineyards here for more than 6,000 years. The Beqaa valley, at the east of the country, is located at an altitude of 900 to 1,200 metres above sea level. A fertile basin between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges, the Beqaa is free of frost and disease and enjoys a unique climate with long gentle summers, wet winters and an average temperature of 25°C, perfect conditions for viticulture. It is here that the wine-making is centred.

Whilst the geographical and climatic conditions may be ideal, the political situation certainly is not. The country torn by a civil war that started in 1975 and is greatly affected by the turmoil of its neighbours Israel and Syria. In spite of these apparently insurmountable problems the wine industry of Lebanon has somehow managed to not just survive but to thrive.

Probably the most famous name in Lebanese wine-making is Château Musar, run for generations by

the Hochar family. French in origin, the Hochars (pronounced 'Hoshar') arrived in Lebanon with the Crusades and have remained there ever since! Musar is internationally renowned for its complex reds that have the potential to age for decades.

Whilst Musar has a long history and a great reputation, my favourite Lebanese producer is a newer venture. Massaya (it means twilight) is run by two brothers, Sami and Ramzi Ghosn, and the story of Massaya in many ways reflects the upheaval, determination and bravery of the people who live in this hugely challenging country.

In the 1960's the Ghosn family were wealthy and lived in Beirut with a weekend country retreat at Tanail in the Beqaa Valley. Here, as was the tradition, grapes were grown for eating and to be made into arak the local, aniseed flavoured spirit of the Levant. The civil war, however, forced the family to leave Lebanon and Sami and Ramzi went abroad to study and work – Sami in the US as an architect and Ramzi to France as a chef.

In 1991 the civil war ended and the brothers decided to return and rebuild their Beqaa estate

and to revitalise the traditions and economy of the land so badly ravaged by the war. Initially concentrating on arak production, they wanted to make wines that would rival those from the likes of Château Musar. To this end they engaged the support and assistance of two iconic families in the French wine industry and formed a partnership with Frédéric and Daniel Brunier from the famous Châteauneuf-du-Pape property, Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe, and Dominique Hebrard, formerly of Château Cheval Blanc in Saint-Émilion, Bordeaux.

This combination of Lebanese land, the determination of Sami and Ramzi and the knowledge of their French backers has turned a hopeful vision into reality with Massaya going from strength to strength. In 2014 a new, high altitude, winery was opened in Faqra on Mount Lebanon. Situated 1750 metres above sea level, it overlooks Faqra, the highest Roman temple in the world, and in the distance it has views over the Mediterranean. The Massaya journey has been long and difficult but, like the view from the new winery is inspiring. Try their wines, they're great!

Further information about the aforementioned wine can be found at [www.richardgrangerwines.co.uk](http://www.richardgrangerwines.co.uk) or instore at Richard Granger Fine Wine Merchants, West Jesmond Station, Lyndhurst Avenue, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 3HH





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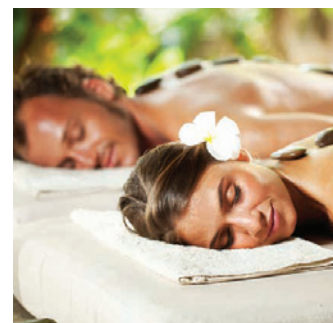
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## NORTH EAST HOTEL TO LAUNCH TREEHOUSE ACCOMMODATION



A North East hotel has unveiled its latest sky high development: six luxury treehouses.

Ramside Hall Hotel, Golf and Spa near Durham has submitted a planning application to create accommodation behind one of its golf courses, giving visitors the opportunity to stay in unique surroundings.

The two-bedroom treehouses will have a private living room and a state-of-the-art bathroom with a free-standing copper bath, similar to the one in the hotel's Celebration Suite.

The plan is the latest multi-million pound

development at the family-owned hotel, which is part of the Ramside Estate which also owns Hardwick Hall Hotel near Sedgfield and Bowburn Hall in County Durham.

In recent years, the hotel has benefited from the creation of an additional wing of rooms, a second championship golf course and an award-winning spa.

Owner John Adamson believes this new announcement will continue to drive business to Ramside. He said: "This is something entirely new for the North East. We really believe that visitors

will have seen nothing like this before. It's a unique, luxury development which will enhance the already strong offering we have at Ramside. We have been very careful about a design which is sympathetic to the surroundings and which will also be built using renewable materials wherever possible."

The treehouses, which will be built on stilts, will give guests views over the 18th fairway and green of the Prince Bishops golf course, with plans for each to have 16 windows.

If permission is granted, the development would be scheduled to open in June/July 2018.

## NEW VENUE BRINGS A TASTE OF FRANCE TO NEWCASTLE

The French Quarter is set to open in the old Railway Arches on Westgate Road to offer a French-style café experience, Tapas-style French dishes and fine wines in a casual, relaxed setting.

The name is inspired by the four elements offered by The French Quarter; it will be a café, wine bar, bistro and market, and will be open from breakfast until late evening. One unique feature will be the opportunity to purchase refillable bottles of wine, which will be filled directly from a barrel.

The French Quarter is the first venture in England by Cedric Boc-Ho, who hails from the Loire Valley in France, and his partner Catherine Metcalfe, from Northumberland. Since meeting in the Alps seven years ago, the pair have dreamed of opening a restaurant together.

The venue has created at least 10 new jobs. Having been inundated with job applications, with every applicant having some connection with France or a long-standing passion for French food or wine, The French Quarter now has a strong team in place ready for its opening.

Cedric and Catherine have been supported in their plans by Newcastle law firm Sintons, with the firm's Head of Licensing Sarah Smith securing a license for the new venue.







# HOTEL INDIGO NEWCASTLE

## THE HEART OF NEWCASTLE

Hotel Indigo Newcastle is situated on Fenkle Street, just a two minute walk from Central Station, in the heart of the city. It is an upscale boutique hotel featuring a Marco Pierre White restaurant and will deliver a refreshing and inviting guest experience.

Hotel Indigo is a boutique concept by InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) and offers guests all the luxury, individual style and design they look for in a bespoke hotel with the reassurance of being part of the world's largest hotel group.

## THE INTRIGUING STORY

The hotel's design has been influenced by its location within the historic Granger Town area. The hotel design features bold geometric forms, classical proportions, repeating patterns to mimic local architecture and rows of columns which can be seen throughout the local neighbourhood. Today, the area is a mecca for cutting edge architecture and just a short stroll away from the city's art galleries, restaurants, shops, bars and business district.

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF SPECIAL

Everything about the hotel has been designed to make your stay in Newcastle exceptional. The hotel boasts 148 individually styled bedrooms with oversized beds, spacious bathrooms and invigorating rainfall showers. Throughout the hotel are vibrant, modern colours, dashes of designer detail and touches you'll remember.

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Hotel Indigo Newcastle in the newest boutique hotel concept to arrive in the city. It offers a unique, fresh and vibrant experience to that of competition in the Newcastle hotel market.

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## TEA FOR TWO

By Clarke Kennedy

Having been relegated to the Northern Insight backbenches in recent times, I'm pleased to report that I've been recalled from the wilderness to do this write up for Crathorne Hall.

A stately country house in North Yorkshire, this is a hotel with a fine reputation for food & drink which celebrates all things quintessentially English. The inner confines are an enchanting place where tradition is adhered to with afternoon tea served daily between 12 and 5:30pm. The regal drawing room is a quaint throwback to yesteryear and dazzles the eyes with its high ceilings, rich decoration and ornate cornicing. There's a lovely, steady hum about the place where guests recline and converse freely whilst spreading jam on cream and indeed, cream on jam.

As a prefix to the menu itself, a little info is even provided to the origins of afternoon tea. The tradition is credited to Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford in the early 1800's. Apparently, a 19th century Duchess could go a little hungry, particularly in the fallow period between early lunch and late dinner. The concept then was therefore conceived to allay those mid-afternoon hunger pangs of which I'm sure so many of us are familiar with.

I personally reckon that we have a lot to thank old

Anna for and me and my Duchess – Mensa memory readers may remember my girlfriend Harriet – simply couldn't wait to get stuck in. You see, what's particularly test match about Crathorne Hall is that all items on offer are genuinely delicious and guests are even given a bit of additional choice aside from their fixed offering. All too often have I been left with that stray apricot macaroon – not today!

Harriet had her eyes on the classic "Crathorne Afternoon Tea." This looked like top tucker and featured dainty, freshly-cut finger sandwiches with fillings including Smoked Salmon with Lemon & Dill Mayo, Ham with Wholegrain Mustard, Cucumber & Cream Cheese and Wensleydale & Tomato Chutney. This was supplemented by a scrumptious array of homebaked pastries which would even make Paul Hollywood smile; Strawberry cake, Lemon meringue pie, Pistachio Slice and a particularly divine White Chocolate & Raspberry mousse were all polished off with gusto. Also in the mix are fruit and plain scones whilst pots of cafetiere coffee and classic loose-leaf teas lend further gentility. For those of you seeking further indulgence (as of course Harriet was), guests can enjoy all of this alongside a glass of fizz.

Meanwhile, if like me, you prefer your flavours a little more savoury, Crathorne also do an alternative "Savoury afternoon tea" which I thought was a sterling idea. This does require 20 minutes preparation time though those patient few can look forward to peppered lemon chicken skewers, classic pork pies, sweet chilli prawn cocktail, spring rolls and smoked salmon & tomato brochettes.

Afternoon tea of course is a most refined activity yet there's no reason that this can't be fun for all the family. Crathorne Hall really have thought of everything and even offer a "Young Person's Afternoon Tea" championing simpler fayre such as plain scones, gingerbread men and ham & cheese sarnies.

All in all, this was a very civilised experience. Situated just minutes away from the A19 you don't need a Geography degree to find it and the staff really are all terribly welcoming.

I'm just so pleased I got drafted in from feature-writing Siberia to sample this; a prim and proper, three-tiered afternoon of splendour which shall live long in the memory.

[www.handpickedhotels.co.uk/crathornehall](http://www.handpickedhotels.co.uk/crathornehall)





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## SUNDAY BEST

Michael Grahamslaw heads to Gosforth High Street for a sterling Sunday lunch.



Café No.95 have come a long way since their origins as a coffee shop and is now under the new ownership of Andrew & Lisa Dobson. Whilst still a bustling little hub for coffees and business meetings during the day, this cafe-cum-bistro has really enhanced the dining side of things in recent times.

The café serves food from morning til moon with a stylish offering of salads, sandwiches, soups and paninis available, before the dining area morphs into an intimate bistro specialising in burgers, steaks and tapas. In addition to this, they also do a fabulous Sunday lunch as I discovered on a recent visit.

The dining area has a lovely leisurely vibe to it and boasts some pleasant views over a leafy and upmarket setting. Slick marble surfaces lend panache whilst some chunky table booths offer a great spot to kickback and recline. The staff are all smiley and super-friendly and a great easy-listening Sunday soundtrack further augments the casual mood of the place. Both Lisa & I remarked what a great venue this is to stage Sunday Lunch as whilst the atmosphere is a casual one, the food is still of an exceptional standard. Perfect then for a relaxed weekend repast.

The range of dishes available arguably transcends basic café fayre and we kicked off with battered king prawns and deep-fried calamari. Presented in some trendy earthenware these looked great and tasted even better with a sassy sweet chilli dip and some zesty lemon mayo providing terrific accompaniments.

In addition to traditional roasts there's also some eye-catching seafood and vegetarian options. Not wishing to deviate from social norms however, we both chose the silverside sirloin of beef which was thinly sliced, melt in the mouth tender and cooked to our own particular preferences. The meat came smartly presented on a bed of both roast and mash potato whilst a grand settee of a Yorkshire pudding sat atop completing this pretty picture. Steamed vegetables consisting of carrots, broccoli and green beans all cooked al-dente were housed next to us in a huge tureen and proved to be deliciously

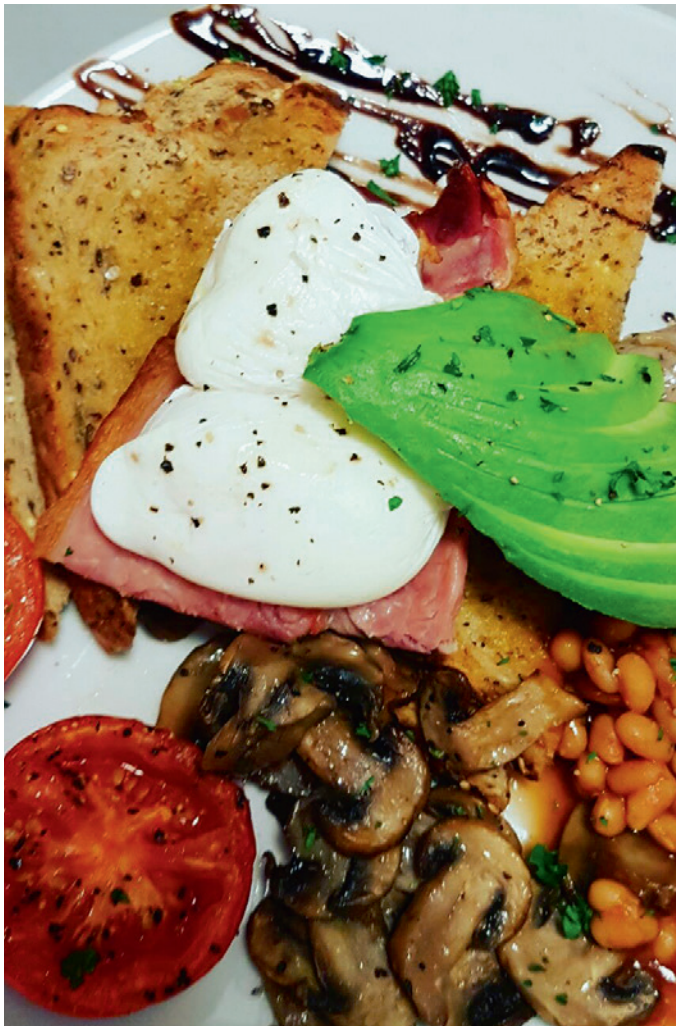
crunchy. Café No.95 draw upon only the best seasonal produce so it was no surprise that there was a real freshness and vitality to the ingredients. Lovely jubbly.

Those on summer diet regimes should look away now. Chalkboards adorn the walls of the café telling of the latest deserts and sweet treats and inevitably both Lisa and I fell spectacularly off the diet wagon! Both served with vanilla ice cream, the unabashedly calorific Mars Chocolate Brownie and an epic slab of banoffee pie provided a memorable table-tapping finale. Well, it was a Sunday!

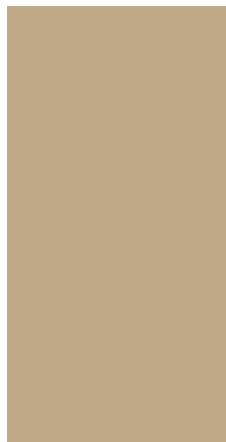
Now offering a superb Sunday Lunch, Café No.95 is a venue with an awful lot going for it. The café is a huge asset to the people of Gosforth and deserves to enjoy continued success. Quality tucker, breakfast through til dinner, 7 days a week.

Check out Café No.95 for yourself at 95 High Street, Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE3 4AA or to make a reservation call (0191) 284 5533.





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# ARRIVERDERCI TO PEPE'S AS SAN LORENZO BEAMISH LAUNCHES WITH NEW MANAGER



Rebranding is never the easiest thing in the world. Filled with worries and deadlines, it can be one of the most stressful times for anywhere, not least a restaurant.

The key word in that sentence? Can.

**In times of stress, it can be down to staff to provide the cool head and in a restaurant environment this is maybe even more important than usual.**

It's a good job then that Pepe's – which has recently been rebranded to San Lorenzo Beamish, has the perfect candidate for the job. The Beamish venue will be in safe hands under new General Manager; Katrina Johnson.

Katrina, or Kat to her friends, comes to San Lorenzo's latest sister restaurant from Ed's Easy Diner, having worked her way up the ladder from Assistant Manager in Mayfair, London to Assistant General Manager at the restaurant's Sunderland and into MetroCentre branches. She brings with her a wealth of experience and a desire to finish whatever she starts.

No surprise then, that Kat already has big plans for the third eatery under the San Lorenzo umbrella,

despite only starting her tenure in mid may, as she explained herself.

"Wherever I've been, I think people would describe me as determined. If I set a goal and really work towards it, then I think anything is possible. Funnily enough I found out about the general manager position while having lunch with my sister at San Lorenzo Washington and got chatting with the manager there.

"Short term I think we need to get a feel for how the customers think about the restaurant and work from there. Long term though, there's no reason San Lorenzo Beamish can't be a huge success."

Kat continued: "With the reputation of San Lorenzo's two venues already in Washington and Gosforth and a great hardworking team, we can really put the Beamish location on the map as a great place to be, whatever the occasion."

Kat's involvement in the restaurant business

stretches right back to her youth – where she worked in her family's bar and restaurant in Spain. It was an experience which only fuelled a passion for restaurants that Kat says has stayed with her.

"For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to work in restaurant management. It's something that I've been lucky enough to do, and love. Every day brings a new challenge and no two days are ever the same.

"I've always been a people person and I think everyone has an interesting story to tell that you can find out simply by talking. Restaurants are the perfect place to meet people and really get to know them, and it's the ideal way to build bonds not only with customers but also to make them friends."

If Kat's determination is anything to go by, we think it's fair to say that San Lorenzo Beamish is set to be every bit as successful as its Washington and Gosforth sister companies.

You can book your table now for the newest San Lorenzo sister restaurant in Beamish. To book, or to see their menus and for more information, visit [www.sanlorenzorestaurant.com/beamish](http://www.sanlorenzorestaurant.com/beamish), call 0191 370 1009 or email [beamish@sanlorenzorestaurant.com](mailto:beamish@sanlorenzorestaurant.com).





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Around 500 people attended a family fun day at Ramside Hall Hotel, County Durham, to raise funds for Bishop Auckland-based Butterwick Hospice.

Families enjoyed sweet stalls, raffles, tombolas, games and activities at the fun day and Ramside Hall also supports the Hospice through its annual Oyster Festival.











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# IF CARLSBERG DID A BALL THIS WOULD BE IT!



The Pathways4All 7th Annual Ball. They really do just get better and better, so please join our wonderful corporate friends for an evening of first class entertainment and a three course meal.

Corporate tables of 10 are £750.

Pathways4All is a unique children's centre right here in the North East. The centre supports families who have a child with any additional need aged 0-25. Our vibrant centre has soft play, sensory rooms, teenage and toddler rooms, a trampoline room with foam pit, IT suite, craft area, bright cafe and an amazing outdoor area.

Our main focus is the child with disabilities who we support through leisure activities

and fun play schemes. We also look at the whole family with our sibling groups, parent support network, and subsidised holidays in our luxury static caravans.

"Our centre is amazing and so very friendly, it really has been a life line for our family" said Sarah Jobson, a parent.

The centre (The Tim Lamb Children's Centre) is ran by dedicated volunteers and a very small team of staff operating 7 days a

week to meet the varied needs and ages of the young people who attend. With no L.A. funding, the running costs are met through the Annual Ball, and some amazing North East Businesses, who have so kindly taken our registered charity to their hearts.

"My wife and I attend many charity balls and I have to say this really is the best one I have been to, the attention to detail is amazing!" commented Mr & Mrs B Draude.

For more information visit [www.pathways4all.co.uk](http://www.pathways4all.co.uk)





  
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OPEN WEEKEND  
11TH - 13TH AUGUST 2017**

## GOLF MEMBERSHIP OPEN WEEKEND

This is a free event for all golfers, enjoy member/non -member competitions, club night, BBQ and prizes. This is a weekend to play golf and socialise.

### **Friday 11th August\***

6pm - 9 holes Golfer/Non Golfer competition, club night with a BBQ

### **Saturday 12th August\***

AM - Junior lessons, tri-golf & fun golfing activities

PM - 9 holes with competition, prizes and a complimentary welcome drink

### **Sunday 13th August\***

AM - 'Start Golf' - FUN starter focused sessions

PM - 9 holes with competition, prizes and a complimentary welcome drink

*For more information please call the golf shop on 01434 676 554 or email [slaleygolf@QHotels.co.uk](mailto:slaleygolf@QHotels.co.uk)*

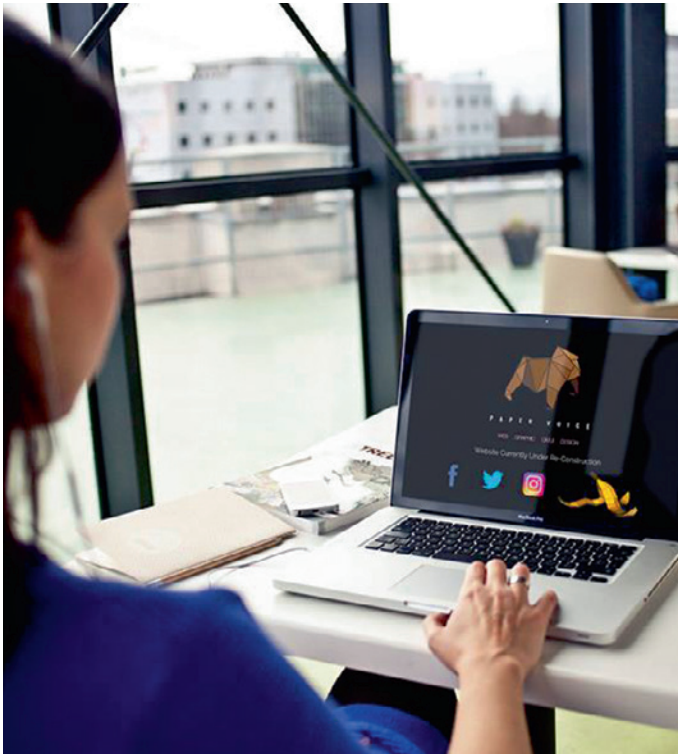
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# BROADENING BUSINESS AND COLLABORATING WITH NEW CLIENTELE



Acquiring new and exciting clients is always an exciting procedure at Paper Voice. Creating customer designs whether that be a website, app, logo or even print-design, Paper Voice aims to inspire and engage clients into securing a complete purchase.

Working efficiently on new contracts is an area of work the owner and lead designer of Paper Voice, Steve Myers takes pride in. This year has worked favourably for the North Tyneside based company as their broadened success has attracted new and exciting clients requiring Steve and the company's expertise service.

Fresh custom comes in many formats for a UI (user interface) design company as a wide variety of businesses require in depth services. A recent client and substantially large project Steve is currently collaborating on is Patterson Ryan Wireworks based within Wallsend. Patterson Ryan Wireworks specialises in supplying perforated metal sheets, expanded metal, weld mesh, industrial filters and woven wire panels. What excites Steve about this is the size of this project.

"This is a large contract for us to have taken on, I will be creating a full e-commerce website for their 1,700 products, as well as creating a series of to scale graphics of each of their products."

Steve and the Paper Voice team have also made the executive decision to work alongside new company, Swiftwater Solutions. The company is a boat rescue service who works alongside industries near large bases of water. The type of work Steve will be taking on for Swiftwater Solutions will be creating and piecing together a brand-new website for the company with a new logo design.

New and intriguing contracts continue to broaden Steve and Paper Voice's portfolio of clients. Patterson Ryan Wireworks and Swiftwater Solutions will add to the Paper Voice portfolio contributing to a roster of companies like with The Experimental Diner, Chartwise UK Ltd and 1-2-1 Mortgages.

Paper Voice specialises in web, graphic and user experience design. For more information on the company or to see what they can do for you, visit [www.papervoice.co.uk](http://www.papervoice.co.uk) or call 07515684411.



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*Image courtesy of Sean Elliott Photography.*



## HOTEL DU VIN UNVEILS CONTEMPORARY NEW BISTRO

Hotel du Vin Newcastle, the boutique hotel located on the iconic Quayside, has unveiled a stunning new Bistro following significant investment.

Ten years after the hotel first opened its doors, the Bistro's new look reflects its nautical roots, with steely blue grey walls, bespoke furniture, light wood flooring, a newly-tiled open cook line and concealed lighting.

Originally home to the Tyne Tees Steam Ship Company, the heritage is echoed throughout the hotel, from the ships' ropes in the courtyard to the porthole windows in the showers. Now the Bistro will also be inspired by the building's maritime past.

General Manager, Adam Green, said: "We are thrilled with the new design; it perfectly blends our brand's culture with the rich history that surrounds us on the Quayside. Our diners come to us for the fantastic food and drink we have to offer and the beautiful new Bistro setting will complement the whole dining experience."

The launch of the Bistro coincides with a new barbecue inspired menu available for private hire parties, including weddings, corporate functions and special family occasions.

The hotel enlisted the specialist hospitality expertise of Newcastle-based Dakota House of Design for the project.



## NEWCASTLE HOTEL CROWNED MOST FEMALE FRIENDLY IN COUNTRY



Luxury hotel Crowne Plaza Newcastle – Stephenson Quarter has been named as the best in the country for catering for women guests. The hotel beat off competition from more than 100 hotels from across the UK to secure first prize and set a new industry benchmark.

The 251-bed Crowne Plaza Newcastle hotel opened in 2015 as part of the £200m Stephenson Quarter site being developed near Central Station by Clouston Group.

The Solo awards are based on nominations of women who travel for business and praised hotels they felt went over and above when it came to providing great quality service and care for female

corporate travellers. The awards are organised by travel management company Redfern.

Louise Hutchinson-Chambers, Head of Account Management at Redfern and one of the judges who visited Crowne Plaza Newcastle anonymously as a mystery shopper, said: "Crowne Plaza Newcastle is the perfect example of a hotel that's getting it absolutely right. The big stand out was the staff. They showed discretion, privacy and care."

Louise also highlighted the hotel's attention to detail, including pillow menus, full length mirrors, good lighting in the bedrooms and unusually good hairdryers.

## LUMLEY CASTLE PARTNER WITH NOVELTEA TO LAUNCH NEW AFTERNOON TEA CONCEPT

Lumley Castle has partnered with NOVELTEA founders Lukas Passia and Vincent Efferoth, creators of alcoholic tea products, to serve up a new afternoon tea concept, the 'No Ordinary Tea at No Ordinary Hotel' package.

A business born from an appreciation of the Brits' passion for both tea and alcohol, NOVELTEA's products provide the perfect partner for afternoon tea, with The Tale of Tangier beverage complimenting savoury products such as cheese scones and finger sandwiches and The Tale of Earl Grey suiting richer flavours like dark chocolate.

Claire Mitchell, Sales Director at Lumley Castle, said: "Afternoon tea has always been very popular here at the castle and as soon as we tried the NOVELTEA products we knew our customers would love them. With the option to serve the beverages both hot or cold, they are also a versatile product that can be enjoyed all year round."

Afternoon tea will be priced at £23.95 per person, based on 2 people sharing, and will be served with a small bottle of either the Tale of Earl Grey or Tale of Tangier.



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## HOLIDAY INN WASHINGTON DAY OUT AT THE GOLF COURSE

The Holiday Inn Washington recently held a great golf day at Ravensworth Golf Club in aid of Grace House Hospice and Greenfingers with both charities benefitting from the £1330 raised. Whilst the weather tried hard to spoil the day some fantastic golf was played. The winning team scored an impressive 85 points. The single ball competition was won with 34 points. Sadly only 5 teams managed to return the original marked ball.

Team Washington enjoyed the walk around the course!! Grace House and Greenfingers thanked all for the fantastic support.







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The Bride and Groom take the lead when planning their day, and an experience and dedicated wedding team are here to guide,

advise and follow through delivering to perfection on the day.

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# CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

The County Hotel welcomed guests to their Christmas showcase and gave an insight into what the Hotel has to offer this December.

Their team of skilled chefs cooked up a storm, serving a delicious selection of hot and cold canapés from the Christmas menu. A selection of handpicked suppliers were also on hand to help guests create the perfect setting for their party.

A variety of packages are available with party nights starting from as little as £29.95pp and breakfast with Santa from £6.95.









## QUARTER CENTURY LEGENDS



It's not been too bad a quarter of a century for me in event management, but it's hard to think that it's actually been that long since I started doing all of this as well!

I mean, who'd have thought that, back in July '92, when at The Portland Arms in Felling after I'd spoken to Gibbo and Supermac regarding an end-of-season fundraiser for my Sunday League side, Felling FC. that things would transpire so funds would be raised for both new kits, and to pay fees for the league as well!

For me, it was the start of something new, the dawning of a new era so to speak.

Three years would pass before my first official event when, in '95, we raised over £2,000 for the family of Terry Moran who'd suffered severe burns in a bonfire night accident. I managed to get, amongst other national celebrities, Charlie Kray, to come north for the event and for me, that's when it all took off.

I'd dabbled in bits-and-bobs since leaving school having been sub-postmaster of the family, village postmaster in my late teens, and then a doorman at most of the city centre hotspots, but this was something new, different and unique. This was me, and I felt that, not only could I bring my heroes to the north-east, I could help bring others as well. That's what it is all about for me, the joy in which these events bring people across the region.

With so many events - be they sporting, musical or literary - I've brought and promoted some stellar names in the region.

Stars such as Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones Jnr, Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard and, more recently, world champions of the modern era in Floyd Mayweather and Anthony Joshua,



whilst from the world of football we've worked with Alan Shearer, Paul Gascoigne, Peter Beardsley, Les Ferdinand and David Ginola; an endless list of super-stardom. Personally though I'd say that the two events with Mike Tyson are my own favourites out of all the great nights we've had, and there's been a few. But I mean, who can forget seeing Trevor Cox, from my band The Longsands, playing conkers of all things, with someone like Tyson, it was a surreal moment none of us would ever forget.

The Longsands also gave me my best moments in the world of music, and they came so close to making it to the big time. They're a great bunch of lads, were a huge success, and had so, so much to give and I'm proud of all that we did together.

I've worked alongside some great people as well, with Andrew Brewster and Joe Allon at the start with Players Inc, then with Danny Cox under Relentless Promotions. We've also worked for some great charities and done some amazing things together, but you realise that, not every event sells and as a promoter you take risks every single time.

Moving forward though, we've some good things to look forward to and I can't wait for 'When Parky Met Shearer' at the Whitley Bay Playhouse in September. It has taken me just over four years to pull this event off but the persistence pays and this adheres to that turn of phrase. The hardest part was getting the two stars' respective diaries to match!

I'd also like to bring Connor McGregor, Manny Pacquiao and Lennox Lewis - they'd go down a treat.





# BodyGUARDS

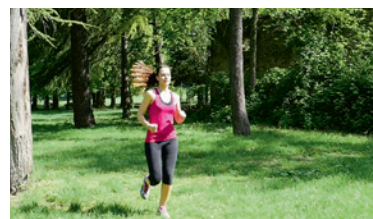
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## MAKING MY DREAMS COME TRUE

After getting married, Claire McGawley was desperate to start a family. However her weight and health issues meant that sadly, her chances of conceiving naturally were very slim.

After going to a variety of slimming clubs and following fad diets, Claire decided it was time to do something about it.

She shares her story here:

"I had been trying to lose weight for 24 years. I tried everything from weight watching clubs to fad diets. I would lose weight but could never get passed a certain point, then because my weight plateaued I became disheartened and the weight piled on again. It was a vicious circle.

"In 2015 and after six years of trying for a baby, my husband and I were told that our chances of having children naturally were very slim - I was devastated. This is what pushed me to look into weight loss surgery so I did my research into having it done privately.

"I came across Spire Washington Hospital online and made a phone call to their team. I was passed onto a lovely Customer Service Adviser, who guided me on who I needed to see and gave me all the vital information. I booked a free ten minute appointment with Mr Balupuri, one of their weight loss surgeons.

"Following this, I booked in for a full consultation, where Mr Balupuri explained which procedure was best for me – a gastric bypass. He went into detail about the operation; what would happen before, during, after and how my life would change."

"On the day of surgery I arrived at the hospital and was shown to my own private room. It was comfortable, light and spacious with its own



bathroom. The anaesthetist visited me straight away and explained everything. I was nervous as I was taken down to theatre but all the staff were so reassuring and never left my side.

"I stayed two nights in hospital and it was fantastic - nothing was too much trouble – the nurses encouraged me to get up and move and always checked to see if I was OK. The catering staff even made sure my husband was topped up with teas and coffees.

"Before I was discharged I had a visit from the dietician, who chatted through the process of eating properly, time scales and what my body would and wouldn't tolerate. She was also on call should I have any queries when I got home - which I did - and she answered quickly and reassuringly.

"I was settling in to life after surgery and looking

forward to the future with my husband. Due to having surgery I was advised not to get pregnant within two years – we didn't think it would ever be possible as we were told for so long that it wasn't. We were absolutely ecstatic when we found out I was pregnant! We never dreamed it would happen, especially naturally! Mr Balupuri and my obstetrician liaised throughout my pregnancy and everything has been great. I gave birth to our beautiful baby son, Isaac, in February. It was emotional when I brought him to the hospital to meet Mr Balupuri for the first time.

"I cannot thank him and Spire Washington Hospital enough for what they have done, the care of Mr Balupuri and the rest of the team has been outstanding from day one and my life has changed so much and for the better - my dream of becoming a mother has come true."

Mr Balupuri said: "Obesity is associated with decreased fertility. Such patients have difficulty in conceiving, but after weight loss the fertility dramatically improves. However it is strongly advised to our patients in the childbearing age to avoid pregnancy for at least two years especially after gastric bypass. This is predominantly due to the unknown malabsorptive effect on the foetus.

"In the case of Claire and a few others where pregnancy inadvertently does occur, a close follow-up and team approach with obstetricians is essential. I wish all the best to Claire and her family in the future and it was absolutely wonderful to meet Isaac."

For more information on weight loss surgery at Spire Washington Hospital, speak to one of their friendly Customer Service Advisers by calling 0191 448 9645.



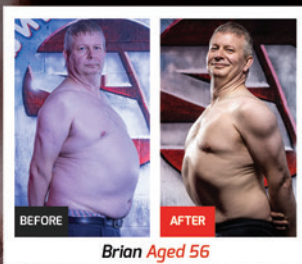


# WORLD RENOWNED 12 WEEK PLAN

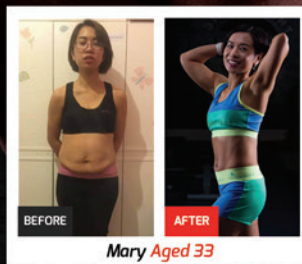
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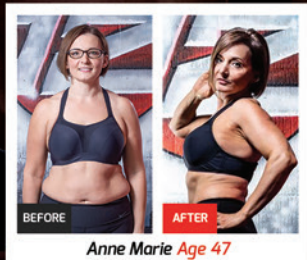
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