

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

DECEMBER 2016

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF SANDERSON YOUNG

business | property | media | technology | education | motors | arts | leisure

issue 18

Looking to expand? Need some working capital? Buying some machinery, equipment or vehicles?

We are pleased to announce we have access to innovative business loans from £5,000 to £1million. We provide a quick and simple service, with a decision typically made within 48 hours and funds transferred soon after.

Loans can be used for almost all business purposes: unsecured loans from £5,000 - £350,000, secured loans from £100,000 - £1million, asset finance and property finance (up to £3million).

- ✓ Interest rates from 6%
- ✓ Fixed rate, monthly repayment loans from 6 months to 5 years
- ✓ No application fees - only pay on acceptance
- ✓ No early repayment charges, settle any time
- ✓ No business plans or forecasts required



Julie Ralph



01388 450762



enquiries@businessfunders.co.uk



businessfunders.co.uk

What can I use this loan for?

- Working capital
- Asset purchase
- Liability payments
- Expansion and growth
- And much more

Does your company have two years of trading history?

Is your business stable and creditworthy? Do you have a UK resident Director?

If YES to the above, apply for a loan today!

Your business must be able to afford the loan and will be assessed for approval at time of application.

Business Funders

Connective financial solutions

NACFB
Helping Fund UK Business

#AskSB

SEEING *is*
Believing
*but sometimes the most
real things in the*
world
are the things we can't see...

*The Conductor,
Polar Express*

*However you follow your dreams,
it's good to know there's a team
to help keep you on track...*

*So, whilst we're no angels, we're
always here when you need us.*

Happy Christmas from Silver Bullet

Silver Bullet: your truly integrated service



@SilverBulletPR



Hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk

www.silverbulletmarketing.co.uk

t: 0191 261 7422

Silver Bullet:
marketing

Silver Bullet:
creative

Silver Bullet:
media

NEWCASTLE
UNITED



ST. JAMES' PARK

Where history is made and legends are born...

Beloved home of Newcastle United, St. James' Park rises high above the city, a gleaming glass and steel icon on the Tyneside skyline.

The warmest of North East welcomes awaits you beyond the gates, where our award-winning hospitality team will assemble the perfect matchday package for you and your guests.

**See the rest of the season out in style
from £935 + VAT**

☎ 0191 201 8444 ✉ hospitality@nufc.co.uk

www.nufc.co.uk



WE ARE UNITED





FESTIVE MATCH DAY HOSPITALITY IN
THE PARK GRILL

Join us in The Park Grill for our home Christmas fixtures
Sheffield Wednesday, Monday 26th December, Kick-off 19:45
Nottingham Forest, Friday 30th December, Kick-off 19:45
£85 Inc VAT per game or just **£150 Inc VAT** for both games

INCLUDED IN THE PACKAGE -

- Pre-match meal cooked to order in the open kitchen grill
- Executive stadium seating in the centre of the Leazes Stand
- Individual tables of four
- Team sheet, matchday programme, & matchday competition
- Pre and post-match analysis by former Newcastle United Hero
- Limited edition badges
- Licensed betting facility
- Cash bar



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO BOOK

☎ 0191 201 8444 ✉ hospitality@nufc.co.uk



foreword

Welcome to the December edition of Northern Insight

2016 has been a momentous year which has seen the magazine go from strength to strength to considerable acclaim. We close the year with another signature issue.

Our cover star is Duncan Young, owner of Sanderson Young, a true doyen of the North East estate agency world who looks back on the past twelve months.

We also explore festive fashion with the Bridges in Sunderland, find a hidden dining gem in the sleepy confines of Seaton Sluice and see our intrepid duo "Glenn and Gibbo" chart the resurgence of the Cherry Tree in Jesmond.

A particular highlight is the final travel article from respected journalist Ken Spearen ahead of full retirement. Ken has been a friend and support to yours truly for many years and a great ally to Northern Insight since its inception. May I wish him all the best for a long and happy future.

We approach 2017 with great enthusiasm and anticipation and with a huge desire to continue to improve the magazine and keep moving forward.

May I wish all readers, advertisers and contributors all the very best for a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Thank you for your continued support on a memorable journey. Till next month....

Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher

contents

DECEMBER '16

Business News 8-9

Recent Appointments 18

Entrepreneurs Interview 30-31

Tom Hedley - Hedley McEwan

Dining Insight 40-41

Harbour View Restaurant - Seaton Sluice

Cover Story 66-67

Sanderson Young

Media News 81

Technology News 92

Arts News 112-113

Travel 118-119

Leisure News 122-123

credits

Managing Director - Michael Grahamslaw

Design & Web - Louise O'Rourke, Ruairi McGuinness

Photography - Gordon Taylor

Editorial Contributors - Ken Spearen, Jack Grahamslaw, Graham Courtney, John Gibson, Alastair Stewart, Gordon Taylor, Alex Nelson, Holly Grahamslaw

www.northern-insight.co.uk facebook.com/northerninsight [@ninsightmag](https://twitter.com/ninsightmag)

All photos are copyright MJG Publishing Ltd and are taken solely for use in Northern Insight. If you wish to purchase a photograph please contact Michael Grahamslaw on mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com. Photo charges £50 for a single image, £295 for full buy out of a photo shoot. Advertising charges: There is a £25 charge for every set of amendments, following the first initial set of amendments, which are free of charge, for adverts designed by Northern Insight (MJG Publishing Ltd). Cancellations: If an advert is cancelled by the booker within a 7 day period prior to our print deadline, the advert will be charged in full, plus VAT.

Editorial

Editorial contributions should include a stamped addressed envelope. No responsibility is accepted for drawings, photographs or literary contributions during transmission, or while in the Managing Directors or Printers hands.

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

Advertisements

Although every care is taken to ensure accuracy the Publishers regret that they cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage caused by an error in the printing or damage to, a loss of artwork, transparencies or photographs.

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

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NORTH EAST COLLEGE



Gateshead College is celebrating further national recognition after winning an award at the 'Oscars' for the Further Education sector in the country.

Already the top performing college across the North East, Gateshead College won the Careers and Enterprise Company Award at the Association of Colleges (AoC) annual Beacon Awards held in London on 16 Nov.

The AoC Beacon Awards, launched in 1994, celebrate the best and most innovative UK further education colleges. This year's winners were announced by Baroness Sharp at the AoC annual conference and exhibition.

Judith Doyle, Principal and Chief Executive of Gateshead College, said: "I'm extremely proud that we've been recognised nationally for all of the hard work that goes into helping young people to have the best start to a rewarding career.

"As well as making sure students are work-ready and equipped with the skills employers need, Gateshead College is dedicated to giving young people access to careers advice that inspires them to make decisions that are right for them; that will help them realise their careers ambitions and be the best they can be.

"Seeing our students succeed at what they want to do, whether that be moving into employment,

taking up an apprenticeship or securing a place at university, is the most rewarding part of the job. To also be acknowledged with such a prestigious award is the icing on the cake."

Gateshead College, graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2015, is currently the number one college in the North East and was named sixth in the UK based on the success of its students.

During 2016, statistics showed that 95% of students had a positive destination, progressing to either further or higher education, starting an apprenticeship or securing a job.

RYANAIR'S NEW NEWCASTLE ROUTES TAKE OFF

Ryanair, Europe's No 1 airline, has celebrated the launch of 5 new routes from Newcastle International Airport as part of its winter schedule. Ryanair's routes to Wroclaw, Gdansk, Tenerife, Warsaw and Lanzarote have commenced.

North East consumers can choose from more routes to sun and city destinations, lower fares as Ryanair passes on lower fuel costs, and an even better customer experience, as it rolls out year 3 of its "Always Getting Better" customer experience programme.

Ryanair's Sales and Marketing Executive, Lisa Buckley, said: "We are pleased to launch our 5 new routes. Ryanair continues to grow at Newcastle by offering the lowest fares and best choice of destinations."

Newcastle International Airport's Aviation Development Manager, Leon McQuaid, said: "It's great to see Ryanair continue to build its presence in the region. Poland is a vibrant country with a host of attractions on offer so we expect the flights to Gdansk, Warsaw and Wroclaw to be extremely popular. Tenerife and Lanzarote are also firm favourites among the North East travelling public. I am delighted that we can now offer our passengers even more choice and availability from Newcastle Airport."



Be seen in all the right places...



THE MEDIA PLANNING & BUYING SPECIALISTS
www.mikelynachadvertising.co.uk



MATFEN ESTATES UNVEIL NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Businesses looking to escape to the country can now take advantage of eco-friendly office space within a prestigious family-owned estate.

Matfen Estates, owner of multi award-winning Matfen Hall Hotel, has unveiled Standing Stone Farm, an 8000sq ft rural courtyard office development close to Matfen Village, Northumberland.

Comprised of 12 self-contained units, ranging from 22sqm to 160sqm in size, the development features a range of environmentally friendly facilities as well as excellent broadband connection.

Heating and hot water are provided by a state-of-the-art sustainable biomass system powered by locally sourced timber, which is dried and chipped on the estate itself.

There is also an electric car charging point and ample parking, including a CCTV monitored covered cycle store.

The fully managed site incorporates showering, changing and kitchen facilities, disabled access and parking and offers 24-hour access to tenants.

In addition, Standing Stone Farm tenants can enjoy reduced rate accommodation, dining and golf and spa visits at the nearby four star Matfen Hall Hotel.

The development will open early in 2017.

SUNDERLAND SHOWING THE CARING WAY IN SKILLS2CARE



A Sunderland based company is fast taking over the delivery of training and apprenticeships in the region's health and care sector.

In its first year of working in the care sector, JB Skills Training has delivered over 225 apprenticeships under its Skills2Care brand.

Headed up by Clare Macmillan, the seven-strong talented assessor team already delivers training for 12 of the care and domiciliary care groups in the North East.

Qualifications being offered include funded apprenticeships for level two, three and five in health and social care. The team also assists learners access Learner Loans and delivers the training for the associated level four qualifications.

There is a commercial offering for care homes too, delivering bespoke training packages that are unavailable through funded routes. This includes level three in the Safe Administration of Medication, which clients can purchase at a cost effective, bringing added value to the relationship.

Clare said: "The health and care qualifications we offer are proving popular with the region's care providers. The Skills2Care brand is growing on a weekly basis and our assessors are starting to span the whole of the region."

JB Skills Training Ltd is one of the leading providers of funded and bespoke training in the North East, working in many other industries as well as care.

EXPANSION AND RELOCATION FOR NEWCASTLE RECRUITMENT CONSULTANCY

A Newcastle based recruitment consultancy is celebrating expansion following a successful period of growth.

Elsdon Consulting Ltd has moved to the 1460 sq ft offices at 33 Grey Street as it has grown from one to six people since its launch two years ago. This relocation to larger city centre offices was overseen by Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents.

Director of Elsdon Consulting Ltd, Louise Brooks, said: "We have had a fantastic two years since launching and the business has gone from strength to strength, with a growing team which shows no sign of slowing down.

"The relocation was a big milestone for us as it marks the beginning of a new chapter for the company following a successful starting period. We are now well established and are looking to continue growing our client base and helping people into their ideal careers."

Neil Hart, Director at Bradley Hall, said: "This is a fantastic milestone for Louise and Elsdon Consulting. Newcastle city centre is well established as home to the region's leading businesses and professionals. Moving to offices in such an iconic location really signifies the success of the business."



synergi:it

www.synergi.it
0191 477 0365

Digital transformation for modern business.

We've helped over 200 businesses across the North East, for a free discovery session call us on 0191 477 0365

Office 365

SharePoint

NINTEX

Shouting louder than your budget will allow.



THE MEDIA PLANNING & BUYING SPECIALISTS
www.mikelynachadvertising.co.uk



The Office Co.'s Lynn Gate is looking forward to a prosperous 2017

WORK SPACE: ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

As she draws the curtains on a busy 12 months, Lynn Gate, Owner of Gateshead's managed and serviced office accommodation provider The Office Co., looks forward to an even brighter 2017.

This year - our tenth in business - has undoubtedly been a memorable one with achievement and a host of new tenants relocating to Metropolitan House to take advantage of competitive leases that accommodate expansion and the flexibility SMEs need.

Indeed, we have seen increasing traction among regional SMEs for solutions that include office accommodation, which embrace more open workspace and shared working. This provides the right environment to nurture growth for ambitious companies, who are looking to take the next steps to boost their ideas and concepts, new products and services, and brand potential.

"Innovation has to be evident across all areas of business," says Lynn. "How can people live their brand, and fulfil their potential, if they're not working in an environment that encourages innovation and collaboration? That's where we come in, creating an affordable and accessible resource that gives these companies the time and space to grow."

The Office Co. has enjoyed its own success in 2016, remaining true to its values and delivering a quality product built around a genuine understanding of

the needs of clients, who range from sole traders and start-ups to well established small businesses.

Indeed, it's the ability to adapt and move with the times, offering flexible packages around an open-door policy, that has and will continue to differentiate it from others in a sector renowned for inflexibility, self-interest and restrictive practices.

This year has seen the retention of long standing clients who have been with the company since it opened for business in 2006, alongside a roster of new tenants. These include training provider N-Lighten & N-Able, UK property investment specialists Homes or Houses, IT network firm SL Data, shipping company Schulte & Bruns UK Ltd, and commercial property cleaners Let's Clean North East Ltd.

This is demonstrable success for Lynn and her team, who continue to achieve occupancy levels that are among the highest in the North East (85% – 90%) in the face of post-Brexit business uncertainty. It's also a key ingredient in an ambitious strategy that's driving the business forward and set to attract more clients in the coming few years.

After a busy year that's seen its fair share of ups-and-downs, Lynn's passion for her work and belief

in people remains undimmed: "I never want to lose my ambition or aspiration. People are the most important thing to this business. I know what they go through and if we can make a difference with a more personal touch, then that's great."

It's that understanding of the SME sector that remains key, and she and her right hand woman Shauna Logan-Summers, will continue to target sector growth on the back of investment in new conference and meeting facilities.

"I'm really excited about 2017, indeed the next 10 years. I can see ever increasing demand for office space in the region on easy-in/easy-out terms as more and more start-ups and entrepreneurs come to the market.

"These people will always need places like Metropolitan House to interact, to network, and to help one another."

So, on the cusp of a New Year, the outlook is bright for The Office Co - a vibrant hub that deserves its position in the heart of the local community and a place to do business.

The Office Co offers a range of serviced and managed offices, virtual offices and meeting rooms for a wide range of businesses.

A YEAR OF THE HIGHEST CALIBRE



Calibre's Karen Nelson (left) says the next 12 months will see the onward march of eLearning in schools

Newcastle-based Calibre Secured Networks Ltd is driving the delivery of advanced IT network solutions to North East schools. Karen Nelson, Managing Director, reflects on 12 months of growth and predicts how the sector will continue to evolve in the New Year.

Technical expertise and the provision of remote networking support at Sunderland's Castle View Enterprise Academy and work on the final phase of a £650,000 contract to deliver cloud-based wireless, network and data storage technologies to St Aidan's Catholic Academy are among the highlights that have continued to secure Calibre's place as a leader in IT for education in the last 12 months.

Elsewhere, in the private sector, a partnership with Newcastle School for Boys goes from strength-to-strength on the back a new enterprise grade network to secure the existing and future e-Learning requirements of pupils, teachers and support staff.

Work in 2016 on phase II has involved the relocation of the school's internet services with Calibre providing network support in a move that's seen a network software upgrade in advance of the relocation of internet services in early 2017.

"We are seeing North East schools investing to ensure that they are wired for learning success through the latest Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD) and interactive technologies," says Karen Nelson. "Strategically, they are being connected to, and integrated with, enterprise grade networks and beneficial education apps.

"The pace of change is relentless and breath-taking at times, with BYOD at the heart of a fast evolving

eLearning landscape built on access to almost limitless online resources, which allow young minds to flourish.

"It really is a brave new world out there right now and we, with our extensive experience and expertise, are well placed to meet schools' IT needs."

And looking forward to the coming 12 months, if there's anything certain, it will be the continuing, almost remorseless, march of eLearning, says Karen.

"Forward thinking schools will continue to up the pace at which they integrate dynamic new technologies to allow students to interact with digital curriculum resources instead of the traditional PC keyboard or mouse."

The emergence of an array of automated solutions to create new courses and learning materials, which save time and money, will only quicken as things like SRS (Student Response Systems) gain increasing traction in classrooms, offering new ways to record responses for immediate feedback to the teacher.

"Our schools will benefit from elements of curriculum generated by tools able to efficiently scan the course content and recognise the most important aspects.

"The augmented reality in e-Learning will also continue in the coming year, with pupils able to access and interact with expanded environments

through the Internet of Things among other technologies.

"This is the next step in the evolution of smart objects, connecting things in which the line between the physical object and digital information about that object is blurred.

"We are also seeing game-based learning, alongside technologies such as Cisco telepresence, continuing to gain a foothold in the education sector. This kind of learning engages students with action-based functionalities in real life through GPS technologies."

However the challenge in 2017 and beyond for schools will continue to be up-skilling their IT staff to keep up with the new technologies.

"The skills' gap is a problem and schools need to train IT technicians as well as teachers to manage increasingly complex IT estates. And this of course provides opportunities for firms like us who can support the sector with value added solutions built around genuine sector experience and competency."

Karen Nelson says its exciting times thanks to the white heat of technology driving the interactive learning experience alongside schools' investing to ensure staff and students benefit from accessible and engaging tools that deliver quicker, smarter and safer learning.

More at www.calibre-secured.net



RMT CHRISTMAS PARTY

As crowds gathered at one end of Northumberland Street for the traditional unveiling of Fenwick's Christmas window, more than 200 members of the North East business community made their way to the other end to take part in another pre-Christmas gathering - RMT Accountants & Business Advisors' annual end of year reception.

The event at The City Tavern, was held to celebrate the end of another successful year for the Gosforth-based practice.

Mike Pott, Managing Director at RMT Accountants & Business Advisors, said: "Working with businesses of varying sizes from within and outside the region to help their owners achieve their commercial and personal objectives has in turn enabled us to have a very strong year. It was great to be able to celebrate this with so many friends of the practice.

"Having recently added a number of new faces to an already-strong team, we're looking forward to all the exciting opportunities that 2017 has in store."





DEALMAKER MICHAEL TRADES UP TO RMT



One of the North East's best known dealmakers is investing in his own future after moving to RMT Accountants & Business Advisors to head up its Corporate Finance division.

Michael Cantwell is now responsible for the Gosforth-based firm's work around helping entrepreneurs undertake acquisitions and disposals, as well as assisting owner-managed businesses to secure the investment capital they need to expand.

Michael has worked in corporate finance for 14 years, specialising in acquisitions, disposals and fund raising, and has spent the last nine years as a director with RSM Corporate Finance in Newcastle.

He has been a leading advisor both regionally and nationally on applications to the government's Regional Growth Fund program, has provided Due Diligence services to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, and has worked on a variety of high profile corporate finance projects for household name clients including Komatsu, Haribo and JCB.

He also led the team which advised engineering

firm Desco on its acquisition by German-based group RAG Stiftung earlier this year as part of a commercial relationship with the Sunderland-based firm going back more than a decade.

Michael Cantwell says: "RMT has a strong industry reputation, and I already knew many of the individuals that make up the team, so the opportunity to strengthen the dedicated corporate finance resource of a full service practice was a very attractive one for me.

"Being part of an independent firm provides a great opportunity to shape our corporate finance offering in what I feel is the most appropriate way to meet clients' needs, and provides the flexibility that I think is crucial in finding the right options for individual deals.

"With a number of funding options emerging, including the launch of the JEREMIE 2 investment funds coming in the near future, this is an exciting

time for business investment in the North East, and I'm looking to use my corporate finance expertise to help more owner-managed businesses get the financial outcomes they're looking for."

RMT provides the full range of financial and business advisory services through its corporate finance, accountancy, specialist tax, medical & healthcare, and recovery & insolvency teams, and works with firms of all sizes both within and outside the North East.

Mike Pott, managing director at RMT, adds: "Michael is a well-known and highly-respected member of the North East corporate finance community, and it's a real coup for us to add him to our team.

"We have had a very successful year across all our different divisions, and are continuing to add and develop high calibre personnel who can provide the services and expertise that help client businesses succeed."

The Coastal Accountants



ReadMilburn
& COMPANY

Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors

71 Howard Street, North Shields, NE30 7AF t: 0191 257 0355 e: info@readmillburn.co.uk

- Annual Accounts • Self Assessment • PAYE Compliance • VAT Compliance • Management Accounts • Statutory Audits • Tax Planning
- Revenue Investigations • Contribution Agency • Investigations • VAT Investigations • Company Formations • Business Start-Ups
- Information technology • Forensic Accounting • Special Assignments

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Rod Wilkinson

Head of Corporate Finance in the North East, KPMG

What were your career ambitions growing up?

My favourite subjects at school were Geography and History and I remember wanting to be an archaeologist when very young. Years later, ironically, it was my history teacher that suggested that I consider accountancy!

Can you briefly outline your career path for the readers?

I joined KPMG (then Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co) in my hometown Darlington in 1984 after studying Geography at Durham University. This was one of the founding offices on the Peat's side of the firm and had a very enviable client base. I fondly remember audit visits to Whessoe, Darchem and Darlington & Simpson Rolling Mills, all of which had fantastic 'school dinner' type canteens.

I was an Audit Manager and doing more and more 'special' (non-Audit) work for my clients when the firm established Corporate Finance in the regions which I set up on Teesside in 1990 following a short secondment to our Leeds office.

I have headed KPMG's North East Corporate Finance business since the mid 1990's, with a stint in charge of Leeds a few years ago. I also sit on our Retail & Consumer and Healthcare national Corporate Finance sector teams.

Can you describe a typical day in the life of Rod Wilkinson?

It is wonderful to say that there is not such a thing as a 'typical day' in Corporate Finance, which is probably one of the main reasons why I have continued to enjoy a long career with the firm. We are usually working on a number of 'transactions', all of which are unique in nature. We may, for example be advising business owners on raising finance from Banks or Private Equity investors or running a sale process to realise a full or partial exit for shareholders.

Transactions typically last for 6-9 months with our lead advisory role being at the heart of the deal where we will work closely with funders, legal teams and other specialists from within KPMG. We get to know our clients exceptionally well and there is a huge amount of professional satisfaction gained from completing a complex and challenging deal.

Can you tell us what you're currently working on?

Virtually all of our engagements are confidential so it's difficult to talk about anything current. However to give a flavour, I can mention recently completed projects that are in the public domain. During the last 12 months we have advised the shareholders of market leading nursery business, Kids 1st and the owners of North East Convenience Stores on the sales of their businesses. In March, we completed the refinancing of North Tyneside based wholesaler, Kitwave Group which will enable the business to continue its growth strategy. In addition, in May we advised Darlington based cycling parts and accessories distributor, Zyro on its acquisition of competitor Fisher Outdoor. The latter two transactions have subsequently received 'Deal of the Year' awards which is fantastic for all of those involved.

Summarise your greatest business achievements to date?

It's not easy to pick out a particular deal when you have advised on well over 100! I am very proud that we were named 'Corporate Finance Team of the Year' at the recent North East Dealmakers Awards and that the success of the office has been recognised by peers at the North East Accountancy Awards in recent years.



What's the best piece of business advice you've been given?

I am very grateful to Tony Dennett, our former Office Senior Partner who suggested I specialise in Corporate Finance way back in 1990.

What motivates you?

Helping our children – my wife Caron and I are fortunate to have Hannah, who is now a qualified Chartered Accountant (!) and twin boys, Christopher and Jonathan, who are at university.

Who are your heroes both in and out of business?

I would have to say Tony and the other senior colleagues I have had the pleasure to work with plus my father-in-law, also an accountant, who gave me some good early career advice, telling me not to bother with specialist Tax exams!

Out of business, I admire historical figures such as Nelson and Churchill, despite their imperfections. I have a great respect for the staff at the Newcastle RVI on the neonatal and paediatric units – they were brilliant when our boys were born very prematurely and took up their bed space for many weeks.

When not in the swivel chair, how do you like to relax?

I have always enjoyed sport which nowadays is limited to the gym and (slow) running. I have completed 25 Great North Runs alongside 6th Form, University and work mates and more recently my children. My son Jonny, who has a cochlear implant, represents Great Britain in Deaf Athletics and I have acted as Team Manager on a number of European Championship trips. I am also a massive Darlo fan and have successfully indoctrinated my boys!

On Sundays, Caron and I often walk around Durham's riverbanks and go for a coffee.

What's your favourite book and why?

I enjoy the historical fiction work of Conn Iggulden and am looking forward to the next in the 'War of the Roses' series. I also read sporting biographies with Charlie Spedding's 'From Last to First' being my favourite – very candid and inspirational.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a supportive and loyal team player, who gave his clients 'best advice' and always acted with integrity.



CS accounting



NOT EVERYTHING
IN BUSINESS IS
BLACK AND WHITE

WE LOOK AT ALL
THE OPTIONS

*Wishing you a
Merry Christmas and a
Prosperous New Year
from everyone at CS Accounting*

 0191 487 9870  @csaccounting

START-UPS

GROWING
BUSINESS

BUSINESS
PLANNING

HELP &
SUPPORT

www.csaccounting.co.uk

SageOne Accredited Gold Partner

pointments....Appointments....Appointments....Appointme



NEW SENIOR HIRE AT TOP NEWCASTLE HOTEL

Crowne Plaza Newcastle – Stephenson Quarter hotel has strengthened its senior team with the appointment of a new Finance Director.

The luxury hotel in Newcastle city centre has appointed hospitality industry finance expert, Brian Alexander, to lead its finance department.

Heading up a team of four, Brian will oversee all accounting and financial requirements as well as providing specialist advice and support to the General Manager and hotel team.

Brian has worked in the hotel industry since the late 70s, starting out as a Housekeeping Porter at the County Thistle hotel in Newcastle city centre. Looking for career progression, he studied finance at Newcastle College and was promoted to Accounts Manager in 1995, a role in which he oversaw the transition from manual accounting to computerised systems.

Leaving the Thistle in 2003, Brian continued to build his career over the next 10 years in various senior financial positions at hotels across the North East, including Jurys Inn and The Village.



RESPECTED ACCOUNTANT JOINS BW MEDICAL ACCOUNTANTS' EXPANDING TEAM

Specialist advisers to the healthcare sector, BW Medical Accountants, have welcomed Julia Charlton (FCCA) on board as their newest Medical Accountant. She will be supporting the team by offering specialist accountancy and financial planning services to their client base of over 95 GP practices and 1,000 medical professionals.

Julia has over 33 years of accounting experience, including a HND in Accounting and Finance from Leeds Metropolitan University. She comes most recently from a role as Finance Manager for Advanced Industrial Solutions, a training firm for oil and gas companies based in North Shields.

Keith Taylor, Head of Medical Services for BW Medical Accountants, said: "When a position became available within our team, Julia was the first person we thought of. As well as having previously acted for healthcare clients, she also has extensive in-house accountancy experience.

"Julia is already well known to many of our people, is highly thought of and fits in well with our culture of integrity and excellence."

NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR DURHAM SCHOOL

One of the oldest schools in the North East is looking to the future with the appointment of one of the region's most experienced education professionals.

600-year-old Durham School, Quarryheads Lane, Durham, has recruited Andrew Beales to the position of Development Director.

Andrew, who is a member of the board of trustees for the Institute of Development Professionals in Education, joins the school from the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation where he held a similar role.

He brings more than 12 years of experience within the education sector to the position, having previously developed resources and support at Giggleswick School, North Yorkshire, and at the University of Sunderland.

In his new role, Andrew will help raise funds to develop facilities at the school and also ensure the continuation and extension of bursaries for young people who would otherwise be unable to attend.

Head of Durham School, Kieran McLaughlin, said: "Andrew not only has a proven track record but he is also passionate and committed to the independent sector. We are delighted to welcome him to Durham School."



FURTHER GROWTH AT MINCOFFS

Newcastle based Mincoffs Solicitors has further strengthened its offering to clients with the appointment of two new Partners. The appointments build on a period of continuous growth at the firm, which now employs over 60 staff at its office in Jesmond.

Peter Robinson has been appointed as a Partner in the Corporate team and will work alongside Partners Paul Hughes and John Nicholson.

Peter joins after running his own corporate practice for a number of years. He has over 20 years of transactional experience by helping early stage businesses, SME's and listed companies establish, grow and reach their objectives.

Malcolm Wood also joins the firm as a Partner in the Commercial Property team working alongside Partner Ryan Bannon, after working for a number of years at national and regional law firms.

Commenting on the appointments, Chief Executive Andy Woodhouse said: "We are very pleased to welcome Peter and Malcolm to the firm. Both are extremely experienced legal professionals and are great additions to our partnership."





Deborah Lewis-Bynoe of GNAAS (left) with Anne Hallowell of UNW (right)

UNW IS A HIGH FLYER WITH GNAAS BEHIND THE SCENES

The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) is on call 365 days of the year, saving hundreds of lives each year by bringing specialist pre-hospital emergency treatment by helicopter to accidents and emergencies across the North.

On average, the charity is called to around 1,000 incidents every year from its bases at Teesside, Cumbria and satellite operation at Newcastle Airport, supporting people across the North East, Cumbria and North Yorkshire with a consultant-led trauma team.

Although GNAAS responds to calls from the North East, North West and Yorkshire Ambulance Services, it is a charity that depends solely on donations to operate. Since 2001, it has run the Great North Air Ambulance Trading Company (GNAAT), a wholly-owned subsidiary that collects clothes, recycles printer cartridges and old mobile phones, and collects office waste paper and documents for shredding. The profits from these activities all go towards supporting GNAAS's vital work.

UNW was appointed as auditor for the charity and its trading subsidiary in 2013 following some initial

consultancy work. Under separate arrangements the charity has also utilised the services of UNW employment tax and VAT specialists on an ad-hoc basis.

Deborah Lewis-Bynoe, director of charity services at GNAAS, said: "UNW are well placed to provide advice and guidance to the charity and SME sector and we have been very happy with the expertise they have brought to our organisation."

"The UNW team are entirely supportive in their role and we look forward to our future working partnership."

Anne Hallowell, Head of Charity and Not for Profit at UNW, has been working with GNAAS since the start of the charity's relationship with UNW.

She said: "We were initially brought in to improve the management structure and control, whilst also looking at training the team. We worked on the

systems and processes to improve the quality, and were then asked to take on the audit assignment.

"On the back of the work carried out, GNAAS recruited Deborah and it now has a much stronger management team in place."

UNW works with around 40 charities of different sizes, providing support for vital back office functions.

Ms Hallowell added: "We have varying degrees of involvement depending on the individual needs or the organisations with which we work, and are ideally placed to provide all of the specialist services that charity and not for profit entities require."

"GNAAS is one of the larger charities we work with although we also work with well-known North East names including Durham Cathedral and the People's Kitchen. It's a pleasure helping them thrive."

UNW is a leading independent firm of chartered accountants delivering a broad range of accountancy and advisory services to our clients.

www.unw.co.uk

ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN NEWCASTLE



The management team: (L to R) Frank Firth, Branch Director, Andrew Robson, Andy Allan and Joe Millen, Directors

Commercial insurance broker and risk management specialist Arthur J. Gallagher is celebrating 10 years in Newcastle and has marked the milestone by completing one of its most successful years to date.

The company originally set up at its base on The Quayside with just eight employees and has grown steadily over the years to reach its current size of 56 team members. This figure was enhanced at the beginning of 2016, with the addition of a seven-strong small business team from its Durham operation to strengthen its range of expertise and provide a full-service offering all from one location.

Gallagher now provides insurance and risk management solutions for companies across a wide breadth of sectors and businesses of all sizes, from SMEs through to large corporates. In addition, it has a private client team servicing high-net worth individuals, and an in-house claims department all based on Quayside.

The first quarter of 2016 also saw the promotion of Frank Firth to branch director and the creation of a new management team. The team set about implementing a new three-year growth plan. This included an ambitious annual new business target which the company was able to meet in just six

months, thanks in part to major new client wins including Nortek Inc, Port of Tyne and Virgin Money.

Frank Firth comments: "I have been with the business since it started, 10 years ago, and seen it flourish year on year. It's fantastic to mark this milestone by enjoying our most successful year to date. This is testament to the strategy we have in place and the hard work of our entire team to maintain an exceptional level of service for our clients."

The company's growth has facilitated a number of key promotions, including the appointment of Gill Moffatt as Client Account Director, Karen Barker as Claims Manager and Michelle Wood as Office Manager. This is in addition to the appointment of three new account handlers to support the team. Frank said: "The professional development of all our team members is critical to our business success and continued investment in our people has helped us achieve a 96% client retention rate in 2016. This was recognised earlier in the year when the Newcastle branch received the maximum three-

star rating for its high levels of customer service awarded by Investor in Customers."

Looking forward into 2017 and beyond, Gallagher sees a number of opportunities and growth areas, particularly in the North East's SME and mid-corporate market. Frank comments: "As a weaker pound makes UK products and services more desirable, we expect these businesses to start exporting. With our expertise in trade credit insurance and credit surety, plus with our vast network of international offices and partners offering client service capabilities in more than 150 countries, Arthur J. Gallagher is well placed to support local businesses with their exporting ambitions."

Frank concludes: "The success we've had this year provides us with a solid platform going into 2017. I look forward to leading the business on the same upward path and our main strategy for doing this is to continue providing our customers with the tailored insurance solutions they need in order protect and run their business effectively."

To find out more about how Arthur J. Gallagher could help your business, please contact the Newcastle branch on 0191 479 7600 or visit www.ajginternational.com



Thinking about
your business is
a big part of ours.

PUT OUR TAILORED INSIGHTS TO WORK FOR YOU

To make confident decisions about the future, an entrepreneurial growing business needs a different kind of adviser. One who starts by understanding where you want to go and then brings the ideas and insights of an experienced team to help get you there.

rsmuk.com

THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD
AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING



The UK group of companies and LLPs trading as RSM is a member of the RSM network. RSM is the trading name used by the members of the RSM network. Each member of the RSM network is an independent accounting and consulting firm each of which practises in its own right. The RSM network is not itself a separate legal entity of any description in any jurisdiction. The RSM network is administered by RSM International Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (company number 4040598) whose registered office is at 11 Old Jewry, London EC2R 8DU. The brand and trademark RSM and other intellectual property rights used by members of the network are owned by RSM International Association, an association governed by article 60 et seq of the Civil Code of Switzerland whose seat is in Zug.



TAKE THE HO HO HOW MUCH OUT OF YOUR CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year, but for many people, the season of goodwill can also be an expensive one.

As a financial adviser, it would be all too easy for me to preach some of the same old money saving tips about planning ahead, setting budgets or staggering your Christmas shopping over a number of months to help balance the budget... but I don't want to do that. With the festive period just around the corner, as my gift to you, I'd like to pass on some of my own tried and tested pearls of wisdom to help you make your finances go further this Christmas.

If like me, you like to shop around for the best deals but you would rather avoid the hustle and bustle of the high street, then shopping online is the way forward. The internet is full of websites like Money Saving Expert, Quidco and Top Cashback which can help you find the best deals on goods from many of the high-street retailers, while at the same time, enabling you to earn a percentage of the price you pay for the goods as cashback when you buy online. If you have an idea of which shops you will be

making purchases from this Christmas, another way to obtain great discounts is to go direct to the retailer's website and register to join their mailing list, to receive exclusive discounts straight to your inbox.

When buying more expensive items such as jewellery, I find that I almost always get a significant reduction in the price simply by asking for it. A top personal tip is to give the sales assistant the impression that you will buy the item there and then, if they agree to an acceptable reduction in the price.

Another thing to bear in mind, especially when purchasing more luxurious items for your loved ones, is that most retailers have to pay a fee of up to 3% of the purchase price if a customer pays for goods by credit card. So, if you are fortunate enough to have the funds available in your current account to cover the cost of the transaction, then you could ask the retailer to discount the cost of

the item by a further 3% if you pay by debit card. Of course, the cost of Christmas doesn't just stop at the shops. There is often a premium rate on services such as transport, hotel stays and dining around the festive season.

If you need to book a taxi over the festive period, always ensure you are quoted a price that is agreed at the time of booking and double check this with the driver before setting off. That way you can ensure you are not paying over the odds for your journey.

Equally, if you are planning to be away from home this Christmas and you need to book a hotel room, don't just accept the online rate. It's always worth calling the hotel direct to enquire about the online price. That way, you can ask for a discount, a free upgrade, or a complimentary bottle of wine with your meal. As the saying goes, if you don't ask, you don't get!

Stephen and his team wish you all a very Merry Christmas! To find out more about Explore Wealth Management, call 0191 285 1555 or visit: www.explorewealth.co.uk

CAPITAL ALLOWANCES – SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

The property taxes landscape is forever changing and evolving; as a consequence, it is critical that we understand the updates, as well as remembering the basics. As a follow up to their successful Property Taxes Seminar in November, here Leathers LLP provide an overview of one particular area which provoked the most discussion on the day and one which many take for granted – Capital Allowances on Property Transactions.



S.198 Elections

Capital allowances on the sale/purchase of a commercial property is a subject which many professional advisers and their clients overlook or simply do not fully understand.

In April 2014 (as part of the Finance Act 2012), new rules were introduced in relation to fixtures and fittings within buildings. The full detail of the rules is outside the scope of this article, however, to briefly summarise, the new rules required both the seller and the purchaser to comply with the following:

- Fixed Value Requirement – The value of fixtures in buildings for capital allowances must be jointly agreed under a 's.198 election', within two years.
- Pooling Requirement – The seller must include all qualifying fixtures in their capital allowances pool.
- Maximising Relief – Allocations to Fixtures and Fittings

Increasingly, we are seeing transactions where the value attributed to fixtures and fittings in a building is only £1. Perhaps this is due to the perceived complexity in the rules or a function of fee pressure both for solicitors and advisors on property transactions.

In many cases, a £1 allocation may mean one or

both of the parties to a transaction are missing out on a significant amount of tax relief. If it is possible to allocate a proportion of the sale proceeds to fixtures and fittings, there is scope for a future capital allowances claim.

In 2015, the Law Society released a Capital Allowances Report, which estimated that between 1 April 2014 and 31 December 2014 an estimated £1.6 billion of capital allowances were missed.

Furthermore, the report wasn't particularly complementary as to the wider understanding of the rules within the professional community:

"Many in the profession are not fully up to speed with their new obligations, and are exposing themselves to risks ranging from loss of fee income to litigation. Very few commercial property transactions giving rise to capital allowances appear to be handled in line with best practice. This is not merely a matter of risk to the profession. It's a missed opportunity to build expertise, relationships and new business."

What to Look For?

Here at Leathers, we always work closely with our clients and their lawyers to ensure opportunities for tax relief are identified, and ensure that best practice is followed. In terms of the thought processes we adopt when considering a property sale, we would look to review the following areas:

- Have all available capital allowances been claimed on the building?
- Has a value been agreed for the fixtures of the building as part of the sale agreement?
- Capital allowances claims do not reduce the capital gains base cost; there is no adverse impact to claiming capital allowances – can proceeds be allocated to fixtures and fittings?
- Has s.198 election be made in accordance with the requirements of the legislation in terms of format and content?
- Have previous claims been reviewed?
- What the optimum position for the seller/purchaser?

We take a proactive approach in relation to property transactions and look to engage in the process from the outset. Ensuring the maximum level of tax relief from capital allowances is claimed at the earliest opportunity, should far outweigh the level of professional fees incurred, and gives flexibility for future sales.

As with much of our advice, whilst the underlying aspects may seem complicated, we keep the message simple; ask an expert as soon as possible and look at a transaction from all angles, you may qualify for a significant amount of additional tax relief.

For advice and assistance with Capital Allowances and Property Tax Planning, contact Ryan Harrison (r.harrison@leathersllp.co.uk) or Barry James (b.james@leathersllp.co.uk), or call 0191 2246760.

MIKE GRAHAMSLAW MEETS

Peter Cromarty

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS GROUP

You are celebrating your second anniversary in business. How has the journey been so far?

Well I can't quite believe it has been two years since we launched. It's been great and I am genuinely delighted to have been able to help a number of SME's with funding their businesses, whether that be working capital, asset finance, short term secured finance, property finance or for acquisitions or MBO's.

I really appreciate the support I have had from strategic partners Reward Finance Group, who provided innovative short term secured funding, and Anglo Scottish Asset Finance who are one of the UK's largest asset finance brokers.

The funding landscape has shifted massively over the past 5 years and you really need to run pretty fast to keep up. There are new funders coming to the market all of the time and we aim to get the right fit for each client's own circumstances, not just what is available from any respective lender. One size certainly doesn't fit all.

Can you tell us what you are currently working on?

We are currently working on a number of funding projects ranging from property refinance to peer-to-peer loans, invoice finance to asset finance, with facility levels between £50k - £4M.

We are also delighted that we are working with, not just small to mid range SME businesses, but also an AIM listed entity, which demonstrates that all business sizes are seeing the benefit of having specialist advice on their funding mix.

We are also working with a small number of rapidly growing businesses, and are looking to provide on going support in a non-executive capacity to help them achieve their growth aspirations.

Summarise your biggest achievement in the last 2 year period?

Starting a business from scratch is not easy. It requires a lot of hard work to set up the infrastructure and IT systems at the same time you are out generating new business opportunities and completing the deals. Getting the business to the end of year 2 well ahead of your plan is a great achievement but also having a clear vision of where you are going in the next 3 years is too.

From a client perspective I have been delighted to work on some fantastic opportunities with some great clients, helping them acquire target businesses, structure facilities that are beneficial to the client not just the lender, and refinancing historic facilities to ones better suited to the client's current situation, have all been highlights.

You mentioned your vision for the next 3 years. What is that?

I think the funding landscape will continue to change and move away from the traditional forms of lending. Clients will always need some help in finding the right funding and mix for their business.

However, over the latter part of 2016 there have been a number of instances where our remit has been wider than that. We have seen a growing requirement for a wider consultative service, where clients, amongst other things, need help with existing systems, for us to translate what their existing funders are looking for by way of financial information and more importantly why. Also how, as business owners they need to protect themselves from key risks.

So going forward we will have 3 clear channels to our business,

Funding • Advisory • Investment.

Investment will be working with local entrepreneurs to identify and provide acquisition opportunities, and also equity opportunities back.

We have rebranded the business and have a new website to communicate what Corporate & Commercial Business Solutions Group can provide

for our clients. For further information please check out our new website below.

What has been your biggest challenge?

Resource. Unfortunately, not all funding opportunities come in a steady manageable flow, and there have been some spikes where 24 hours in the day have not been enough. Communication and prioritisation is the key.

What motivates you?

That's' easy – doing the best job for your clients that you can possibly do.

Email: peter@ccfundingsolutions.com Web: www.ccbgs.co.uk

SINTONS SECURES ACCREDITATIONS



L-R: Sintons' compliance team – Helen Cunningham, Steve Freeman, Simon Anderson, Peter McCloy, Rachel Johnson, Garry Jennings

Law firm Sintons has been rewarded for its ongoing commitment to minimising risk and ensuring compliance by securing a series of accreditations.

The firm has recently gained the Lexcel accreditation, becoming one of few law firms to secure it at the first time of being assessed. Sintons won praise for its robust standards and commitment to client care.

Sintons, which was the first law firm in Newcastle to gain the Investors in People standard, recently had its IIP accreditation renewed until 2019.

In a further demonstration of its commitment to reducing risk, Sintons also received the Cyber Essentials quality mark, a Government-backed scheme to reward firms which operate at low risk of cyber-attacks.

Sintons – which recently won praise from Legal

500 for its outstanding legal expertise and ability to attract national clients – is well known and highly regarded for its levels of personal service and client care, and its commitment to compliance forms a central part of that.

Compliance officer Peter McCloy recently joined Sintons, whose experience includes a 30-year career in the police force, during which time he headed up a team responsible for the investigation of financial crime and money laundering. He is also a fellow of the International Compliance Association.

Steve Freeman, Partner and head of compliance at Sintons, said: "Through gaining these accreditations, have secured formal recognition of the high standards and commitment client care that have

always been at the heart of how Sintons operates. Each accreditation is only awarded after thorough assessment and scrutiny of how we function, so it is very pleasing that we have been independently recognised for our best practice.

"Ensuring we are compliant is an ongoing and ever-changing process in today's fast-changing world, and Sintons continue to invest in our business to ensure we are fully abreast of new developments. Through Peter joining us, we have added additional expertise to our compliance team, and can move forward with confidence that we are operating a business that is low on risk which offers legal excellence and outstanding service to clients."

SOMEONE TO TURN TO



From right to left: Claire Robinson, PROPS Chief Executive, Nicola Mansfield Jones, Operations Manager, and Lyn Hunter, Senior Team Leader

PROPS NORTH EAST MAKES LIVES BETTER FOR FAMILIES IMPACTED BY SUBSTANCE MISUSE

The season of goodwill and over excessive indulgence is upon us. In moderation, the odd tipples or two is completely acceptable, and in December we all find ourselves enjoying the extra one here and there, no doubt ahead of Dry January. Not wanting to sound bah humbug, but for many, excessive drinking is a daily occurrence causing untold misery to families who turn to PROPS - Positive Response to Overcoming Problems of Substance misuse.

Many of you reading this won't have ever heard of PROPS North East, let alone needed our services. Let us explain what we do and how we provide support to over 600 Newcastle and North Tyneside families, who have the misfortune of having a family member who brings turmoil to the home through substance misuse.

PROPS North East began life in 1997, when Scotswood Women's Family Drug Support Group formally constituted as Newcastle PROPS. A group of mothers founded PROPS for families in their community affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs, identifying a need from their own experiences, the use of heroin being predominant at that time.

Fast forward nearly 20 years, PROPS is now a leading provider of specialist services to families affected by substance misuse and a recognised centre of excellence in the UK. Our services employ 17 people who are supported by an active volunteer workforce and work directly with around 600 families each year from across Newcastle and North Tyneside.

UK Drug Policy Commission national research estimates that:

- Almost 1.5m adults were significantly impacted by a relative's drug misuse
- This equated to an annual cost of £1.8bn
- The support families require would cost the NHS or local authorities £750m to provide themselves



Positive Practice social enterprise is the trading arm of PROPS. It was created both to progress the mission of PROPS in creating equality of access to services for families and carers affected by substance misuse and addiction, to provide a sustainable income stream for the charity to support organisational development and delivery of services.

Over the last three years Positive Practice has trained 600 workforce practitioners across England, Scotland and Wales in the evidence-based Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) structured interventions, providing better lives for the families with whom they work with as well as better performance for services.

PROPS North East and Positive Practice have gathered performance data for a typical group of 32 carers. They were asked each time to score

on a scale of one to 10, their understanding of substances, their relationships with the substance user and other family members, and how they viewed their own wellbeing. The data shows the vast improvement during a five-month period of intervention from an initial assessment to exit:

- Conflict between the carer and substance user decreased by 66%
- Misusers entering treatment increased from 43% to 75%
- Carers' relationships with their families improved by 50%
- Carers' wellbeing rose by up to 200%

Like mental health, substance misuse remains a stigma, with many sufferers or families feeling isolated and not knowing where to turn. With continuing awareness and funding we can step in to help the child who has an alcoholic parent or the elderly mother who has an alcoholic son.

We were ecstatic to be selected by Boots as their chosen charity in October, which will entail 14 Newcastle and North Tyneside stores fundraising for us in the coming months.

It may be that your organisation is looking for a charity to support in 2017, therefore if you would like to know more about our charity, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

BREXIT, USA GOES THE FULL FARAGE AND THE MORTGAGE MARKET – HOW HAS 2016 TURNED OUT?



Firstly, very best wishes for the festive season to all readers of Northern Insight.

In a year of shocks which arguably killed the polling industry, if you had told me at the start of 2016 that Brexit and the USA going the “full Farage” with its new President would become reality, I would have expected a turbulent year in the property and mortgage world.

So how has it turned out?

In truth a really positive year where the market has overcome these international shocks and carried on regardless, albeit with peaks and troughs. Volumes of housing transactions and mortgage lending are both likely to finish the year slightly up on 2015, a remarkable achievement given everything which has happened.

In addition to these huge political events we have seen other areas which the market has overcome; increased regulation of buy to let mortgages (ironically EU driven!) with more due in early 2017 - stamp duty increases and tax restrictions for buy to let investors have undoubtedly had an effect, but overall homeowners and investors are robust in their need/desire to move home or invest.

The main upsides we have seen during the year are increased competition in the mortgage world, leading to lower rates and changes in lenders requirements, meaning that those previously unwilling or unable to move home or change their mortgage may now have options.

Hopefully those 25% of mortgage holders unnecessarily paying a high standard variable rate (source Nationwide – 09/11/2016) and those “mortgage prisoners” will use this opportunity to obtain an impartial review of their circumstances to see whether they are able to move home and / or reduce their mortgage costs.

Given my comments about the polling industry, I’m not going to predict how long this window of ultra-low mortgage rates will last. What if you could reduce and potentially fix your costs for the medium term? Surely this has to be an option worth exploring?

Local, face-to-face, independent mortgage advice can smooth the process - Innovate Mortgages and Loans are ready to take your call and offer assistance!

You can call us on 0191 223 3514 or email Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans at paul@innovatempl.co.uk

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



Diamond Inn

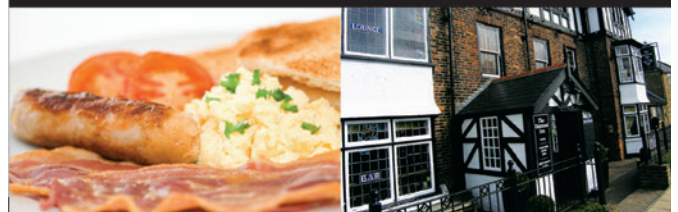
Pub, Restaurant & Hotel



The Diamond Inn is located in the heart of Ponteland and offers a wide range of real ales, real food, and a real atmosphere! We believe in using fresh ingredients, cooking from scratch.

Serving a selection of beers, real ales, wines, spirits and soft drinks all served with by our team of friendly staff. Enjoy a comfortable seat by the fire in the winter or cool off in the summer in our picturesque beer garden with a traditional and welcoming atmosphere.

Experience dining in relaxed surroundings serving a variety of traditional English dishes, Sunday lunch, breakfast and private dining menus.



GET INTOUCH

Main Street, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 9BB
01661 872898
www.thediamondinn.co.uk

EN-SUITE ACCOMMODATION | FUNCTION ROOM FOR HIRE | GOOD FOOD

NEWCASTLE-BASED NBS IS AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



As they celebrate the £5.8m refurbishment and redevelopment of their headquarters - the Grade II listed Old Post Office on St Nicholas Street – we caught up with Chief Executive, Richard Waterhouse.

What does NBS do?

The UK Government recognised back in 2010 that the construction industry needed to change. It recognised that digital was going to apply to the construction industry and NBS has been at the forefront of supporting that initiative.

We are committed to offering distinctive, innovative specification and information solutions to construction industry professionals and are the only provider who can connect data, provide accurate content and information which meets industry standards and can deliver this digitally across the entire project timeline and beyond.

We help our customers manage their knowledge and information so they can be as efficient and effective as possible.

Who uses NBS?

We ensure construction industry professionals have access to the right information at the right time and in the right way. Our specification, building product and construction knowledge tools and services enable customers to deliver outstanding projects in an informed, collaborative and efficient way.

We also connect building product manufacturers to construction professionals through a unique combination of specification and construction knowledge products.

What were your aims in renovating the Old Post Office?

We wanted to have an office environment that

would support collaboration and be the innovation hub for the organisation - and that's what we have built here.

We have created spaces that allow people to work at their desks, to work in a team area or to find a quiet space where they can sit and focus by themselves, if that's what they want to do.

This is an office which will support the future direction of the business and inspire people to want to join us but also to help the business improve in the future.

There will be big open work spaces, a central hub for informal meetings and socialising with colleagues, a lecture theatre and an exhibition area. Extension of the roof gardens and terraces will create spaces to entertain and network and with a gym and catering, the building will be alive beyond nine to five.

Visitors from the business and academic communities, along with members of the public, will also be invited into the building for corporate events, while the third floor will provide incubator space for architectural start-ups.

Why is it a great place to work?

We know that the key to success lies in our workforce: in employing the right people with the right skills and ensuring they have the tools and environment in which to fulfil their potential.

It's about the support we give people. We train them and give them the skills and experiences they wouldn't get in other organisations. We are looking for people who want to succeed, who want to look

after our customers, who are innovative in their thinking and love coming up with great solutions.

The city centre space brings other benefits to staff, such as access to major transport links and a myriad of shops, bars and restaurants, all on the doorstep.

And, to make sure staff have the time to enjoy them, each person gets their birthday off and an extra half day holiday in the run up to the festive period for Christmas shopping!

NBS has been built by people and they are the foundation blocks for its future.

What does the future hold for NBS?

The world's the limit. We have created a fantastic set of tools and services that meet the needs of our customers here in the UK.

We are leading the direction of travel for digital construction information. Many, many countries are looking at the UK to see how they can replicate it which gives us a great opportunity to take our products, services and support to customers around the world. We will continue to become a truly digital business, creating simplistic experiences for our customers, collaborating with external partners to realise our digital aspirations and encouraging our team to work with the future in mind."

Could you describe NBS in three words?

Responsive, collaborative, trustworthy.

And in a sentence?

Leading the digital construction industry.

SHOWCASE YOUR BUSINESS WITH A
CRITIC-PLEASING,
BOX-OFFICE
SMASHING,
BLOCKBUSTER,
MULTI-AWARD
WINNING,



Okay, it's not exactly Hollywood. However, a great idea, well scripted and superbly produced, can help make your brand famous too. Over many years, we have made hundreds of fabulous, 'glossy,' creative broadcast TV commercials, often at great expense. Oh, how times have changed. Now your customers turn to the internet for information about you. That's why we're focusing our huge experience and creativity to make online films that everyone can afford. With all the skills needed to create high-impact, effective online content in-house, you'll be surprised how little it can cost. Why not get in touch and find out.

Email: tom@hedleymcewan.co.uk Tel: 0191 265 7542 hedleymcewan.co.uk

**Hedley
McEwan**
creative communication



Tom Hedley 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

TOM HEDLEY

Hedley McEwan

Tell me a little about your background.

I started in, what you would then loosely call, 'the marketing industry' almost 40 years ago as a window dresser in the fashion sector. Back then there was no such thing as 'display teams' or 'visual merchandisers' working to 'set templates' like you have now, and actual 'artistic and creative ability' was fundamental to the job.

I didn't come through university, I actually went to art school and to find a job coming out of art school which utilised the skills that you had acquired was difficult, but I was fortunate enough to find a start with 'Burtons' and 'Jackson the Tailors', a job I greatly enjoyed.

I then stumbled into something more akin to what we now understand as marketing in quite a strange way; I'd moved on to Wades Furnishing, the head office in London said each region should have a 'marketing manager' and the manager of the Sunderland store said, "Oh, the window dresser can do that!"

It was a great grounding and it taught me a set of principles that I have carried into almost every aspect of my working life. Certainly in my business life now, 'quality presentation' permeates every element of what we do, it's critical.

How did you get started on your own?

I was at Robson Brown for around 25 years and Duncan, my business partner, was there for 28. Six years ago, Robson Brown was bought by an American company, which unfortunately went bust and took Robson Brown down with it.

Duncan, myself and another director tried to buy RB out of administration. That didn't work out, so Duncan and I hatched the plan that we had talked about for a few years previously, and Hedley McEwan was born.

When we got together to map out the vision for Hedley McEwan (over several Guinness), we knew what we wanted the company to be; a truly 'creative-centric' company.

We don't pretend we can do everything. The core team that we have here is all about creativity, creating and crafting the 'Big Idea' from which everything else then develops. I do believe that we are the only truly, singularly creative company in Newcastle and probably the North East for that matter.

What was your first business premises?

We had to set up very rapidly, so we moved in with a friend of mine who had

a digital business. This introduced us to Ouseburn which was fast growing into what it has now become, the creative and digital hub of Newcastle and the wider region. About 18 months ago we bought where we are now on St Peter's Marina, it's a hidden gem, a fantastic location.

How has the business grown?

There were five of us on day one and there are 14 of us now. Our extensive previous experience told us that there would be a point in our growth cycle where if we got to a position of somewhere between 12-15 great people working with a similar amount of great clients, then that would be the perfect balance; allowing us to invest the time required for each challenge to deliver the best creative product we can. We have been fortunate enough to get to that position sooner than we thought.

How is your market changing?

The obvious answer is the rise of 'digital' and it's interesting that most people view digital as a kind of sector in its own right. It isn't really. In our view it's always just been another media platform, another route to market. For us, it's always about the core idea. In simple terms, digital means you can communicate more accurately and 'personally', and react much quicker, so agility is a great benefit. You can't change a TV campaign overnight but you can change digital campaigns in minutes; if you see something happening in your market, you can be right on it.

Our approach to business hasn't changed and I believe this is because Duncan and I are from a classical advertising background where what matters is the big idea (some would call it the 'strategic thought') that works across every platform, not about the delivery technologically, the latest gimmick or the route to market.

What is your Unique Selling Point?

The ability to generate the 'big idea' based on rock-solid strategic thinking. An idea that is then extendible into every aspect of a client's communications, both externally and as importantly, internally; it's amazing how many companies overlook taking their own people on their marketing journey. If the core idea can only work on a limited level then it is not fit for purpose.

How do you keep your team motivated?

We try and do that in almost every way that we can. We of course, believe we pay people well, but we also try to make sure that the environment and working atmosphere is the best it can be. Duncan and I absolutely believe that we have provided the best working environment that we can; our people are the best at what they do, so consequently we want them to work on the best quality work we can attract. Unlike most other sectors, within the creative industry people really just enjoy doing what they do and value creative fulfilment, so pay alone isn't always the biggest motivator.

We want to provide everyone here with opportunities to be creative. Anyone that comes

and sees our working environment will immediately understand this. We are a small team, a family, and we make sure that the mixture of personalities is absolutely right to generate the all-important creative energy.

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

Like anyone else, I want to enjoy coming to work. For most of my working career the ability to create a great working environment wasn't down to me. At Robson Brown I was fortunate, overall it was a very enjoyable experience, working with some amazing creative and project management talent (many of whom now make up the core of the Hedley McEwan team), and for a good deal of that time we were working with the best clients, in the best offices and environment. So for me now, my personal motivation comes from knowing I couldn't put more in to making this place a great place to work.

I mentioned the family aspect about Hedley McEwan. It's a wonderful place to be in life when you only work with people you really like; I don't exclude clients in this. We only work with clients that we really like. I know that not everyone is lucky enough to get to this position and we have worked hard to achieve it. The mix of personalities within our client roster has got to be as good as the creative chemistry. It's great when you get to the stage that when the phone rings you know you're going to have an enjoyable conversation, regardless of who is at the other end.

How does mentoring work in your company?

I'm lucky that in my working life I have worked with some really outstandingly talented people and none more so than Duncan, who continually surprises and inspires me (quite something after 30 years of working together!).

We don't mentor in a structured way, but because of the make-up of the company with many of the team having worked together for 15 to 20 years plus, mentoring happens on a daily basis. Everybody interacts with everyone else; people learn and are mentored continually.

What does the future hold for Hedley McEwan?

Well, we are always looking at 'what's next' and we are about to launch another strand to our business specialising in film content for online use. We have exceptional in-house expertise and the best available equipment to be able to write, produce, direct and edit, highly creative film content; exactly what all businesses need to promote themselves online.

We've done a lot of this already but have never really pushed it hard as a specialism. Now we are further investing quite significantly in this area. The world communicates through film, it's our most powerful and persuasive means of communication.

FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE: 10 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE NORTH EAST'S GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK CONFERENCE

BY GILLIAN MARSHALL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM



Each autumn, as part of the UK's Global Entrepreneurship Week celebrations, the Entrepreneurs' Forum host a conference packed-full of inspiration and advice to help North East entrepreneurs grow their businesses more rapidly.

At Redworth Hall in Durham, the event was hosted by John Myers with speakers including Robert Forrester (Vertu Motors), Keith, Gary and Jacqui Miller (Miller UK), Cameron Saul (Bottletop), Peter Hiscocks (University of Cambridge), Andrew Tomlinson (Andrew James), Mohammed Bashir (Boro Taxis) and Richard Lane (durhamlane).

It was fantastic to see 200 of the region's most aspirational entrepreneurs come together to create new opportunities and learn from those that have been there and done it; and here are my top ten takeaways from the day:

- A good idea is only as good as the people who execute it, but if you get both of these things right success will follow. Entrepreneurs need to plan, plan and plan; and build a great team to implement it.
- It's crucial to take advice from those who have been there and done it. When growing a business, put together a board of experienced people and take guidance from mentors. An important statistic we heard was that businesses with a mentor have more than an 80% chance of surviving over five years, without a mentor this is reduced to 20%.
- In a changing world, try to look forward and stay ahead of the market. If you can predict what is coming you can be agile and take advantage of opportunities, exceeding your customers' expectations along the way.
- Growth doesn't just happen; you have to plan for it. All net new jobs in the UK come from SMEs, so our economic recovery depends upon high-growth businesses, or 'Gazelles'. We need to get better at scaling up and we need to help entrepreneurs develop growth plans.
- The wrong people are the biggest barrier to business growth and at different stages of the journey your top team will need to change; but the characteristics of the right people will always stay the same: driven, energetic, positive and talented people.
- Achieving success and getting to the top of any industry takes 10% talent and 90% determination.
- You need to trust your instinct and keep an active eye on the risks to your business so you're in a position to defend yourself if you need to. You never know what's around the corner and if you're not prepared, prepare to fail.
- Being socially responsible is a virtuous circle as customers and staff want to be involved with an organisation that is making a positive impact. Companies should consider what is important to them and try to give back to both the communities within which they work and to those who need it most; because as long as you make a profit, you can do anything you want.
- Focus, focus, focus. If you are a small growing business you will have limited resources and lots of opportunity, so you need to focus on key markets first.
- People are not your greatest asset, the right people are. If you do good things for 66 days it will become a habit, and to succeed in business you need people who have good habits and a positive attitude if you want them to translate your vision into reality.

It can sometimes be difficult to take time out of a business to learn from your peers, especially when you are busy growing a company. Attending the Entrepreneurs' Forum's conference once or twice a year is an easy and rewarding way to do this, and to make new friends and connections.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum support 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





Primark
jacket £13
trousers £18
scarf £3
shoes £14

Party Time!

The festive season is upon us, which means that everyone's social life gets a huge boost.

With events taking place straight from work, we often encounter the problem of going from day to night without the time to go home and tivate.

Help is at hand however, courtesy of The Bridges in Sunderland. In the past year the city centre shopping centre has seen the arrival of a number of new brands including leading cosmetic chain KIKO, stationery company Smiggle and shoe giant, Footasylum.

This ever-growing list of retailers stands side by side with favourites such as Debenhams, Next, River Island, Superdry and many, many more.

So when it comes to picking out something that will help make the obligatory seasonal sartorial transition -look no further.

Here's a few of our favourites which are cool and smart enough for office hours but then can be quickly adapted for a night on the tiles.

Find out more at
www.thebridges-shopping.com



Next
dress £70
coat £60



**H! Henry Holland
Debenhams**
blouse £35
bomber £45
skirt £35
bag £29



River Island
coat £85



**Jasper Conran
Debenhams**
roll neck £40
dress £55
boots £75

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BRYONY GIBSON

Bryony Gibson, Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, gives us a look into what it would be like to live a typical working day in her shoes.



6.30am

The snooze button on my phone was my favourite thing until we got a dog in July and I've been forced to change; especially if I want to squeeze exercise into my day! Now I'm up and out by 6.30am to get to the gym for an early morning spinning or boxercise class.

7.45am

Back home the first thing I do is check my email and social media to catch up with the early morning business news. Then I get to take my gorgeous Labrador puppy - Buddy - for a walk.

8.30am

The morning is a finely tuned operation, so while I've been out my husband will have made our children breakfast and got them ready for school. He usually drops them off on his way to work so, providing they're on time, it means I've got the chance for a quick shower and to get ready for the day ahead.

9.30am

The morning is a great time to meet people or go to networking events as it's much less disruptive to your day. I'm a member of Durham Business Club, Service Network and the Entrepreneurs' Forum, so if it's not one of their events, a typical meeting could be with a client looking to expand their accounts team, discussing how to make the most of their recruitment opportunity, offering salary advice and agreeing how we can find and attract

the best talent; giving me the rest of the day to work on their behalf.

10.30am

A quick email check before jumping in the car and heading back to my office, often speaking to candidates on route to get their feedback on yesterday's interviews.

11am

Time to resource for new vacancies, conduct some preliminary telephone interviews, check my email and social media again and advertise new opportunities online.

12.30pm

Lunchtime is a great chance to chat with candidates who are considering a change. I like to meet everyone I recommend in person so I can get a feel for their character and ambition. Combined with experience, this helps me to match them to the right company and working culture.

2pm

The afternoon is where I catch up with my to-do-list. Typically I spend time resourcing new candidates, responding to emails, keeping my admin up-to-date and making some client calls; perhaps offering advice to someone facing a resignation or wanting to know more about current market salaries and candidate availability.

5pm

Luckily we have some help with school pick-up, so

if I haven't already collected our children I try to finish work at 5pm to spend some time with them and take them to whatever club they are at tonight; usually swimming, football, taekwondo or dancing.

6.30pm

Once my husband arrives home from work, one of us will walk the dog while the other gets the children fed, watered, washed and ready for bed.

8pm

It's time to read stories and convince the children to go to sleep, while getting their bags and uniforms ready for the next day.

8.30pm

Candidates are at home in the evening and can speak freely, so most nights involve me offering advice, discussing potential opportunities or helping somebody prepare for an interview.

I never seem to have trouble filling my time with things to do and each day throws up something different, which is why I love it.

As far as coordinating work and my personal life goes, it's not always easy. Both my husband and I work hard but we try to get a balance with family time and time for the two of us, even if it's just to eat together each night!

It's quite a balancing act, but I can't sit still so I guess it's about prioritising what's important and makes us happy; and maybe trying to fit a little more sleep in somewhere if I can.

Contact Bryony for help finding the right tax & accountancy role or recruits on (0191) 375 9983. Alternatively, visit www.bryonygibson.com, connect on LinkedIn or follow @bryonygibson.

BRYONY GIBSON CONSULTING
Recruiting specialists, helping you grow.

**For train bookings nationwide,
in person, by phone or on the web!**

You can book from any station to 2,500 other stations
on the  National Rail network.
Your local National Rail station, wherever you are.

Chester-le-Track

We are your
gateway to the
 National Rail
network



We're open
Mon 0610 - 1800,
Tues - Fri 0710 - 1800,
Sat and Public Holidays 0730 - 1415

CALL US ON
0191 387 1387

THE RAILWAY STATION · STATION ROAD · CHESTER-LE-STREET · CO DURHAM · DH3 3EE

Go
by train...
it's
environmentally
friendly!

**Chester-le-Track at
Eaglescliffe.tv**



We're open
Mon - Fri 0715 - 1815,
Sat and Public Holidays
0715 - 1315

CALL US ON
01642 200140

THE RAILWAY STATION · STATION ROAD · EAGLESCLIFFE · STOCKTON-ON-TEES · TS16 0BT

or book tickets at our website www.nationalrail.com

Train services from
Chester-le-Street and
Eaglescliffe are provided by



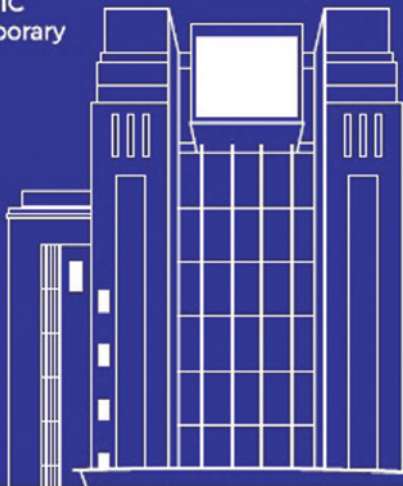
BALTIC 1000

Run up and down over
1,000 steps at BALTIC
Centre for Contemporary
Art on Sunday 5th
February 2017!

This unique, fun
experience will
take you through
four stairwells
and the top floor
restaurant, Six.

£15 TO ENTER

Chip timing and
medal for all finishers.
Adults only (18+).



SIGN UP TODAY AT
PERCYHEDLEY.ORG.UK/FUNDRAISING/EVENTS

IN AID OF



SUPPORTED BY



Challenge
Northumberland



The Percy Hedley Foundation registered charity number 515943.



**The Percy Hedley
Foundation**



February to July 2017

#Develop Staff #Build Teams
#Create Great PR #Have some
#Serious FUN #MakingADifference

We'll lend you £500 and give you
6 months to make that money grow.
After 6 months we want our money
back PLUS anything else you've
made on top.

You'll be up against some stiff
competition so this is your chance
to show us and the North East what
you're made of.

You'll be helping to build a brighter
future for disabled children, young
people and adults.

Sign up now if you think you have
what it takes.

Contact Sheila on: 0191 2381321
or email:
s.coltman@percyhedley.org.uk

www.percyhedley.org.uk

Registered charity no. 515943

BOOM IN DIGITAL & TECH SECTOR INDICATES HEALTHY GROWTH OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS

BY James Blackwell, CEO, Ronald James



With businesses across all sectors relying heavily on the digital and technology industries for the running of day to day business activities, digital companies have grown at an impressive rate in recent years. Will this confidence continue to increase, as we enter the next decade? It certainly looks that way, and with the help of data collected by the Auxin Partnership, this article will explain why tech jobs will remain secure. One might say that business is currently booming...

Companies benefiting from higher turnover

Information technology(IT) is an expensive business and successful companies specialising in digital services will in the most part turn over reasonable profits. A recent survey carried out by Auxin Partnership, based on the regions of Newcastle and Gateshead, found that a healthy spread of businesses currently have high turnovers. For instance, nearly all respondents confirmed that their business had increased turnover in the past year, with 32% of them indicating an increase of 100%! The region's digital and tech sector's aggregated turnover was found to sit comfortably at £1.25bn.

Looking to the future, only a tenth of companies did not predict a growth over the course of the next three years, with the rest looking to expand their teams and source new skills. Of the 90% that predicted growth, 56% anticipated a modest increase of up to 50%, whilst the remaining respondents suggested they could grow beyond

50% (some even stating a growth of over 100%). With such confident targets and goals for the future, this data suggests that significant growth in the sector over a short period is more than possible. Even when looking at the numbers negatively, the data suggests an overall sector growth of at least 28%, with the potential to reach 40% by 2020. These figures highlight that there will be huge gaps to be filled by strong candidates.

Staffing levels to increase accordingly

It goes without saying that any company wishing to grow will be in need of additional staff. Not only are businesses anticipating staff level increases in the near future, many have already added significant numbers to their workforce in the past year. The level of increase is likely to correlate with the company's growth predictions. Therefore, companies expecting to grow by 20% will expect to take on 20% more employees during the period of growth.

With the industry growing at such a fast rate, tech career opportunities should start booming too. Skills and expertise are vital for business success in the sector and your experience could wind up being very valuable to certain teams. Companies will be looking to spend their increasing turnover on talented staff who fit the bill and can contribute to future professional success. There could not be a better time than now to find exciting career opportunities within this growing sector.

Filling the skills gaps

Is your business struggling to attract the right talent?

Do you have the right recruitment Partner in place to help you with your growth strategy for 2017?

What if you had a system implemented into the core of your business that consistently enabled you to attract, convert and deliver the type of Employees you really want?

Ask Ronald James today about how the '7 Step North East Digital & Tech Hiring Strategy' will help your business find the Top 15% of talent. james@ronaldjamesgroup.com or call 0191 3006501



RONALD JAMES

• THE NORTH EAST'S LEADING DIGITAL & TECH RECRUITMENT AGENCY •

WE FIND THE TOP 15% OF TALENT

"It's the way we deliver that separates us from the rest!"

☎ 0191 3006501
🌐 www.ronaldjamesgroup.com
✉ info@ronaldjamesgroup.com
📍 Durham, United Kingdom



UP AND COMING EMERGING MARKET FOR NORTH EAST BUSINESSES

Iran is slowly re-emerging from its heavy economic sanctions placed by the international community while it was trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Currently, there is also mounting tension from Saudi Arabia as Iran still refuses to build positive relationships with the Gulf Sunni Monarchies and this is further fuelled by their active involvement in Syria and pro support for Russian and Assad forces.

The Iranian government has however announced they are actively looking to attract \$500 Billion (US Dollars) over the next 5 years, which is highly attractive for future export business within the UK. Having the world's 4th largest oil and 2nd largest gas reserves this will ensure Iran has a promising future beyond any enforced nuclear sanctions. The UK government is now actively encouraging UK business to start developing strong trade links, however the banking markets are still yet to support this potential economic manoeuvre.

Environmental Risk:

Iran sits astride some main tectonic fault lines, which means it regularly suffers from earthquakes. Although most cause minimal damage, fatalities are not uncommon and within the last 14 years an estimated 31,000 people have lost their life because of earthquakes. In Western regions of Iran flooding is a major concern and this further contributes to an already crippling national water supply system. Iran has 4 of its cities listed within the World Health Organisation (WHO 2011) as being in the top 10 world's most air polluted cities

Business Risk:

Investment into Iran's economy has clear levels of uncertainty for UK companies. If sanctions were to be re-imposed due to Iran not conforming, then this could severally hinder future business ventures. UK companies should also be mindful of the levels of corruption within the region, as they are currently ranked 130 out of 168 for corruption (Transparency International 2015). Corruption appears to be an everyday occurrence within the business markets in Iran and this creates complex businesses ownership agreements that can put UK companies in difficult positions with the UK Bribery act if not well thought out.

Crime:

Due to the possibility of low levels of foreign nationals visiting Iran, crime reporting tends to be very low. In some reported cases, violent crime is minimal while petty theft is more often the case. There is a large issue with drug misuse and trafficking through Iran and these acts could be a safety concern if caught up within any ongoing incident. The largest risk concern for international visitors is espionage of critical data and business

intellectual property. Iran is currently ranked within the top 10 for this criminal act.

If travelling near or towards the boarder of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan as a foreign national your risk levels increase considerably. Your chances of becoming a victim of kidnaping is extremely high if unprotected. This will affect UK nationals more due to recent UK government perceived negative involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan as many believe they have contributed to the weak security situation in these areas.

Political Risk:

The new nuclear deal with the west has created conflict among Iran's hardliners who feel that UN and US sanctions are an infringement of their liberties as a recognised nation. In terms of how this will impact key critical decisions in businesses and commodity markets for western investment, is still uncertain. It is therefore advised to keep a very keen eye on the political landscape and maintain this over the next 12 months. Parliamentary elections were held at the beginning of 2016 and there was no real concerns or repercussions during this time. The next Presidential elections are set for 2017 however, and this will be a time to view the political horizon with caution and establish how political changes will impact business.



QUITE THE CATCH

When it comes to high quality fish & chips the name on everyone's lips these days seems to be The Harbour View Restaurant in Seaton Sluice. Having heard of so many glowing reports, our recent visit was therefore marked with great anticipation. Of course, there's a bustling little takeaway on the side guaranteed to satisfy everyone's teatime tastebuds, yet we arrived ready to sample the fully licensed, 48-seater restaurant of which we'd heard so much about.

Rather bedraggled from the wicked North Sea winds, it was pleasing to stumble upon an interior which is calm and cosy. The Harbour View team have created a quintessentially British décor which ensures for a fully authentic dining experience. The perfect place then to enjoy the national dish.

The dining area radiates a quaint, homely charm owing largely to the nautical-themed wallpaper and novelty lobster pots, whilst a "Golden Oldies" soundtrack complete with Buddy Holly et al only further enhances this lovely, serene allure. With pristine table tops, it qualifies as "nipping clean" and even boasts a fully stocked bar with a broad selection of wines, lagers and ales available for any shipmates interested in splicing the mainbrace. (Apparently this is seafaring speak for getting on it!)

Having been welcomed heartily, we swiftly settled in and cast an eye over their menu. Naturally, in such an esteemed local fishery as this, your Cod/Haddock & chips are always going to be the major drawing points, although some alternative old chip shop favourites like Steak Pie & Chips, Haggis & Chips, Jumbo Sausage & Chips (you get the idea) are also well worth signposting. Inevitably we plumped for 4 rounds of Cod & Chips which were served up with a choice of mushy peas, gravy or curry sauce and also came accompanied by a generous helping of bread and butter. No artisan breads here I'm afraid!

Having opted for the "Large" variation, my Cod arrived on a vast platter which was easily over a footlong in length. It soon grew apparent that we'd bitten off far more than we could chew but boy did we give it a go. We waded in with real gusto, excavating the flaky white fish from its warm golden batter as we went. Procured from deep Icelandic waters, the fish at the Harbour View is cooked from fresh not frozen and as a result is exceptionally soft in the mouth, paired off nicely by a crisp chardonnay. Suffice to say there was not a bone to be found. Fluffed up and buttery, the chips were equally outstanding and flaunted that deliciously, potato-ey stodge which is so desirable in the winter months. It truly was an outstanding version of the old British classic yet due to the colossal portions, we were soon staring defeat in the face. In light of this we were informed that we could have chosen the smaller "Pensioners Special" a less-filling Cod Bite served with chips which is even available to those under 65! A real steal at £7.70.

Totally gorged, we body-swerved dessert for a pot of strong tea but did file away a mental note to sample some of their authentic Italian ice cream on a return visit.

With the cold and the darkness now upon us, the longing for a "chippie tea" grows stronger, and I can assure you that few do one better than the Harbour View!





BUSINESS WAR GAMING - MAKING THE DIFFERENCE



Realising and predicting forthcoming events and problems in the running of a business, is key to the organisations success. Business War Gaming strategies will provide an unprecedented level of security and help with development for the future, allowing for growth and best practice within those companies.

Chris Paton served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Marines with distinguished service. While serving, he came to realise war gaming strategies within the military could be adapted to provide relevant techniques within a business context and began his company 'Quirk Solutions', "It's all about pressure testing plans and strategies," he says, "the object being to create quality procedures and pre-empt problems before they start," he continues.

Many companies write plans for the direction their business is to develop, then roll it out and will react when things start to go wrong. At that stage remedying the situation in crisis management mode, becomes very expensive and time consuming. Making a good plan allows you to predetermine risk and opportunity, not originally thought of.

At Quirk Solutions, they take a broad view of the ways clients can look to the future creating red and blue teams of relevant parties, be they suppliers, customers, employees and outside agencies. The blue team will take a plan, strategy or issue they wish to test and then work out all this issues

surrounding it, the red team, with stakeholders in place will react, giving a critical appraisal of the blues presentation. A facilitation panel will act as referee, chaired by an impartial third party individual, advising how a particular stakeholder has reacted to the plan. It gives the blues the opportunity to decide whether they will change or adapt the plan based on what they've heard.

For any business the War Gaming scenario, allows individuals to look at second and third effects which might happen, rather than simply concentrating on the obvious which may happen. It's a strategy Chris has promoted while working with the likes of Downing Street, Shell and Waitrose, among others.

"The advantages of all this, mean a client can look, three months, six months or even a year in advance and be able to predict with a reasonable amount of accuracy, future outcomes," Chris advises, "they will be able to mitigate or even eliminate possible risks altogether." It's all about predictability and planning."

This ability to bring decision making forward means that when a plan comes unstuck, as all plans do

to varying degree, confidence is high as a coherent plan to deal with the situation is in place.

Foresight and agility are the two key words which characterise the process of Business War Gaming.

Since the advent of Quirk Solutions, a new concept by Chris, he has been inundated with enquiries for the unique service the company provides. He travels the country and globally, outlining what Quirk's, Business War Gaming strategies can do for businesses, from corporate organisations to SME's. Business size is irrelevant with this type of approach to problem solving. It's a stakeholder driven approach to improve business and make life as easy and risk free as possible for the people who work within a company.

To further promote the concept of Business War Gaming, Exclusive Business have arranged an interactive strategy dinner at St. Mary's Heritage Centre on Monday 30th January 2017, the evening starting at 6.30pm. Chris Paton and five of his associates will take everyone through the process of War Gaming, imparting their expertise and directing the evening.

EXCLUSIVE

BUSINESS



Business War Games Interactive Strategy Dinner

Monday, 30 January 2017 | 6.30pm | St Mary's Heritage Centre

Will your team advance under pressure?

Wargaming is all about team building and bonding through simulated pressure. A business war game doesn't just put a plan or strategy through its paces, it makes teams defend and strengthen their ideas and concepts. You'll quickly identify the natural leaders and the more risk averse while experiencing the importance of trust.



Who's giving the orders?

Chris Paton of Quirk Solutions is one of the UK's premier exponents of business wargaming. He has served as a Senior Officer in Afghanistan and worked with Downing Street, Shell and Waitrose. Chris will be joined by five of his team to manage the process throughout the evening.



Real scenarios. Real challenges. Real solutions.

The battle lines are drawn

There are at least six business critical situations where wargaming makes a difference:

- Mergers and acquisitions
- Investment
- Strategy testing and options analysis
- Change management
- Team building
- Product launches and start-ups

You'll learn how to plan and test plans using lessons drawn from military operations, an environment in which accuracy and robustness is central to avoiding catastrophic consequences.

The rules of engagement

Teams of 10 will be set challenges and have to react to a fictional business scenario. When the time is up, your strategic ideas will compete with the other combatants, be thoroughly analysed and the outcome debated.

Does your team have what it takes to win? *Prizes will be awarded!*

Business War Games
Interactive Strategy Training

Tables of 10
£100 PP +VAT

Also includes: Welcome drink,
working supper and drinks

Book your war games ticket by calling 07813 533021 or email team@exclusive.co.com

Book your table for the Exclusive Business - Cheltenham Gold Cup Day - Newcastle Racecourse
Friday March 17th 2017 - Supported by Premier Equestrian Flooring

SWITCH
GAS&ELECTRIC.COM

Bradley Hall

CHAKA
travel

DARREN BAKER

INSIGHT
BRADING

LEADR^{TV}

YEAR OF HARD WORK KEEPS COLLEGE AT THE TOP OF ITS GAME

It's been a dynamic year for the North East's leading FE college, as Gateshead College continued to outperform many of its peers nationally, creating skilled young people fit for work.



'Hard work wins' was the mantra at the heart of everything the college did throughout 2016. It's an ethos which is instilled in students and apprentices from day one of their studies and underpins every aspect of how the college operates with staff, partners and the business community.

Driving performance standards

Gateshead College retained its position as the number one college in the North East and was named sixth in the UK based on the success of its students.

Impressive statistics showed that 95% of students had a positive destination after finishing their studies, meaning they either went on to further or higher education, started an apprenticeship or secured employment.

Innovative work with business

Striving to work differently to others in the sector; Gateshead College genuinely seeks to work as a business partner and devise innovative ways to solve problems that local and regional employers have.

When Ryder Architecture and a consortium of designers, builders and project managers, revealed that training and even traditional industry qualifications were no longer fit for purpose, the college worked closely to design a new solution.

PlanBEE, a campaign for change in the built environment, aims to address the skills gap in

the construction industry while educating people through a new architectural, engineering and management programme. The college has mapped out a new way to recruit and train young people for careers in the sector. Its success is being monitored nationally.

Elsewhere, through a partnership with G4S Utilities and Energy and Utility Skills, the college was once again at the forefront of innovation when it became the only college in the UK to proactively address the skills shortage in the energy sector. The introduction of a pioneering trailblazer apprenticeship resulted in a course that will deliver the training needed to meet the high demand for an extra 6000 smart meter installers and training to upskill 3000 existing installers by 2019.

Getting the North East working

As well as developing bespoke solutions for employers, Gateshead College tries to take a broader view to meet skills shortages and address unemployment in key sectors in our region. Working with partners into Properties and Job Centre Plus, a new initiative Retail Gold was created. The pre-employment training provides job seekers with essential skills and retailers in intu Eldon Square and intu Metrocentre with a world class recruitment and training solution. Hundreds of local people have got back to work as a result of the programme.

Industry standard facilities

Investment in facilities in 2016 ensured that

apprentices continue to receive industry standard learning experiences and their employers can be confident that training is up to date and industry relevant.

The £5.5 million Skills Academy for Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing and Logistics based at Team Valley in Gateshead received an investment of more than £300,000 in brand new engineering workshops, providing state of the art lathes, milling machines and supporting tools.

Strong leadership

The accomplishments of principal and chief executive, Judith Doyle were recognised at the highest level this year when she was named FE Leader of the Year in the Times Educational Supplement FE Awards 2016.

The award recognised Judith's exceptional commitment to helping students progress as well as developing outstanding partnerships with employers and links with the North East LEP, CBI, Entrepreneurs Forum and the North East England Chamber of Commerce.

At the heart of our community

An organisation with a strong community spirit, the staff and students of Gateshead College have also found time to raise funds for their own charity the Gateshead College Foundation, which supports students to cover some of the costs of coming to college, as well as St Oswald's Hospice, Mind, Macmillan, Age UK and Children North East.

Achieve | Succeed | Lead



YOU MAY HAVE IT IN YOU,
AT LMS WE COAX IT OUT.

LMS offer professional business consultancy advice and online leadership management courses which are fully accredited.

Find out what our courses can do for you

Contact: **Michael Thompson** at **Leadership Management Solutions**

☎ 01670 618 080 ✉ michael@leadershipmanagementsolutions.co.uk

www.leadershipmanagementsolutions.com



LEST WE FORGET



The Future Prime Minister - Yousef Mirza remembering our Armistice Day.

What an incredible year. Who would have thought that we would have experienced such cataclysmic change within the world we live which may undoubtedly never be the same. Gone are the days where we would go out to play in the street all day and then have to be dragged back in when it was getting dark, with our front doors remaining open and no one worrying who we were playing with.

I remember when you would settle things by having a Barney in the playground and then become best of friends. Growing up in the North East provided a wonderful backdrop to recognising and appreciating a multi-cultural resilient society, admittedly there were rare times when I found myself being racially abused but no more than the boy who had different colour hair or was a little large, or the girl who spoke or dressed oddly.

It would appear that we no longer get on or respect one another. The point is we are all different and so we should be. What an odd place it would be if we all just had the same values, beliefs, looks, religions and cultures. That said I do not necessarily agree with certain views people share, but as long as they do not physically impact or affect someone else then why shouldn't we be more accepting. What happened to the sticks and stones view?

So looking back over 2016 we can look at the year

as a catastrophe, a year that has broken a union, that an alleged bigot was placed in the white house, a one where we were all going to experience financial doom and the sky was going to fall on our head. Or we can look at it as a year which highlighted how politicians and policy appear to be disconnected from wider general public views and take advantage of this opportunity for change, a chance to reflect positively and take a sense check on our society.

Even with the dramatic changes our lives continue and there is so much good that goes on within our region and the wider world that we seem to miss. Throughout this year I have seen a range of initiatives demonstrate absolutely the power of people coming together for a common purpose. From the PIE Challenge at the beginning of the year that had over 20 primary schools and 1000 pupils working with teachers, parents and business to develop our future generations, to the ABC Annual

Awards Dinner that recognised the positive and significant contribution of the Asian community to our region, the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership through which thousands of jobs have been created and millions of pounds invested, there is so much more we should appreciate.

One of the greatest revelations for 2016 that clearly demonstrated the power of people coming together was remembering the First World War which took place 100 years ago. Over a million people from all religions including Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu fought side by side and sacrificed their lives. And it is their memory and those that have since fought to help make our world a better place that I would like to propose a Christmas toast, for the sake of our future generations Lest We Forget.

Wishing you all a peaceful, joyful and fun filled Christmas.

Ammar Mirza CBE

Ammar Mirza CBE is passionate about the North East, Founder and Chair of Asian Business Connexions (ABC) alongside holding various public, private and third sector positions across the North East. Email ammarm@ammarm.com



**AmmarM would like to wish all customers,
partners and supporters a very Merry Christmas
and prosperous New Year**



Your Success is our Business

*For all your business start-up and growth including
property investment needs contact AmmarM first.*

BAH HUMBUG...



Joanne Howe

Ah Christmas. There's a nip in the air, everyone's jolly and filled with happiness and the kids are excitedly counting down the days til' Santa comes to town.

However for HR departments, it can be a real nightmare. How? Let me explain.

Think Christmas at the office and what springs to mind? The Christmas party of course. Undoubtedly a great time for team building and raising the moral and a few 'spirits'; it can be a little easy for some people to overdo things.

But it's not just alcohol to consider. As always, a big part of HR is inclusion – and making sure everyone has the chance to get involved, no matter their beliefs.

Be it ensuring a venue with access for any disabled employees, providing specialised dietary meals in the case of eating out or even just ensuring everyone – including part time staff or those who may be on maternity / paternity leave – get an invite, everyone must be catered for.

At the same time as including everyone in the plans, it should be noted that under no circumstances should it be made mandatory to attend – it may clash with holidays for other religions or they simply may just not want to go. Forcing the issue with mandatory attendance will only negatively affect morale both in and out of the workplace.

So how do you go about preventing the issues before they even become a problem? One solution is to include Christmas parties – and all out of office events – in your company policy and staff contracts.

Areas such as staff behaviour should be covered in the document as well as a reminder that events out of the office reflect on the company as much as during work hours; so should be treated as such.

That said, it is Christmas and no one likes a Grinch so do allow staff to let their hair down, just responsibly.

As always, if there's any aspect of HR that you need advice on, call Howe Consultancy on 07921 256 981 or drop us an email on info@howeconsultancy.co.uk

BREXIT FALLOUT – CHANGE WILL DO YOU NO GOOD

The mass panic may be settling down somewhat, and the naysayers demanding another referendum have been told that 'Brexit means Brexit', but the uncertainty thrown up by the out vote in June seemingly shows no sign of slowing down.

What the exit from the European Union, which Britain has been a member since 1973, means for a number of business sectors remains to be seen, but many are suggesting that multiple changes in laws imposed by Brussels may change – and accountancy is no different here.

VAT, pensions and a number of policy changes have all been rumoured by online sources, however a story from the International Business Times raised an interesting point – what if no changes were made at all?

The article states that accounting watchdogs "have urged the Government to ensure the UK retains global book-keeping rules", in short then everything changes but nothing.

But why the insistence on remaining steadfast in the EU rules? Well, according to the International Accounting Standards Board, a change in rules could do more harm than good, with a risk of "serious implications."

At current, the UK operates under the same rules as the rest of the EU – that is the international accounting standards. However with the Brexit, these could be liable to change, and as the UK will no longer be a member, we are able to change our laws and regulations.

But consider the effects of any changes to any dealings with the remaining EU nations – will any renewed laws clash with the existing EU rules, will they make it more difficult to do business with EU accountants, or will the EU flat out refuse to deal with the UK?

The only certainty at the moment; is uncertainty, but what is guaranteed is an interesting few years as we adapt and gear up for leaving.



As always, if you need any advice or further information on any aspect of accountancy, call us on 0191 420 0550, or drop us an email to info@kpsimpson.co.uk

MUCKLE PARTNER NAMED TURNAROUND PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR AT NATIONAL AWARDS



Andrew Cawkwell

Andrew Cawkwell, Partner in the Banking and Restructuring team at Newcastle-based Muckle LLP, has been recognised as one of the country's leading turnaround professionals at the prestigious national TRI (Turnaround, Restructuring & Insolvency) Awards.

Up against three other specialists, Andrew claimed 'Turnaround Practitioner of the Year' at the annual awards ceremony in London.

The independently judged TRI Awards, now in its ninth year, celebrate the achievements of experts undertaking outstanding work in corporate rescue, those making critical investments in struggling businesses and those in the field of turnaround and restructuring.

Andrew, who has been with leading North East law firm for businesses, Muckle, for five years, claimed the coveted prize thanks to a number of significant turnaround projects he has overseen in recent years.

Most notably, his involvement in the rescue of Darlington Football Club, which had

suffered three administrations during a ten-year period, and was ultimately brought back into the fans' hands in a large part due to Andrew's expert advice and guidance.

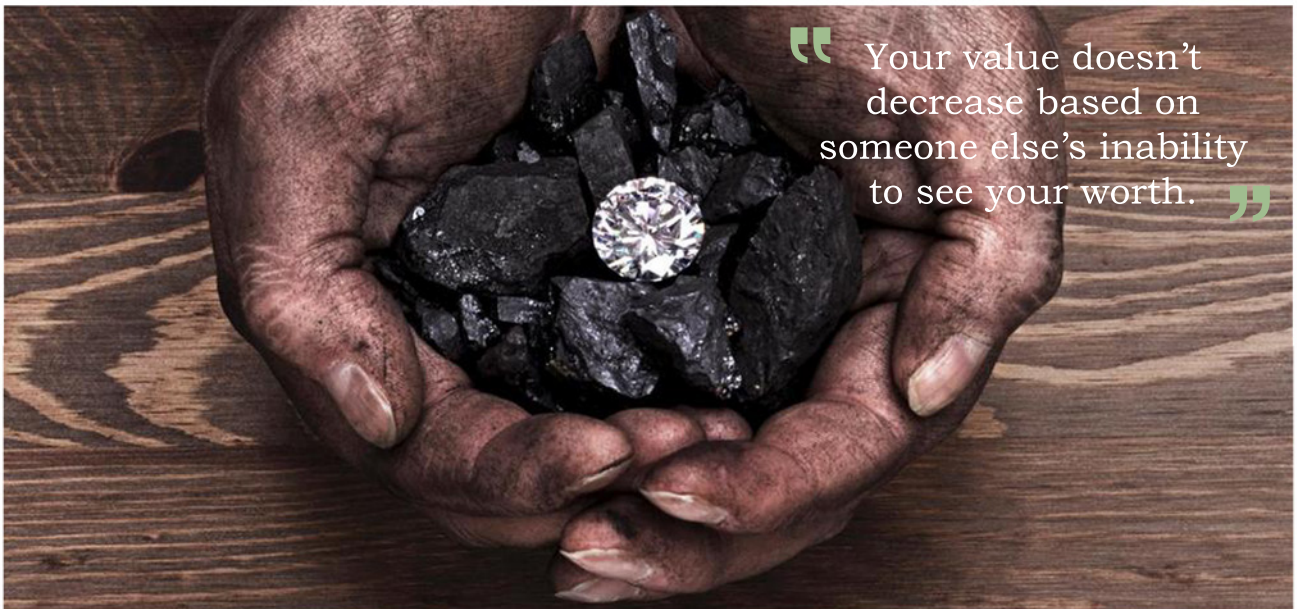
Andrew, who is a Solicitor and Certified Turnaround Professional, said: "I am truly delighted to have won this award, which was decided by respected professionals within the restructuring and turnaround industry. I thoroughly enjoy every aspect of the work I do helping to breathe new life into businesses, so to be recognised for doing something I love makes this win all the more rewarding.

"This award reflects not only my achievements but also that of my colleagues at Muckle and also the clients we support on a daily basis."

Andrew's work at Muckle involves supporting a wide range of businesses in financial difficulties.

If you would like support from Andrew Cawkwell, please call 0191 211 7957 or email andrew.cawkwell@muckle-llp.com for an initial informal chat.

Andrew Cawkwell, Partner and Certified Turnaround Professional, Banking and Restructuring Team, Muckle LLP
 e: Andrew.Cawkwell@muckle-llp.com [@CompanyRescue](https://twitter.com/CompanyRescue)



“ Your value doesn't decrease based on someone else's inability to see your worth. ”

IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE VALUE OF YOUR TALENT, HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO GET WHAT YOUR WORTH?

For free salary advice or to find a new challenge, simply get in touch:
bryony@bryonygibson.com
or (0191) 375 9983

BRYONY GIBSON CONSULTING

Recruiting specialists, helping you grow.

WWW.BRYONYGIBSON.COM



Bryony Gibson Consulting



@BryonyGibson



YOUR EYE ON THE REGION

Guy Currey

Director of Invest North East England

The strategic inward investment function working on behalf of the seven local authorities in the North East Combined Authority area.

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

I was brought up in York and moved up here for a new job in my mid thirties after studying and working in a variety of places in England and overseas.

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

Due to the relatively small size of the region there is a very tight-knit business community which is proud to be based here. Many inward investors who have relocated businesses to the region from elsewhere in the UK or abroad have some sort of North East connection - the place gets in your blood and draws you back. There is an appreciation of how globally connected we are, our cost competitiveness, our skilled workforce and the world class research and training we offer.

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

For me, it's easy access to beautiful mountains and beaches from vibrant urban areas. It's so easy to get around with very little congestion; the feeling of space to unwind with a vigorous undercurrent of energy and passion is a heady mix.

Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?

I love meetings at the Quadrus Centre in Boldon, next to the Testos Roundabout on the A19. For my job covering Northumberland to Durham it's really central, a fabulous building, great wifi and cafe. I also often meet at the Centurion Bar at Newcastle Station for informal meetings with clients before they head off by train.

Where do you like to eat out in the region?

Anywhere with good vegetarian/vegan food (my wife's a vegan), so the Sky Apple in Heaton and any Indian restaurant. The Masala Dosas at Ury restaurant on Newcastle Quayside are particularly good.

Where do you like to unwind in the North East?

I own a cottage in Northumberland, so unwind when I can sitting on the decking overlooking

the hills in perfect tranquility. Fly fishing for brown trout on the River Derwent is a great stress release as are the real ale pubs in Ouseburn.

Are the people really friendlier?

Yes, undoubtedly. I went to university in Liverpool and I think the Scousers and Geordies are remarkably similar in that regard. Friendly, engaging and up for a laugh.

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

The view down the Tyne towards the Tyne Bridge from the Free Trade Inn in Byker. Surely one of the most magnificent urban vistas in the world!

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

There is nowhere else in the country that I'd want to work right now. The quality of life is second to none. While we are a small region there are huge opportunities in our key sectors, which are vital to strengthening the local economy. These are advanced manufacturing, healthcare and life sciences, IT and digital, energy and business services, many of which have large supply chains around them. At Invest North East England we are working alongside the North East LEP to ensure we have the relevant skills base on the doorstep so if you work in one of these sectors, it's an especially good place to be.

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

I've worked in London, Northampton and Sydney Australia. London and Sydney were buzzy and full on, but also big and impersonal. I found Northampton a little underwhelming. The North East for me is perfect in that it offers opportunity, is cost competitive whether you're a resident or business and thanks to its strong transport connections is recognized as the best connected urban area in the UK.

“I'm staying!”

FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR GROWING LIGHTING FIRM



A North East lighting solutions firm is benefiting from rapid growth which has seen it relocate to larger premises with the help of the commercial property team at Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF).

EnviroLux has made the move to a 3,000 sq ft. industrial unit at Atley Business Park in Cramlington, assisted by GBLF solicitor Paul Crawley, which will see it continue to deliver high quality cost effective lighting solutions but on a larger scale.

The business called on the expertise of GBLF's corporate and commercial team, who work with clients locally, nationally and globally on a wide variety of transactions, after an increase in client wins, adding to its portfolio of both public and private sector organisations.

Owned and operated by Jonathan Wisniewski, EnviroLux started life in 2009, following the 40-year-old taking a step back from the family lighting business. With 19 years' experience, the entrepreneur grew up in the industry spending school holidays earning extra pocket money, and has since turned this passion into his own venture.

Commenting on the businesses' move, Jonathan said: "It's an exciting time for the business as we continue to grow due to an increased awareness of the benefits of LED lighting. We've made a string of investments including securing our larger premises and adding to our fleet of vans, which has left us in a fortunate position, with recruitment in our sights for the coming months.

"Working with GBLF has made settling into our new premises effortless and I've been so impressed with the service which we have received. Thanks again to Paul and the team."

Associate at GBLF, Paul Crawley, said: "It was a pleasure to assist Jonathan in the acquisition of the businesses' new premises, as it looks to build on its presence both regionally and nationally and sets its sights on recruitment following new client wins. I wish Jonathan the best of luck for the future – long may the businesses' success continue."

For more information on Gordon Brown Law Firm call 0191 388 1778 or visit www.gblf.co.uk.
For more information on EnviroLux call 01670 730 001 or visit www.envirolux-lighting.co.uk.

TRUE

SOLICITORS LLP

Conveyancing that's right up your street

A tailor made conveyancing service that meets
your individual needs.

Call: 0191 260 6571

or email: team_conveyancing@true.co.uk



www.true.co.uk

WHY NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS MAKE GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

Barrister Ian Kennerley, is a founding partner of Silk Family Law - ranked as a leading North East largest specialist family law practice by legal bibles Chambers UK and Legal 500.

The latest edition of Chambers UK describes Silk Family Law as "worthy of national recognition", whilst commending Ian for his "notable expertise in high-value separations".

The legal guide notes that the firm is "increasingly active handling significant prenuptial and postnuptial agreements". Ian Kennerley looks at the reasons why such agreements are fast gaining traction in England and Wales.

In the six years since I founded Silk with former Bond Dickinson solicitors Kim Fellowes and Margaret Simpson, I have seen a year on year increase in enquiries about nuptial agreements. Sometimes the initial enquiry will come from an engaged couple, but it may be a parent who is looking to protect a family business, farm or land if their son or daughter divorces in the future.

ONS statistics show that 42% of marriages end in divorce – with a third of couples not making it to their 20th wedding anniversary. It may seem unromantic, but having an open and considered discussion about future division of assets before tying the knot may prevent additional heartbreak in the future should things not work out as hoped.

A prenuptial agreement is a legal arrangement made between two people before their marriage, setting out how the couple wish their assets to be divided between them if they later separate or divorce. Some agreements also detail how the couple will arrange their finances during the marriage. A postnuptial agreement is a similar arrangement drawn up after a couple has married, or entered into a civil partnership.

In family businesses, including farms, parents are often advised as part of their overall tax and inheritance planning to transfer assets to the next generation in an effort to reduce their exposure to inheritance tax. This advice may well be sound, but parents may be reluctant to make the transfer in

case the younger couple's marriage ends. Understandably they fear that assets, or a business, built up over many generation will be divided up and lost from the family.

A "prenup" gives parents peace of mind - allowing them to make gifts, confident in the knowledge that they will remain in the family, even if the newly weds separate in years to come.

Pre and postnuptial agreements can be helpful in the case of a second marriage – particularly if there are children from a first marriage. They can ensure that the children are provided for, as their parent would wish, in the event of a subsequent divorce.

Arguments about money are a major cause of bitterness, anxiety and cost arising from the breakdown of many marriages. A well thought out nuptial agreement dealing with finances, housing and other assets might help to prevent this.

Although such agreements cannot override a court's discretion to decide how to distribute assets on divorce, a properly prepared agreement, entered into by both parties of their own free will, is likely to be considered favourably by a judge in the event that a couple divorce. A robust agreement should contain full information relating to the assets involved, their value and an understanding of the effect of the agreement in order to withstand scrutiny in a divorce court.

Crucially, the agreements must be freely entered into. Each person must have a full appreciation of the implications of its terms and it must be deemed fair to hold them to their agreement. A "prenup" drawn up close to the wedding day smacks of unseemly haste and possibly coercion, and may be disregarded by a judge.

A well drawn-up nuptial agreement, backed by sound legal advice, can form an important part of asset protection for anyone seeking to regulate their own affairs and to protect, business, land and assets for future generations.



For further information you can visit Silk Family Law's website www.silkfamilylaw.co.uk

THE UBERIZATION EFFECT



Many of you reading this article will no doubt have used Uber taxis over the past few years with little thought for what the employment status of the driver is; unless you are an employment lawyer of course!

What a surprise it must have been to many to hear the decision of the Employment Tribunal in the case of Aslam, Farrar and others v Uber where it was held that drivers were in fact 'workers' and not self employed as commonly perceived.

The Uber decision could have a monumental impact on nearly 5 million UK individuals who work in the 'gig' economy; which refers to those people engaged to take up casual work on a piecemeal basis. We've seen a huge rise in Uber drivers working under the umbrella of this organisation who are now in line for compensation because their self employed contracts do not reflect the true nature of their engagement. Although the Uber case is a first instance decision and not binding on other cases looking at the gig economy, Deliveroo bikers and other casual workers could well bring claims on the back of the Uber judgment if they pursue claims for workers rights from the company that engages them to provide their services.

Uber unsuccessfully argued that they were merely providing the technology to facilitate taxi rides between drivers and customers. They purported (as set out in their contracts) to have limited degrees of control which were not indicative of an

employment relationship between Uber and their drivers. If these drivers were truly self employed, they would have not been found to be entitled to basic rights afforded to 'workers' for the purposes of the Employment Rights Act 1996, National Minimum Wage Act 1998 and the Working Time Regulations 1998.

The Tribunal held that Uber drivers were not quite 'employees' but were 'workers' and therefore legally entitled to be paid for 5.6 weeks annual leave, rest breaks, national minimum wage (which should be paid during waiting times), a maximum 48 hour average working week and whistleblowing protection. The Tribunal held that the supposed driver/passenger contract was pure fiction and "faintly ridiculous" which bore no resemblance to the real dealings and relationships between the parties. The lengths that Uber's lawyers went to in drafting the contracts to indicate a self employed status was not enough to alleviate the retrospective burden now placed on Uber to provide basic workers rights and potentially huge amounts of back pay to their 40,000 drivers for claims of failure to pay the minimum wage and holiday pay. Uber drivers were held to be economically dependent

on Uber because they could not negotiate with passengers and were completely reliant on Uber to supply work. If Uber had followed a different business model and exerted a lesser degree of control over their drivers then the decision may well have been different.

Growth in the gig economy has led to the Commons Select Committee on Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy investigating the nature of casual working relationships and focusing on the status of workers and rights of these individuals. It is estimated that 460,000 people are falsely classed as self employed in the UK which leads to approximately £314 million a year in lost tax and national insurance contributions.

Collingwood Legal recommend that employers review their employment relationships so that contracts are truly reflective of the degree of control they have over individuals they engage for work.

Should you wish to be kept informed about developments in the law and the impact of this judgment please sign up for our regular bulletins at www.collingwoodlegal.com.

Our team of experts are available to meet at any time. If you require legal assistance or guidance please contact me on 0191 282 2872 or at anu.kaura@collingwoodlegal.com.

Sintons
Law

www.sintons.co.uk

clear, direct
legal advice.

How can we help?



For further information please contact us



0191 226 7878



law@sintons.co.uk

Personal & Family | Business | Insurance Litigation | Healthcare

Sintons LLP is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.



MINCOFFS SOLICITORS 'TECH DRINKS'

Clients and connections of Mincoffs Solicitors joined the firm's Technology Team for an end of year drinks reception at 467 Club in Newcastle City Centre.

2016 has been a significant year for the Mincoffs' Technology Team who were once again shortlisted as the Technology Media and Telecoms Regional Firm of the Year in the 2017 Legal 500 Awards and also received recognition in the Chambers and Partners Guide for their expertise in the information technology sector.





WHY BOTHER HAVING STANDARD T&Cs OF BUSINESS?

Save for a few types of transactions, such as disposition of land, no written contract needs to be in place to legally bind the contracting parties. As soon as you make an offer to another person to provide goods, services or digital content in exchange for consideration (usually money) and your offer is accepted, a legal contract is formed. Then why bother having standard terms and conditions (T&Cs) of business?



When things go wrong

This is the part where we scare you...

Imagine you put your heart and soul into developing a product to your client's specification and are ready to deliver it but your client has changed their mind and claims that they have a right to refuse delivery in certain circumstances. You can prove otherwise by producing email or verbal evidence, but it might be difficult at best and impossible at worst. Imagine you agreed to provide services on your client's T&Cs, they are not happy with your performance and threaten to take you to court, you check the terms and it turns out they are subject to the exclusive law and jurisdiction of... say Belgium. We could go on forever.

...and this is the part where we offer you a solution

When things go well, the legal contract is merely a formality, but when things go wrong, your standard T&Cs will be vital to determining the respective parties' rights and liabilities, and so the solution.

T&Cs are evidence

T&Cs are evidence of the rules under which you provide your goods, services or digital content. They remove the scope for dispute as to what was intended between you and your client, and so minimise the chance of a legal challenge or the costs of handling one. Contract negotiations

tend to focus on key commercial terms, but the devil is in the detail. Your standard T&Cs would be drafted to protect your interests. When your client accepts them, they agree to all the detailed terms contained in them including those that had never been specifically discussed between you.

T&Cs provide certainty

Flexibility is important, but certainty is crucial to business planning and managing risk. Standard T&Cs give you piece of mind over commercial and legal matters (such as delivery, payment terms, risk, ownership, liability, exclusivity, consequences of breach), and allow you to focus on what your business is really about.

T&Cs ensure efficiency

Standard T&Cs are not suitable in all circumstances. You will still need a bespoke contract for an important one-off deal with a client. However, when it comes to repetitive transactions, standard T&Cs will save you time and expense developing or reviewing new terms every time you make a sale.

Your terms over implied terms

Statutory law implies a number of terms into contracts for the sale and supply of goods, services and digital content. While some of them cannot be changed (mainly when dealing with consumers), you can exclude or limit the operation of others

in your T&Cs (especially in business to business relations).

Compliance with law

Standard T&Cs may help you to comply with statutory or industry regulations. For example, in the case of online trading, they may satisfy the requirement to provide customers with certain information which must be drawn to customers' attention prior to concluding a sale.

Good customer service

There is more to T&Cs than just being a sword and shield to your interests. T&Cs provide a clear and consistent basis for trading, which will give reassurance to your clients and encourage their custom. Your T&Cs will also set out customers' rights, which they can rely on to protect their interests.

T&Cs must be incorporated

Once you have a perfect set of T&Cs, you must ensure they are legally binding on your client. It will not suffice to publish them on your website or print them at the back of your invoice. You need to bring them to your client's attention before they accept your offer, for example, by making an express reference to your T&Cs in your written contract, your purchase order, or on your online sales form.

Standard T&Cs facilitate trading and protect your business. If you need advice in relation to putting in place or updating your online or offline T&Cs, please contact Lucy Cook on 0191 281 6151 or lcook@mincoffs.co.uk to take advantage of our promotional offer, valid throughout the month of December, which comprises of a free contract review and a discount on the preparation of certain contractual documentation*.

*Our standard T&Cs apply 😊



Up, up and away!
With our expertise behind you,
the sky's the limit.

With a commercial team as passionate about technology as you are, Mincoffs Solicitors provide a responsive, proactive and commercially focused service on all areas of technology law.

To find out more, visit: www.mincoffs.co.uk
T: 0191 281 6151 E: info@mincoffs.co.uk

mincoffs
SOLICITORS



New recruit – Sally Stanway has joined the Family Law team at Ward Hadaway.

WARD HADAWAY EXPANDS FAMILY TEAM

Law firm Ward Hadaway has further expanded the family team with the recruitment of Solicitor Sally Stanway.

The move forms part of a significant strengthening of the Top 100 UK law firm's family law services across the North as demand for its expertise continues to rise.

Sally has over six years' specialist experience advising on all aspects of family law.

Accredited by national family lawyers' organisation Resolution as a Specialist Family Lawyer, she has particular expertise in advising on cases involving cohabitation, complex financial remedies and cases involving family trusts.

Sally often deals with financial matters either as a result of marital breakdown or breakdown of relationship where there was no marriage.

She is also experienced in advising on matters involving children and family law, including those which involve potential national and international relocation.

Sally sits on the national committee of YRes, which is Resolution's network of family law professionals at the start of their careers. She was also Chair of YRes Merseyside for three years whilst practising in Liverpool.

Sally is the third specialist family lawyer to join Ward Hadaway in the past three months, following the recruitment of Partner Andrea Dyer and Solicitor Nicola Hunter, both of whom are based in the firm's Leeds office.

Ward Hadaway is expanding its family law team in response to growing demand for its services, which are rated in the top rank by independent legal guide Legal 500.

Speaking about her appointment, Sally, who will be based in Ward Hadaway's Manchester office, said: "Ward Hadaway has an excellent reputation for the quality and scope of its family law services so it is great to be joining such a well-respected firm.

"The fact that the team is supported by experts across a range of other disciplines that touch on family law issues means that we are able to provide a truly comprehensive service.

"I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues in the Manchester office and in the family law team across the firm."

Jonathan Flower, Partner and Head of Family Law at Ward Hadaway, and who is based at the

firm's Newcastle office, said: "We are delighted to welcome Sally to the team.

"As well as her experience helping people with a range of different family issues, she is also someone who takes a keen interest in the family legal sector as a whole, as demonstrated by her involvement with YRes on a national level.

"I have no doubt she will fit in very well with the rest of the team in Manchester and across the firm and will help to further enhance our services to clients.

"The investment which we have made in the team over the past year is a reflection both of the growing demand we are experiencing for our services and the importance of providing high quality personal legal services to Ward Hadaway's clients right across the North of England.

"With experienced, knowledgeable family law experts in all three of our offices, we are very well placed to tackle the many challenges which this practice area involves and to providing the kind of service our clients rightfully expect."

Moving forward together.
Our experts will keep you on the right path.



Our leading employment team provide practical advice on all areas of employment law, including redundancies and restructures, employment tribunal disputes and contracts of employment.

To find out more, visit: www.mincoffs.co.uk
T: 0191 281 6151 E: info@mincoffs.co.uk

mincoffs
SOLICITORS

EU REFERENDUM: SIGNPOSTING BUSINESSES TO THE IMMEDIATE ISSUES

Neil Warwick, EU and competition lawyer and business development partner at Square One Law, outlines the areas businesses should be thinking about addressing ahead of Theresa May triggering Article 50 in early 2017.

BREXIT

The first areas businesses should focus on ahead of exiting the EU

- Review of major contracts
- Supply chains
- Employing EU nationals or seconding people to the EU
- Not seeing eye-to-eye with your overseas supplier or purchaser
- Currency issues and funding requirements
- Competition law
- Energy
- Property development
- State aid and procurement

For more information please visit squareonelaw.com/brexit

SQUAREONELAW

Mirrored rhetoric

The recent American Presidential Election has managed to eclipse Brexit as the lead news story, and although many commentators continue to link the rhetoric in both events, the impact of the changes thrown up by Brexit are likely to last for a longer period than a Presidential term in office.

Leaving the EU, what happens now?

The political situation is still likely to remain fluid for a number of months. It is almost certain that there will be an appeal to the Judgement in R-v-Miller case, which has seen the High Court rule against the Government in favour of investment manager Gina Miller, along with a crowd-funded 'People's Challenge' coalition, in saying Parliament should be consulted before Article 50 can be triggered.

These Court cases and the various constitutional arguments are fascinating and could ultimately end up changing the basis of the UK legal system. However, from a business perspective the



implications are likely to be a little more mundane, but have a far greater reaching effect on the day-to-day running of a business.

How your business may be affected

We have created a simple guide showing some key areas which may be immediately affected by this changing landscape. It is not intended to be a comprehensive overview but it should help signpost businesses and business owners to which issues they should prioritise addressing immediately.

Keep a watching brief

The sort of issues outlined above are simply the first phase of what businesses are likely to encounter and we will be keeping this under constant review. The proposed Great Repeal Bill announced by the Government in October, may freeze existing EU law when it is enacted on the date we formally leave the EU, which will give some short term certainty. However, once new EU laws are implemented, British businesses may need to comply with the existing UK law and future EU legislation in order to continue trading with Europe. It will therefore be necessary to keep a close watch on how the trade negotiations develop.

If you would like more information on any of the issues raised in this article please contact neil.warwick@squareonelaw.com

properties | **UNIQUE**

THE NORTH EAST'S AWARDING WINNING SERVICED APARTMENT PROVIDER



**STAYS
STARTING
FROM
4 NIGHTS**

**1, 2 & 3
BEDROOM
APARTMENTS
&
PENTHOUSES**



**OUTSTANDING APARTMENTS - CHEAPER THAN HOTEL STAYS
FOR BUSINESS & LEISURE - SHORT & EXTENDED STAYS**

CALL + 44 (0) 191 4900789

OR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.PROPERTIESUNIQUE.COM



WORKING WITH THE PROPERTY EXPERTS

Writing this article in late November, it is fair to reflect that 2016 has yet again been a year of rollercoaster activity of supply and demand within the housing market. We thought in 2015 that the election would cause some disruption and it did, but early in 2016 we were busy and productive with the sale of many houses in the region between January and April.

From May to July, the impact of Brexit was felt by the housing market throughout the country and confidence dropped significantly. This was mainly due to estimates and irresponsible speculation about the immediate impact of Brexit on the housing market.

The reality was that none of the scaremongering worked and the housing market actually continued to grow in confidence and demand. August of this year saw one of our busiest sales months and demand increased throughout September and October, proving the month of November to be the busiest of the whole year, which has only happened on rare occasions throughout my 32-year career in estate agency.

We all need somewhere to live and the reality is that we must continue to keep the economy and confidence within the housing market at a reasonable level. The skill of government is to stop the peaks and troughs within the confidence factor.

Regardless of whether people were keen to leave the European Union or remain, we have to work out a logical way forward and be able to define as best as possible, with all of the knowledge available, what Brexit means.

The immediate impact of the current situation will be felt in January 2017 when the Supreme Court considers the present situation on how we trigger Article 50. Dependent upon the Supreme Court's decision, this will then have a further impact within the economy and timescales.

It seems that every year has some sort of trauma or extreme reason for the economy to wobble. If it hadn't been Brexit or the previous general election, it might have been an oil crisis or the Middle East, or even the impending presidency of Donald Trump.

The reality of all of these actions is that we still need somewhere to live and whether it is a house to purchase or to rent, we are

keen to help our clients as much as possible. In reflection of 2016 as a whole, our turnover has increased and we have seen strong confidence in house prices up to £500,000. The higher price levels in the region are also proving popular in certain hotspots and there is no doubt that unique, quality homes will always sell.

On this page, I am delighted to introduce one of the region's leading country mansions. Hallington Hall in Northumberland, just north of Corbridge, is a magnificent country house with 9 bedrooms and 5 reception rooms, set in stunning grounds and parkland of 60 acres. The house has been extensively modernised and refurbished to an extremely high standard, with the influence of internationally acclaimed interior designer, Fiona Barratt-Campbell.

Internally, the impressive accommodation includes a state of the art kitchen with 'Sub-Zero & Wolf' appliances, as well as handmade cabinet furniture throughout.

The property is supported by 3 cottages and extensive stone outbuildings with machinery stores and garaging.

The walled garden has a fabulous recreation use with tennis courts and extra storage areas and the whole of the property provides one of the region's finest country houses available for sale at this current time. It is situated within easy access of Corbridge, Hexham and the Military Road, as well as the A69 which links into Newcastle. The property has recently been priced at a very attractive figure of £4.95 million.

All discreet enquiries and confidential approaches can be made to myself.

I hope that everybody who follows the housing market and takes an interest in properties through the region will have a very healthy and peaceful celebration over the Christmas period. I look forward to moving many of our clients in the New Year into what I hope will be a beautiful home for the future.

"I would like to wish you all a very happy and merry Christmas and a successful 2017."





GLENGAIRN, SOUTH DRIVE, WOOLSLINGTON



PRICE GUIDE: £1.295 MILLION

Glengairn is a magnificent detached house, set in its own private grounds in South Drive, Woolslington. Constructed in 1928, this seven bedroomed property represents one of the finest detached homes available within this very well-respected area to the North West of Newcastle. The house was purchased by the current owners in 1999 and is a fabulous family home which has continued to be updated and improved over the past 16 years. The gardens are a significant feature with lawned areas, mature shrubs and trees, a water feature and a very large area and recreation facility to the rear and west of the house which has been professionally designed and landscaped for barbeques and parties. The double garage provides access to a useful store room above, with potential to be used as a studio, and there is also an outbuilding with three separate storage areas.



New phase now open...

...be the
first to see
**'THE
VILLAGE'**

The Village is the latest phase to be released at this established development of new homes set in a stunning woodland setting.

The Village brings new availability to this much sought-after development boasting an impressive range of **2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes from £189,995.**

**5 bedroom homes
also available
from £564,995.**



Click: www.bellway.co.uk Call: 01670 789 572

Visit: Monday - Thursday 11am - 7pm, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11am - 5.30pm.

Bellway

What next...

BY Jan Dale, Regional Property Expert

Well – what next. Welcome to the brave new world with Mr Trump! I was half thinking if a reality TV star can win the USA presidency maybe I should apply for X-Factor – even though I sing like a scared cat!

So we thought Brexit was scary, and then the US Election happened, and then news that on-line estate agents are putting their fees up! What next!!

Well the latter is clearly only bad news for those who use online estate agents and believe the local estate agent is a thing of the past.

At urban base we have always strongly believed the future in estate agency has to continue to be driven by excellent customer-service just as it was done in the 1900s, and now the 21st century. This was reiterated by City investors last week at a property seminar in London.

It was enforced there is absolutely a place and need for the latest online technology, but this has to be combined and enhanced with great local knowledge and high-street customer-service.

We believe our clients want their properties to be seen by a wide audience of potential buyers and tenants, and the internet allows this by displaying our property brochures on as many online portals as required to maximise the awareness of their properties to the market.

We also believe local knowledge, support and the customer journey offered by local agents, provides a more enjoyable transaction in what can be a very stressful time.

The future; Ed Balls to win Strictly, and Boris to present Bake-Off. Well who knows what could happen...though we understand Farage may be in high demand to do pantomime this year. Oh yes he is...

URBAN BASE can be contacted on
08456431186. Or visit www.urban-base.com



URBAN

Base



We didn't
invent
exceptional
property service.

We just deliver it!

Contact us to arrange a FREE property
consultation today - Sales, Rental & Urban Interiors

ub
URBANBASE
THE PROPERTY PEOPLE

Email
info@urban-base.com

Telephone:
0845 643 1186

www.urban-base.com

NEWCASTLE
65 Quayside
Newcastle City
NE1 3DE

DURHAM
61 Saddler St
Durham City
DH1 3NU

MARKETING SUITE
Number Fourteen
Maling Street
NE6 1LP

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES, CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS RESULTS IN GREAT MARKETING



“They’re an amazing company to work for apparently; everyone I know who works there say they’d never work anywhere else.”

This ringing endorsement of a client of ours, by an employee of one of their competitors, stopped me in my tracks. Was that corporate heresy being committed? Treason, perhaps?

No. It was much simpler than that; it was just one person being honest to another. One sales and marketing member of staff at a new housing development talking about another housebuilder. I was struck by how refreshing the comment was, and how natural it seemed for the comment to be made. There was no falseness behind the words; no ulterior motive. The client concerned wasn't in the room at the time, and nor did they need to be.

This moment, on a cold, damp Friday evening on a housing development under construction, was the epitome of marketing. It's not what you are saying about your company, products, services, values and ethos that matters; it's what others are saying. That's marketing, but it's not just marketing. That's great marketing.

It's the kind of marketing that many companies yearn for, and in a week when I had been told that a North-East business in another sector to ours was 'in trouble, and struggling with money', it reminded me of the power words have in a world where a comment is only a matter of seconds from becoming a social update, and a reputation potentially under threat.

Results Communications is quite often the 'face' of clients when we bring development proposals into the public realm, and invite the community and other stakeholders to tell us their views. Through other marketing activity, we sometimes step slightly sideways, placing the client front and centre, and enabling them to present themselves to their audiences, but always there to ensure that what they saying and how they are saying it are the most appropriate words and tones to be used.

What we can't control is what others are saying about our clients, but we can influence it. We can endorse and share the positive, and react to the negative to mitigate its impact, and in extreme cases, close it down.

We were catching up with another client earlier this week when the question of 'closing down' comments reared its head again. It's a common problem, and with the ease one can set up a social media account without having to prove ownership, is becoming an issue which needs to be at the forefront of a marketing strategy to ensure swift resolutions are possible.

The client in question was unsure whether to respond to material in the public domain which has the potential for damaging the business, although the level of damage which could be achieved was unknown at this stage. To act or not act?; that was the question.

My advice? Close it down. Every time, and especially when there is a potential threat to the business or its reputation. It may take some effort; it may distract you from your core business but the long-term benefits are irrefutable.

No-one can control what others are saying about them, but we can all input into the perception people have about us and our businesses. This comes from what we say, how we behave, how provide the services and goods we offer, and how we deal with issues when they arise. That says more about a company than any 'marketing spiel' on a flier can ever do.

As with Health and Safety, and Safeguarding – both fundamental to construction projects – everyone is responsible for marketing, and for ensuring that when something negative is being said about your company, someone stands up and starts a movement to close it down. Even if all they are doing is drawing it to the attention of the person who oversees marketing, everyone needs to be aware of what's being said about you. After all, that's what marketing is.

Do you have a marketing challenge or a conversation you need to close? Do you have questions about the best approach to tackle it, and how not to? We're happy to help define approaches and strategies so why not give us a call or drop us an email?

STYLISH APARTMENTS AVAILABLE AT NEWCASTLE DEVELOPMENT

For those taking their first steps onto the property ladder, the modern apartments available at City Edge, courtesy of Barratt Homes North East, are the perfect choice, priced from just £95,995. The five-star housebuilder currently has a range of two-bedroom apartments available on the development in Blakelaw, Newcastle and is encouraging hopeful buyers to visit soon to view what's on offer.

One of the apartments is the Malton, a two-bedroom home that maximizes the space available. An open plan design encompasses the lounge, dining room and kitchen which provides a perfect space for entertaining and relaxing. The apartment also has two double bedrooms and a bathroom fitted with a bath and shower. The Malton is available from £106,995.

Also available to buy at City Edge from £113,995 is the Foxton. This apartment is a great first home for small families and those taking their first steps onto the property ladder, with a beautiful master bedroom that boasts a feature balcony, along with a further single bedroom, both with ample storage space. The apartment also has a spacious family bathroom and a contemporary kitchen with an open plan living and dining area.

Each of the apartments at City Edge is available to buy using the Help to Buy scheme, helping buyers take their first steps onto the property ladder.

Steven Ball, Sales Manager at City Edge,



commented: "All of the homes here have been hugely popular since launching this development and as such we've seen a real sense of community growing. The apartments are ideal for first time buyers, young couples or growing families and are perfectly situated with Newcastle city centre just

a short drive or bus ride away. I'd recommend that buyers who are interested come and have a look around the development to get a feel for the area first hand and chat with one of our expert sales advisers."

To find out more, or to book a viewing, please visit: www.barratthomes.co.uk/cityedge



infrastructure

built environment

construction

The complete construction sector marketing consultancy

Stakeholder Engagement
Pre-Application Consultation
Marketing
Bid Writing

www.resultscommunications.co.uk



THE FOUNDATIONS START AT THE TOP...



Building a house, or anything at all needs a solid foundation - but as winter submerges us, that foundation may be threatened by incoming bad weather.

Snow, sleet and hail, and of course the good old British rain all threaten to lead to leaks, a cold home and rising heating bills when trying to keep your conservatory heated during the cold snap.

After the hottest summer in recent history, many predict 2016's winter months are lining up to be some of the coldest, after a couple of milder winter seasons in the last few years – with news outputs already reporting that snow is settling.

But when it comes to your home in the bleakest of winters the foundations are flipped – if water gets into your conservatory due to leaks, then the whole house may be compromised.

So how do you deal with the inclement weather playing havoc with your conservatory, extension or orangery? Tear it down and rebuild it? Or you could do the sensible thing and just improve what you already have.

While you might think carrying out work on your

home during the winter is a fruitless task which will leave your home more open to the elements, you couldn't be more wrong.

Of all the improvements we carry out here at Tyneside Home Improvements, one of the most popular is a Supalite Roof installation. It's easy to see why it's such a popular choice; Completed in just four days, waterproof from the beginning and designed to match and complement your homes existing look, Supalite roofing really is the smart choice all year around.

And what's more, Tyneside Home Improvement have been named Supalite national installer of the year for five years running from 2012-2016.

Supalite roofing isn't just a short-term option either. Fully guaranteed for 10 years and with a life expectancy of 60 years, your newly fitted Supalite roof system will be all set for even the longest winters that Mother Nature can throw at it.

However it's not just Supalite roofing which is

helping to winter-proof your home in these late months. For those flat roofs where water pools form more often than on sloped roofing, ensuring a watertight seal is vital. As the predicted snow rolls in over the hills and lies on your flat roof, you would hope not a drop of water would breach your home.

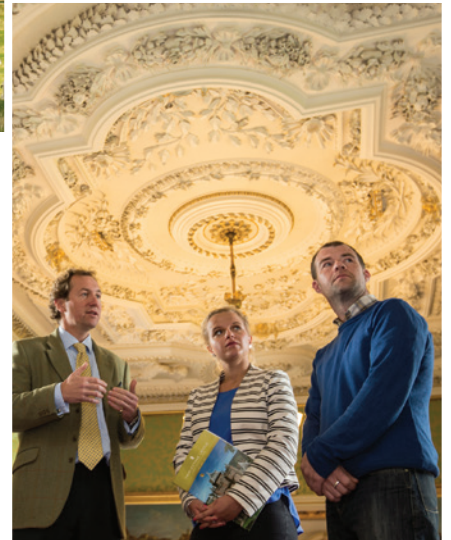
Fear not, Tyneside Home Improvements are there to save the day again, this time with GRP roofing. Completely waterproof – thanks to the GRP being made up of one continuous surface with no breaks or joins, it comes in a range of colours meaning a perfect match with your home's existing look.

Completed within a day depending on your requirements, there's no need to worry about a mess being left behind as our team of professional fitters will take away all rubbish and debris left on site, meaning no fuss for you.

No matter the home improvement you need - be winter ready this December with Tyneside Home Improvements.

To find out more about us or to see our full range of home improvements, visit our new website at www.tynesidehomeimprovements.co.uk, call us on 0191 489 5063 or drop us an email to info@tynesidehomeimprovements.co.uk

A CASTLE FIT FOR A FAIRY TALE



George Bond goes behind the scenes of Thirlestane Castle and talks about his new interior TV series 'Behind Closed Doors'.

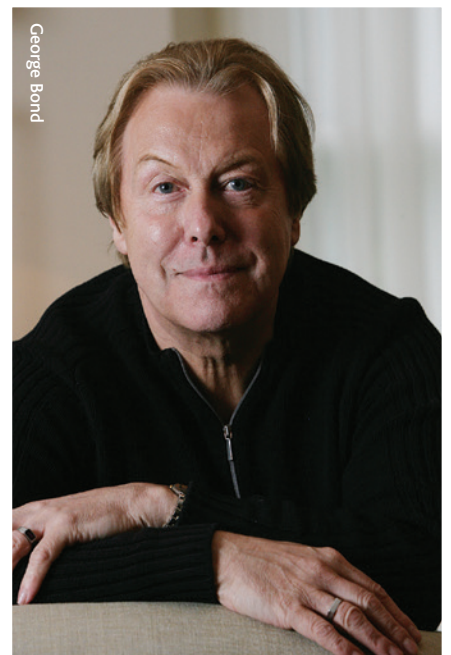
I first visited Thirlestane Castle, situated in Lauder on the Scottish Borders, when I was carrying out initial research for the TV programme 'Behind Closed Doors' which I am a presenter of. If you're not already familiar with the show, it consists of myself and co-presenter Peter Grant taking you behind the scenes of Castles, Mansions and huge new builds throughout the north, showing you some of the most breath taking interiors and touching on some interesting historical facts.

When driving up to Thirlestane Castle, my first impression was that it looked like something out of a fairy tale, a phrase which has been reiterated many times whenever I try to describe the castle to others. The red Scottish brick along with the witch hat roofs and superb symmetry, is simply breath taking and you can't help but be bowled over. As for the castle interior, I recall my neck was rather stiff by the end of my visit due to looking up at the intricate plaster ceilings which are jaw dropping. The sheer scale and attention to detail is mind blowing, something which I admire enormously as you don't see many ceilings or interiors like that in the modern day, if at all. I was very fortunate to have been shown around the castle by the owner

himself, Mr Edward Maitland-Carew, whose family have lived in the castle since 1590, remodelling it in the 1670's and again in the 1840's to create the great castle it is today. Not only can visitors tour the castle (from May to early October Tues-Thurs and Sun), but it is also a beautiful venue for events and weddings. During my tour, Edward took me to a very interesting part of the castle which he called 'the forgotten tower', where situated in the floor was a wooden hatch which at one time would have had metal spikes below it. This was used for captured enemies, who would have been thrown down the hatch, onto the spikes and left, or in other cases, forgotten about.

There are so many other aspects to this castle which I could go on about, but it's something you need to experience for yourself. The history surrounding the family and the castle is extremely interesting, not to mention the connections to the Royal family, who I believe stay from time to time.

A truly marvellous castle which can be viewed on the new 'Behind Closed Doors' series on Made in Tyne and Wear, airing from Thursday the 24th of November through to Thursday the 29th of December.



NORTHERN INSIGHT MEETS

Claire Parry

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Week2week

Did you always envisage a career in property?

Not at all, but my family have always been involved in hospitality and property management which does go hand in hand with serviced apartments. Once you work in the service industry it becomes addictive and at Week2Week we thrive on good customer service, so it suits my work ethic to a tee.

What attracted you to your current role?

The opportunity to work in our family business around my own family's commitments. I love looking after my children and making a difference to the operation at the same time. I welcomed the opportunity to develop the business further helping to put Newcastle on the map as the first apartment lettings company in the region!

What changes have you seen in the market since you started?

The demand for serviced apartments has increased dramatically along with the launch of Airbnb, it continues to grow rapidly as clients look for a more home-from-home approach to their business and leisure stays. As awareness of the concept grows, more long stay clients have a requirement for what we do whether it be project work, relocation or a holiday.

Brexit uncertainty. What's your slant?

Regardless of how you voted, I think it's a volatile time for everyone as society has evolved since we previously stood apart from the EU. Although I was not born in 1973, I am confident that we will still be able to trade successfully with members of the EU, especially as it will always be a buyers' market and countries will still purchase what they require from where they want. The decision has been made now, so we need to be positive moving forward and get on with it. I am sure that America has, as a country more problems with their current decision than we do!

How would you advise people looking to buy property?

I would suggest suitable locations for serviced apartments in and around Newcastle City Centre as perfect investment properties. We would have an informal discussion around why the person is buying; is it part of their pension or is it to maximise yield for example? What their expectations are and how we manage serviced apartments verses long term rentals. We would also discuss their long-term plans for the property to ensure our management style is a good fit as well as being affordable. Whilst we at Week2Week Serviced Apartments offer a high return on investment there is a requirement to



furnish and equip the property to a high standard meaning there is an initial outlay to factor into your purchase.

Are there any restrictions in the lease for short term rentals?

This is something that must be checked to prevent any repercussions later. Does the property come with parking, is there a view – all selling points - lots to consider when making a purchase! At Week2Week we have a checklist for our clients to cover all aspects of the pros and cons of short-term rental leases, so we encourage them to read through these carefully before making a decision. Our clients are our priority over profit.

Tell us the most exciting thing you're currently working on?

Internationalising the business! We would like to open more branches of Week2Week in this country first, utilising the gap in the market in several cities and then, in time go international. I am confident that we can achieve this with the fantastic team that we have and if we can grow the staff to include more people who care about the business as they do now, then anything is possible. Watch this space!

What's your fondest memory of a career in property?

Countless trips to London to meet with our TAS Alliance colleagues and fellow ASAP members. Our crossover with the hospitality sector, links into travel and the opportunities it brings. You

meet some fantastic people in this industry as the majority of time we are dealing with clients that are either using your services for a vacation or looking for a home-from-home for work. Either way we ensure that we exceed their expectations every time, which is why our clients' testimonials mean so much to us.

What are your career aspirations?

Expansion and growth which keeps the family ethos alive. As a family business it would be great to think that as my mother has passed the baton to me, I could do the same with my children. I would never force them into this career, however if they showed an interest, then I would certainly encourage it. I would also personally like to take the business to the next level and open offices in other cities.

Where's the best place to live in the North East and why?

Newcastle upon Tyne of course! What an awesome city, what don't we have here? Our city is lively, atmospheric, historic, contemporary, international – what is not to love? It is by far the most cosmopolitan city outside of London, but unlike Londoner's – we have the good old Geordie charm and welcome here in Newcastle.

When not working, how do you like to relax?

Time with my family is precious outside work, so spending time with my husband and children in addition to learning Muay Thai boxing is how I spend most of my free time. I also love the cinema, theatre and eating out – which is where the Thai boxing comes in as I need to do the latter to counteract the former!

NEGOTIATION WITH ITALIAN COFFEE

Damiano Rea is Director at Heaton Property. It was established in 2005 and specialises in rental property for professionals in Newcastle and the surrounding areas. In 2014, the company won gold in the Times/Sunday Times Letting Agency of the Year Awards.



Most of us can be proud of our generation tag. Baby Boomers got to see all the good bands. Generation X raved the night away in a muddy field. Generation Y gave us much of our technology. So why does journalist India Knight describe Generation Z as "Generation Mummy's Little Sausage"?

Harsh judgement on an entire generation and as ever, I suspect a small minority is responsible. Mostly Generation Z are perfectly sensible and self-assured. But it is the expectations of the minority that dominate discussion among those of us in the service and retail sectors.

Consumer rights are enshrined in law and like any responsible business we have a complaints structure. This comes in three phases. One, we sit down with a cup of tea and resolve the issue. If that does not work, the matter is addressed at Director level (sit down with a cup of Italian coffee). The next level escalates the issue to the Ombudsman who will deliver impartial judgement.

In over a decade we have never had an issue

progress beyond the cup of tea stage. But we have found a change in the nature of complaints. We operate a 24 – 7 call out service for emergencies. The smell of gas, a flood or structural damage to the property can all fairly be described as an emergency.

A lightbulb popping or the internet going on the blink is an issue we will address, but not at 3.00am. The 3.00am internet issue happened recently and when we advised we would be out the next day, led to a full-on footy stamp on social media. Apparently, we are Attila the Hun on a bad hair day.

The answer to this emerging issue is not to unfairly lambast an entire generation. The answer lies in communication and outlining precisely what our customer care package can reasonably be expected to offer. In that way, we can manage customer expectations and any issues can be resolved over a nice cup of tea. Common sense and the threat of Italian coffee will usually be enough to ensure that both sides of a dispute can walk away satisfied.

www.heatonproperty.com



Heaton Property

Property... it's everything we do



w. www.heatonproperty.com

e. office@heatonproperty.com

tel. 0191 240 0665

A YEAR OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION FOR BRADLEY HALL



Bradley Hall Managing Director Neil Hart and Operations Director Peter Bartley

Leading North East chartered surveyor and property agent Bradley Hall has experienced a year of impressive growth, resulting in a recent move to new, bigger head offices at Greys Monument. Bradley Hall Managing Director Neil Hart comments on a great year for the firm.

The past year has included many milestones for us at Bradley Hall. We saw the launch of BH Financial Services and BH Mortgage Services, which have both gone from strength to strength; we opened our fifth residential office in Morpeth, and we recently moved to new, larger premises on Hood Street to secure more office space to accommodate further growth.

During this time of substantial growth for the entire company, we noticed a rise in demand for our property management services, prompting us to revise our systems to accommodate our growing client base. We enlisted trusted real estate software providers, Qube Global Software, to install a brand new state of the art system to support the expansion and make our IT systems even more efficient.

We are also expanding the Bradley Hall team and have appointed a senior property manager to oversee the increase in property management. We have appointed a new accounts assistant and property accountant to ensure our clients' needs are met.

Bradley Hall currently manages over 600 residential and commercial properties for clients, along with a rising rent roll of over £5m per annum. Our expert team, led by myself and fellow director Peter Bartley, are highly trained to offer specialist services to clients including property and asset management, accounts and facilities management.

When executed by experts, effective property management can have a significant and positive impact on your rental properties, resulting in a largely effortless profit once the original investment has been made.

The financial side of property management can be the most challenging for those who aren't industry experts, which is why we have expanded our accounts team to assist with the monetary side of property management. It can be easy for non-professionals to miss details when compiling information to complete a VAT return. Our expert team ensures all income and expenditure is taken care of as well as liaising with accountants.

The Bradley Hall team work with clients to agree and deliver a clear plan for maximising the return

from your property with asset management plans, designed specifically to manage your property or properties in a business-like manner, with tactics to ensure every aspect is covered.

Another factor which property owners often appreciate is that a professional property manager will ensure a better quality of tenant. When screening tenants, we know how to analyse applications and spot any key warning signs. Experience provides us with the tools to pick out a tenant who will take care of the property, resulting in less wear and tear, as well as the ability to choose reliable tenants who will consistently pay rent on time. Our team also conduct rent renewals with tenants to ensure they rent the property for a longer period, leading to shorter vacancy cycles and more profit for investors.

These are just some of the benefits and reasons why our property management services are growing in demand. If you would like to have a conversation with one of our expert advisers on how we can help you, please contact the Bradley Hall Hood Street office on 0191 232 8080.

THE MEMORY MAKER

As I drive around the North East I can't help but think how lucky we are to live in such a fantastic area, we have access to great countryside, coasts, towns and cities. I seem to be drawn to the different properties and property types and as I drive I can see how the properties also change from area to area, often shaped by their past.

I often think about who lives there and what stories the houses could tell, especially those properties which date back a number of years and will have seen families grow, the excitement of Christmas, new arrivals, happiness and tears.

The properties we live in are much more than bricks and mortar, they create memories that stay with us forever. When people ask me what I enjoy most about my job, it is seeing memories being created, however to create those memories new homes need to be places where people want to live, this means they are located in the right area and also designed to meet what customers want and aspire to own.

Open plan living has become more popular over the last 10 years. We like to have the ability to swing open the French doors and bring the outside inside, let the kids play in the garden on a sunny day, or watch them play outside on a crisp winters morning.

The breakfast bar in the kitchen that allows the family to enjoy a breakfast or a coffee together before they head off for work and school.

These are all memories that will stay with you forever and whilst a new home won't have the ability to tell their own story as much as an old home, you can start that first chapter in the story yourself today and for many years to come with Chapter Homes.



URBAN BASE are sales agent for Chapter Homes, Tel:0330 3530056

CARGO

A design and digital agency that focuses on delivery.

Dependable.

Honest.

Effective.

Contact us today to talk about delivering your next project.



www.cargocreative.co.uk

0191 296 6081

WHEN IT COMES
TO MARKETING &
PUBLIC RELATIONS
WE'RE LIKE A DOG
WITH A PHONE!



 **Clothier**
Lacey&Co

MARKETING | PR | DESIGN | DIGITAL | ADVERTISING

Clothier Lacey & Co, Albany Court, Monarch Road, Newcastle Business Park NE4 7YB
tel: 0191 273 9897 email: info@clothierlacey.co.uk www.clothierlacey.co.uk



PR DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT BOLSTERS NARRATIVE TEAM

A North East communications agency has appointed a PR Director to underpin long-term growth plans.

Kate Russell has stepped into the role at Sunderland-based Narrative Integrated Communications, joining the company's now 19 strong team of marketing and communications specialists.

With 16 years in the PR industry under her belt, Kate has previously worked for agencies in the North East, Manchester and Leeds, including Weber Shandwick, Ptarmigan and Gardiner Richardson on a range of b2b and b2c clients in the private and public sector. She has also won a series of awards for her work.

Kate will oversee the strategic development and growth of Narrative's PR division, which delivers both traditional and digital PR campaigns for a growing portfolio of national and regional clients.

She said: "It's an exciting time at Narrative as we continue to win new clients in a number of sectors, including education, charity, social housing and business growth. I'm looking forward to bringing my skills and experience to the team."

Kate is the fourth new recruit to join the Narrative team following increased demand for new and existing service strands including PR, creative, advertising, digital media and marketing strategy.

Kieron Goldsborough, Managing Director of Narrative, said: "I'm delighted to welcome Kate to Narrative at this crucial point in our growth journey. She has an impressive track record in delivering first-class campaigns for clients across the full PR spectrum and in winning new business. I have no doubt that her experience and fresh insight will be a real asset to the team."



MEDIAWORKS WINS BEST LARGE DIGITAL AGENCY

Digital agency Mediaworks recently won the Best Large Agency award at the 2016 Northern Marketing Awards, taking the top spot amidst some stiff competition. The award serves as recognition for the great work the agency does, illustrating the commitment to their staff here in the North East and to serving their clients nationally.

The Best Large Agency of the Year award is given to the shortlisted organisation of 31 or more employees which continually performs to a high standard. Judges were looking for the company that delivers fantastic results and high standards of work, while contributing positively to the industry.

Managing Director, Brett Jacobson, said: "Winning Best Large Agency at the Northern Marketing Awards is a fantastic achievement for everyone at Mediaworks. The team works tirelessly to deliver exceptional results for our clients. We've always been proud of our North East roots, so it's great to be recognised as the premier digital agency in the North."

To continue the success Mediaworks has achieved so far in 2016, the agency has also been shortlisted for the UK Search Awards 2016, again in the Best Large Digital Agency category, at the time of writing.



MHW WINS CHERRY ON TOP

Newcastle restaurant The Cherry Tree, in Jesmond, recently appointed MHW to undertake a complete review of its brand and communications.

The long-established restaurant needed a refresh and new approach creating for its PR and marketing, with a view to reasserting the restaurant's strong reputation for great food and music with the aim of driving more customers through the doors. This review coincided with the arrival of a new chef and menu changes.

Wayne Halton, Director at MHW PR, explained: "The Cherry Tree is a much loved restaurant in the leafy suburbs of Newcastle. It had reached that classic stage of maturity when certain things are no longer working and there is a slow drift in the customer base. The owner spotted the scenario before it became a major problem and we reviewed marketing activity when it needed some fixes that could make a difference to a good product."

Working in partnership with Room 8 Design the restaurant identity was refreshed along with all the menus and promotional materials. A poor online offer and presence was addressed and MHW managed the launch of a new website; more activity was devoted to social media and email marketing.

This combined with regional media relations, restaurant reviews and blogger relationship building.

Wayne added: "This great neighbourhood restaurant is back on the map and more customers, loyal and new, are giving The Cherry Tree a try."



INSIGHT MEETS INSPIRATION

Media News brought to you in partnership with

**Hedley
McEwan**
creative communication
hedleymcewan.co.uk

FIVE COMMUNICATIONS LESSONS FROM 2016

This year has seen seismic changes in the political landscape in the UK and US. No one predicted the outcome of either the EU Referendum or the US election. Here are five areas of reflection for leadership and management as we head into the New Year.

#1 Lead from the front

There has never been a bigger opportunity for public relations practitioners. The global economic environment is in a state of flux and businesses are looking for how best to secure competitive advantage. Public relation's natural role is as strategic adviser to the management team, helping organisations to find their place in society, navigate uncertainty, and manage reputation.

In 2017, leaders will need even greater support from their communications advisors. Make sure you have the appropriate skills to advise at Board level, including business, management and financial capabilities, and report directly to the C-Suite.

#2 Audience insight

The shockwaves resonating from the results of the EU Referendum and President-Elect Donald Trump's election in America show the huge disconnect between political establishments and the general public. The polling business is completely broken, having called it wrong on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ensure you know your stakeholders before rolling out campaigns. This means gaining behavioural insight and working from grass root communities upwards to understand what motivates the people you wish to engage with.

#3 Social media bubbles

Social media can often make it look like one party or another is ahead in the stakes. In fact, data shows that there are often pockets of activity within one sphere of influence, which is not permeating a wider demographic.

Do your homework and measure properly. Look at how to achieve reach and scale and don't be



Sarah Hall

distracted by noise; this may well be just the same people talking to each other and reinforcing each other's views.

Also remember that algorithms on social media serve you content based on your own behaviour; you need to break out of that to have a more balanced view of the world.

#4 Emotions beat facts

Oxford Dictionaries has just named 'post-truth' the word of the year based on the success of the Brexit and Trump campaigns in which appealing to the emotions was more effective than factual accuracy. It's clear that visionary soundbites such as 'Make America Great Again' and 'Take Back Control' secured much greater cut through than the opposing slogans.

This is a big issue for those in communications, especially those working for national and local government at a time when trust is at an all

time low. Consideration needs to be given to how members of the public receive accurate and appropriate information to help them make important decisions and so they understand the consequences of what they're voting for either way.

#5 Personality trumps politician

Last but not least, it is perhaps not a surprise that in a reality show obsessed society, a reality TV personality was voted in as President-Elect of America rather than an experienced politician.

With Trump appearing regularly on US TV screens, talking frequently about wealth creation, many of the US public no doubt felt they knew Trump better and had more in common with him than Clinton. This coupled with the fact he promised to help Americans transform their fortunes was a likely a significant factor in his election.

Finding ways to show commonality between elected leaders and society at large will be crucial for campaigns of the future.

SarahHallConsulting
PR and marketing that builds profiles and profits

Sarah Hall Consulting Ltd.
m: 07702 162 704
t: 0191 659 7072
e: sarah@sarahhallconsulting.co.uk
w: sarahhallconsulting.co.uk

A PINCH OF SALT WITH YOUR DAILY PAPER? YOU'RE GOING TO NEED MORE THAN THAT.



Is the growing partisanship of media outlets exacerbating divisions within society or merely responding to what it thinks its readers really want to see?

As our lives fill up with more and more media – social and otherwise – that we’re encouraged to consume, then so we’re all becoming increasingly desperate to stand out in one way or another. There is an air of inevitability that the content produced is going to become more and more controversial.

Here’s a scene from Remembrance Sunday. Jeremy Corbyn attends the annual Cenotaph service. Mail Online and Sun Online readers were faced with the shots of Corbyn, alone, appearing to be dancing.

The Mail Online’s story, headlined: “Is this really the day to audition for Strictly, Jeremy? Corbyn appears to dance a jig at the Cenotaph as he waits for the Remembrance Day parade.”

The Sun’s headline said: “Jeremy Corbyn dances his way down Downing Street as he attends Remembrance Sunday.”



Hours later, Mirror online publish the uncropped shots and it turns out the Labour leader is in animated conversation with World War Two veteran, George Durak, who confirmed Corbyn certainly wasn’t dancing.

Less than 24 hours later, both the Sun and the Mail

had removed their versions from their website. But the damage is already done by then. It fits the narrative for those right-leaning newspapers to portray Corbyn, as they have done before, as non-patriotic and disrespectful.



That same weekend, the #StopFundingHate movement won its battle to hit the Mail’s publishers where it really hurts. Lego announce their most recent promotional campaign with them which will be their last having come under sustained pressure to act from the campaign’s leaders and supporters.

Lego, one of the strongest and most respected global brands is effectively being told where it should and should not advertise by a campaigning group based on what it believes are irresponsible and hate-led stances on migration, race and religion. We’ll know by the time you’re reading this whether they were successful in persuading Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, John Lewis, Walkers and Iceland to follow suit. That could really hurt if they’re successful.

It’s impossible to prise the media and political landscape apart, so intertwined have the two become. So what about the channels we do

control? Well, I don’t think the answer is any more straightforward there.

As just one example, Facebook’s algorithms work to show you what it believes to be the most relevant content to you. If you were a pro-Brexit voter, and your Facebook activity leant that way, you would be far more likely to have seen like-minded ads and posts in your timeline. Facebook, of course, has its own issues with delivering too much ‘fake’ news into our feeds.

So who are we supposed to believe when it looks like all media – traditional and online – seems to be working to its own agendas? Does all this actually matter if all you’re looking to do is get more people to buy your product or service. You may, justifiably, care little whether your next buyer thinks Trump’s going to sink or save the world’s most powerful nation.

Well, within the communications industry, it is, of course, our business to understand how all this works and, more importantly, how we can apply it for the benefit of our clients.

Does a holiday company try to better communicate with its customers worried about going to the United States on holiday, or does it exploit the notion that at least half the nation wants to keep things British and therefore expand the way it talks about UK city breaks or week-long walks in the Lake District.

The ways in which we communicate with our customers is going to become ever-more complex and finessed as the media landscape fractures, niche groups form to represent their interest and new media groups find new formats for us to speak to each other.

We need to keep up.



RAFA LIGHTS UP ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER




The Newcastle United Foundation's Annual Awards Dinner, sponsored by First Class Supply, took place at St.James' Park recently with Newcastle United Manager Rafa Benitez and several of his senior players in attendance to celebrate the achievements of the black and white heroes supported by the charity.

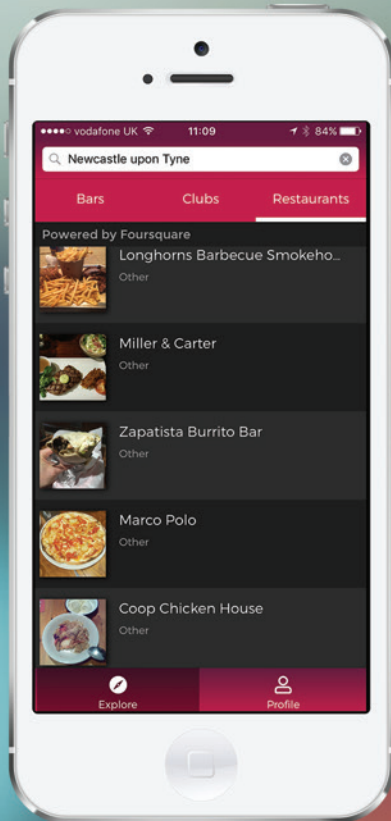
Over 400 supporters from the business community spent the evening celebrating the individuals whose lives have changed significantly through the support and guidance of the Foundation.





Roar
app

 @TheRoarApp
 /TheRoarApp
 @theroarapp



Find the right Bars, Clubs and Restaurants






The RoarApp is designed to help you find the best Bars, Clubs and Restaurants in any city in the world.

You can choose to follow venues, which gives you access to special offers on drinks, meals, entry or any other events or news created and hosted by your venues.

You can then share plans and offers with your friends and even stay connected with our unique Find my Friends feature.

Should your Restaurant, Bar or Club Sign up to RoarApp? - The answer is YES!

Your venues are already listed on RoarApp and as a subscriber you can take full advantage of the following:

-  When you subscribe the first 3 months are **FREE!** This gives you the ability to add all your latest offers to your Roar profile, allowing users to see the latest offers of today, tomorrow or next week! Once users are following your venue, you can send them direct push notifications (like a text message) to remind them why they need to return!
-  Regular radio coverage. We are partnered with Capital and Heart Radio, so RoarApp users know exactly what is going on in your area.
-  Free exposure to our large audience on social media.
-  We give you the ability to show our real time users why they should choose your venue, by giving you complete control over your profiles, with unlimited wall space for offers, news, and other events. You can edit your pictures, contact info and dress code...the possibilities go on!
-  There is no other social media platform available which allows such direct access to your public!

All of the above is included in your subscription package for as little as £15 per month.

For more information, please contact Venues@theroarapp.com
or visit our website at www.theroarapp.com



2016: WERE OUR PREDICTIONS RIGHT?



It may feel like we've only just rang in the New Year but 2016 is almost over. With 2017 on the horizon, Mediaworks' Managing Director, Brett Jacobson recaps on the year's digital developments.

Cast your mind back to December 2015 and you may remember us making predictions for the year ahead. We dubbed 2016 the year of digital dominance - but just how accurate were we? We compare our forecasts with reality, as we turn our attention to the future.

Our prediction: "Recognising the growing audience of smartphone and tablet users, Google will continue to tailor its services to meet the needs of mobile users."

Google had already made it clear that they'd be focusing more heavily on mobile in 2016, as proven by the launch of their mobile algorithm in 2015. Since then, the focus on mobile has snowballed.

In May, Google released an update for the mobile-friendly algorithm, increasing the effect of the ranking signal for mobile-optimised sites to ensure users can find the most relevant and useful information for their queries.

More recently, Google announced plans to launch a separate mobile index in the coming months.

Replacing the search engine's current single index, the mobile version will act as the primary index and will be used alongside a secondary desktop index, which won't be updated as frequently. While the impact of this change remains to be seen, the shift clearly indicates where Google's priorities lie: with mobile.

Paid search has also been heavily influenced by mobile, with Google AdWords offering additional features to improve the visibility of mobile ads. Google's removal of the right-hand sidebar made way for expanded text ads, allowing more characters to promote products and services. The ads are optimised for the most popular smartphone screens and, with over half of Google.com searches taking place on smartphones, this additional space can be vital.

In addition, AdWords now allows for individual bid adjustments based on device types. If the majority of your target customers are on mobile, you can now increase your bid to capture a greater audience share.

Our prediction: "Social offers some of the biggest possibilities in terms of paid search this year."

Back in 2015, we predicted the continued growth of social media as an advertising platform. This has certainly been realised as the year has gone by, with advertising spends rising on the most popular platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

New opportunities have also emerged through updates to platforms like LinkedIn, for example. The business-orientated site has gone from strength-to-strength, with 80% of all B2B leads generated on social media coming from LinkedIn. As this year has highlighted, social media is a fundamental aspect of any digital strategy, helping you to both promote products and engage directly with your target audience.

If one thing's certain, digital is set to grow again in 2017. To stay ahead of digital trends and gain a competitive advantage in the New Year, call Mediaworks on 0191 404 0100.

MEDIAWORKS APPOINTS NEW FINANCE DIRECTOR



Digital marketing agency Mediaworks has appointed a new Finance Director. Mark Rutherford joins the award-winning business, bringing his experience gained from roles as Head of the UK Finance Team for Wellstream PLC and more recently as the Finance Director for the Great Run Company.

This wealth of experience will help shape the future of the growing business, which was recently awarded 'Best Large Agency' at the Northern Marketing Awards. Mark studied computer science at Durham University and has worked in IT at KPMG before beginning his finance career, which gives him good insight and understanding of the digital sector.

Speaking of the new role, Mark was enthusiastic: "First and foremost, I look forward to contributing to the success of the business and playing my part in helping Mediaworks realise its ambitions and potential. There are great opportunities we can capitalise on for our clients, so that they have an optimal digital strategy that will help maximise their online revenues, and for them to maintain that position as the search industry continues to evolve."

Mark's wealth of experience and focused financial direction will help the business maximise its current growth and increase revenue, the ability to service to clients and our stellar reputation as a trusted digital partner of some of the UK's biggest businesses.

For further details: mediaworks.co.uk

VOTE PRINT!™

DID YOU KNOW THAT WE DO NEXT DAY DELIVERY ON LOADS OF PRINT, LIKE...

A5 DOUBLE SIDED LEAFLETS	150GSM SILK	250 - £33	500 - £43
A6 DOUBLE SIDED LEAFLETS	150GSM SILK	250 - £29	500 - £33
A5 4PAGE FOLDED LEAFLETS	150GSM SILK	250 - £48	500 - £68
A5 8PAGE BOOKLETS	150GSM SILK	250 - £76	500 - £120

NOT WHAT YOU NEED? EMAIL US FOR MORE INFORMATION

**NORTHERN
PRINT
SOLUTIONS**

0191 411 1698
INFO@NORTHERNPRINTSOLUTIONS.CO.UK
NORTHERNPRINTSOLUTIONS.CO.UK

JOURNALISM, MARKETING AND MOVING INTO NEW FIELDS



It's February of 2015, I'm sat seven hours in to another tedious visit to the library, deliberating over a third cup of coffee or leaving university and never coming back. Fatigue's kicking in. I'm about to give up hope and go home to the disappointment of a microwave meal and the promise of bed until I stumble upon a Huffington Post article reading, 'Employment Rates Are Improving For Everyone But Journalism Graduates'. I'm captivated.

As a soon to be journalism graduate myself, I can't help but sink further into my chair and come to the conclusion I'll be having that third cup of coffee and the microwave meal and bed can wait. The first line of the article reads 'we're back with your daily dose of depressing journalism news'; how daunting. The article continued, amidst the perpetual employment graphs and jargon I couldn't help but ponder the prospects of post-university life and what's next for me when I graduate. I had to research further.

To add further insult to injury, in 2012 Jonathon Baker, the then Head of the BBC College of Journalism stated 'to get into the BBC as a journalist, a university degree is not required'.

I needed a plan, a strategy, something to augment what I've already started. With a professional

placement module being part of my final year of university, I began researching companies further afield to traditional journalism institutes in a bid to broaden my experience.

Studying under a Media and Journalism degree I have managed to acquire an array of skills ranging from working within radio, documentary making and web design. After nearly three years of university and a plethora of new abilities, why shouldn't I try bridging my career to something different to traditional journalism? What do I have to lose?

I highly value work experience, it's a chance to learn under professionals and develop an insight into industry at reputable businesses. It was time I looked for experience further than local newspapers and magazines. Enter JAM Marketing.

Upon beginning work experience within JAM I was sceptical of my own abilities, this was something new and I previously had little experience within marketing and PR. I'm a journalism student, not a marketing student, am I going to make a fool of myself here? I could have not been more wrong. Working as one of the team at JAM has allowed me to channel various skills I've learnt over my degree into tasks like writing up editorials and researching clientele for the creation of databases and blog posting.

I'm in the process of creating a professional relationship between my career and what I'm capable of as a journalist. It's not all 'depressing journalism news' if you're willing to further yourself. Go out there, explore, and find out what you're really capable of.

Give your business
some presence in 2017



Your *new* graphic design team

Design | Print | Web | Social Media

grievesdesign.com | 0191 516 6331 | The Hub, Washington NE38 0AQ



ADVERTISING | BANNERS | BUSINESS CARDS | BOOKLETS | BROCHURES | CARDS | CATALOGUES | EXHIBITIONS
FACEBOOK | FLYERS | ILLUSTRATION | INVITATIONS | LEAFLETS | LITERATURE | LOGOS | LOYALTY CARDS | MAGNETS | MENUS | NCR | PACKAGING | POS | POSTCARDS
POSTERS | PRINT | PROSPECTUS | ROLLER BANNERS | SIGNS | STATIONERY | TICKETS | TWITTER | VEHICLE VINYL | WEBSITES | WEDDING STATIONERY

ASK SILVER BULLET



“If Christmas shopping is going increasingly online, why do shops like Fenwicks invest so much in their Christmas windows?”

By the time this learned journal sees the light of day not only will the Fenwicks window display be unveiled but the John Lewis TV advert will have debuted and, the infamous Black Friday retail weekend will have been and gone – Christmas, albeit solely in the retail sense of the word, will be well and truly upon us.

So, firstly, to consider the Fenwicks window extravaganza which, according to Fenwicks, this year took German craftsmen some 2,300 hours to produce with five skilled window dressers assembling the display prior to the unveiling on November 4. This was the 45th year of the famous display which has now replaced the turning on of the Christmas lights by some minor celebrity to become the unofficial start of Christmas for Newcastle, and with costs estimated to be well over £200,000, it's a valid question as to why the company puts so much effort and resources into this?

Whilst I obviously can't speak for Fenwicks, the answer is as much about branding as it is about increasing turnover. Fenwicks have established themselves as THE Christmas store for Newcastle in this limited period of spending frenzy which is so important to all retailers. In reality, this year's Beatrix Potter display has little to do with

Christmas, but everything to do with establishing the warm feeling of characters recognised and loved by all ages. The window is enticing shoppers inside where even more wonders await and they've already created the atmosphere that helps spending. Think Christmas, think those nice people at Fenwicks is the theory, whether it's the actual store or the web site.

The John Lewis TV advert is more of the same – marketing the brand prior to marketing specific items. But, as retailers are finding to their cost, having a great brand and great looking stores isn't enough these days when online shopping is such a major percentage of turnover.

Black Friday (the 'Black' refers to profit rather than referring to loss) has expanded this year to Black Friday covering the period from Thursday 24 to Monday 28 November, an indication of just how important the sector regards this opportunity.

An American concept, it originally referred to the Friday after Thanksgiving when retailers offered massive discounts in the run-up to Christmas. British retailers have taken the opportunity to heart and this year it's estimated by retail consultancy firm, Salmon, that £5 billion will be spent over the five days, with £2.55 billion being spent via mobile

devices – crucially, the first time mobile devices have become the dominant means of purchase. It's the 'flash' sale to end all flash sales with the jostling crowds and fighting of 2014 being replaced by crashing web sites last year – Currys PC World, for example was selling 30 TV's every minute on the day!

So, if you can get such great deals online, why bother decorating your store and advertising on TV? It's all about branding, establishing your store and thereby your web site as a trusted place to do your Christmas shopping as much about where you can also get great prices. In a way, it's almost content marketing – Fenwicks and others are giving their windows free of charge to entertain the children of Newcastle, and their parents who all then relate Christmas to the Fenwick brand just as TV viewers associate John Lewis with the festive period.

In addition, whilst Christmas shopping may only last six or seven weeks, the physical store is trying to attract customers all year so promoting the brand makes perfect sense. Add to this the invaluable media coverage that such brands achieve and their investment becomes clearly understandable and very good business.

Do you need some assistance with your marketing? Do you need to review your strategy or do you have another marketing question we can help with? Talk to us. Email your questions anonymously to us today hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk or Tweet us (not so anonymously) @SilverBulletPR and use the hash tag #AskSB

MY DAY AT THE OFFICE

BY STEPHANIE SNOWDON

Stephanie Snowdon is 33, lives in Ashbrooke, Sunderland with her husband Paul and is the Head Resourcer for dynamic and innovative recruitment company, LMB Recruitment.



She has a raft of experience and has worked in many industries including being a market trader in Blackpool and London. She has lived in the North East since 2007 and here she tells Northern Insight readers about her day as part of one of the fastest growing, new companies in the region.

"I always get up early, at about 6am. I like to eat properly and exercise so I start my day with Pilates to loosen my muscles. At 7am, I switch on my phone to check my emails, get ready and take my Westie Pug Cookie out for her walk.

"I'm usually the first in the office at about 8.15am. I set up the office for the team, so when the owner Sean Lavender arrives we can start the working day straight away. We have an apprentice Sophie, so when she arrives at 9am, I organise her workload and spend some time helping her to develop her role.

"I then turn my mind to my own workload by clearing and answering emails, organising forms, amending and printing CV's making sure that they are anonymous to meet the data protection requirements. I also prepare for the interviews being held by Sean and myself that day.

"I spend a good few hours sourcing people for placements by using my connections. That is followed

by more phone calls and first stage interviews – I conduct most of these on the telephone and then once I am happy, I pass the candidates to Sean to meet face to face.

"I am currently working with some large blue chip organisations in industries such as Oil and Gas, Further Education, ICT and Business and professional services. I look for candidates perfect for full time permanent vacancies. We specialise in the needs of industries including training, assessing and business development first and foremost. We know and understand what training companies and awarding bodies need, due to our own experience, so we are exceptionally good at head hunting.

"At lunchtime I usually remain at my desk – I am undertaking a CIPD qualification myself, so it's a good opportunity to do some studying.

"I then make sure the office has all it needs, order stationary and book in any maintenance needed for our equipment.

"My afternoon consists of conducting initial telephone interviews, whittling my prospects down to a strong choice based on their qualifications, skills and competency. I work with candidates on their CV's ensuring they are telling prospective employers what

they need to know in a snapshot. Generally I will look for between five and 20 candidates for any one position, so it's a lot of work to get down to the right three people to put in front of the client.

"We often end the day with a management meeting, reviewing the coming priorities, taking briefings on new placements or vacancies and agreeing on the next course of action for our clients.

"I usually try and finish around 5pm so I can get home and walk Cookie again. I can often be doing interviews on my mobile up to 8pm though as many people can only talk once they themselves are out of work.

"Depending on what night it is, I either cook a meal for me and Paul, go to my ballet lesson or have a driving lesson – life is never boring!"

If you have a vacancy you would like to talk to Sean or Stephanie about, please get in touch via the website www.lmbrecruitment.com or by calling 0191 510 5520.

TRADE
PRINT
SOLUTIONS

→ PICK YOUR PRODUCT → PLACE YOUR ORDER → NEXT DAY DELIVERY*

Nice to meet you,
we are your new online
trade print partner

Save 35% off your first order!
Enter F0035 at the checkout to receive your discount.

e: sales@tradeprintsolutions.co.uk t: 0191 411 1698

www.tradeprintsolutions.co.uk

AGENOR TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS WITH SCOTT LOGIC TO DELIVER ICEFLO 'NEXTGEN'

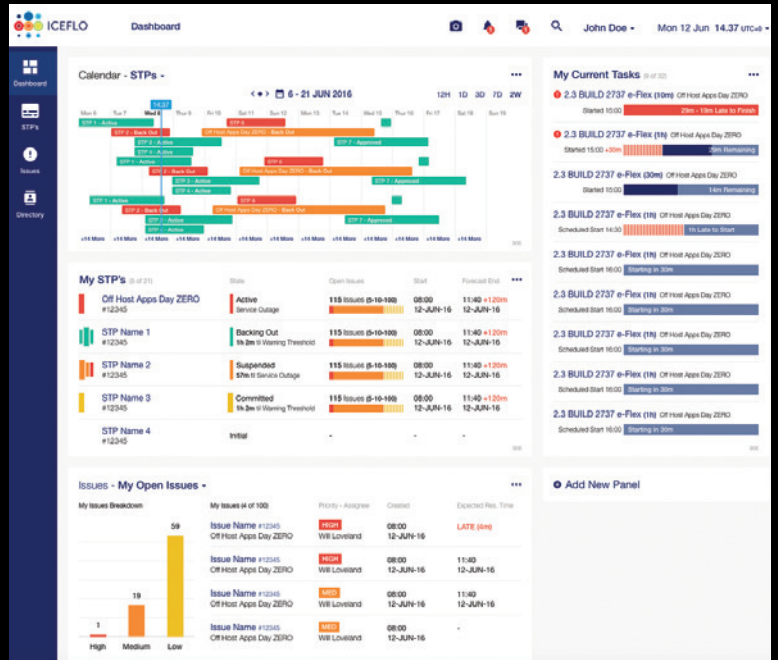
Agenor Technology is delighted to announce a major redesign of its ICEFLO product, which will be carried out in partnership with software development consultancy Scott Logic.

Following the successful launch of ICEFLO Mobile, the firm has been busy working on the Next Generation of ICEFLO (NextGen) to keep it at the forefront of the industry.

NextGen will use new technologies to support its business strategies, enabling clients to dispense with cumbersome spreadsheets and adopt a sophisticated management solution, with real-time collaboration across geographically dispersed teams.

ICEFLO customers can look forward to having a vast number of new features and enhancements including a cloud-based instant messaging service and notifications regarding specific data items within cutovers they are involved in. Other features will include the development of customisable panels on the dashboard view, which will allow users to pick and choose the data they want to see, and board views which will give a unique and creative alternative to users viewing their tasks.

Andy Smith, Agenor CEO, said: "This partnership is a solid step in our journey to further build and enhance the design and development of ICEFLO. I'm confident that Scott Logic will help us fully deliver on our product roadmap and further enhance our unique strengths in the market."



NEW STARTERS BOOST SERVICES AT ADVANTEX



North East based Advantex Network Solutions Ltd has announced several new starters as it expands to meet demand for its telephony and network services and secure growth.

Dean Cowens, who has over 15 years' experience in the IT sector, has been appointed as Sales Manager to oversee the sales team. He will be working alongside chartered accountant Celia Yeates, who joins as Finance Manager together with new Accounts Assistants Gemma Barker and Ryan Masters.

The Follingsby Park-based company has also appointed Dan Baird and Nick

Scott as Communications Engineers, who bring a combined 30 years' experience in technologies to their roles.

Also joining are new IT Engineers Chris Airey and Andrew Simpson and IT Apprentice Nathan Colquhoun. Within the Operations Department, Operations Administrator Julie Lamb, Storeman Jason Lilly and Project Managers Oli Atkins and Graeme Dalkin are new starters.

Advantex was established in 2002. Employing more than 60 people, the firm provides single source solutions to deliver high performance benefits to clients.

SCHOOLS SAVE THOUSANDS AND KEEP PUPILS SAFE THANKS TO NEW IT CONTRACTS

Two North East academies are set to save thousands of pounds a year after teaming up with a local IT and Telecoms company to provide broadband services, web filtering and firewall facilities.

Sunderland-based CCS will be working with Hummersknott Academy and Skerne Park Academy in Darlington from early next year in a deal that will save the schools around £40,000 between them over three years and keep pupils safe in the process.

The news was announced to coincide with Anti-Bullying Week, 14-18 Nov, with the Smoothwall software designed to protect young people from inappropriate online content, including radicalisation and cyber bullying.

Nigel Forster, Hummersknott Academy Vice Principal, said: "When I met with Lee from CCS and he explained how much they could save us I was delighted. That is money which can be put back into the school and providing the best learning opportunities for our pupils."



Ready to reduce costs and achieve more from your IT spend?

Call us now and find out how.

ITPS

ICT FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

IT Professional Services Ltd.

Axwell House, Waterside Drive, Metrocentre East Business Park, Gateshead NE11 9HU.

E: contact@itps.co.uk | www.itps.co.uk

Follow us on @ITPSLtd

0191 442 8300

How much data can you afford to lose?

Data is one of the few assets that cannot be replaced, and while many businesses say they cannot afford to lose any data, they are complacent about IT backups.

One day they may have to explain to their customers that vital data has been lost forever.

Without backup there is no recovery. Talk to us about secure, high speed backup solutions tailored to your needs and budget.

Our world assures yours

Contact us today to tour our data centres:

call **0191 442 8300**

or email

contact@itps.co.uk

www.itps.co.uk

ITPS

DATA CENTRE
SERVICES.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO?

by Garry Sheriff, Managing Director, ITPS



Garry Sheriff, Managing Director of ICT experts ITPS, looks at how having a carefully thought out business continuity strategy could save your business.

Business continuity is a current hot topic in business circles. Often confused with disaster recovery, business continuity is just one element of a strategy designed to keep your business running smoothly in the face of an interruption.

In our role as North East ICT, business continuity and workspace recovery experts we have learned over the years that business continuity is a broad church that means many things to many people, and every solution is unique to each organisation.

Business continuity is so much more than simply being able to retrieve your data. It involves detailed forward planning for every eventuality so that premises, people, ICT systems and data can function as usual under any circumstances.

A carefully thought out business continuity strategy is based on analysing every single element of what keeps your business afloat, and then making contingency plans for every eventuality.

It is an area where we strongly recommend you work with an expert partner who can guide you through the process. It is essential to be clear about the questions you need to ask. If you don't know what you don't know, you could be going down the wrong path, but an expert ICT partner will have created thousands of BC plans and can help you avoid the pitfalls.

Get the right backup plan in place – opt for the

right solution and it can save you time, effort and money. Don't assume that running a tape or disk backup every so often and popping it in your safe will see you through. Start by assessing how much downtime your business can live with, whether you want to backup systems, applications and data every time or whether you can live with doing daily data backup and combine it with monthly systems and applications backups. Most important of all, don't neglect to test your backup in a 'live' situation. The worst possible time to find out your backup hasn't worked is when your business is relying on it.

Establish your recovery objectives – both your recovery point objective (RPO) and recovery time objective (RTO). Recovery point means the time lapse between backups and therefore the amount of data that you are prepared to lose; while recovery time objective means the maximum time you can live without access to systems and data.

An organisation like a building society or a fire and rescue service may commit to zero point and time objectives, but other businesses might be able to live with a small amount of downtime, and a slightly later recovery point.

For instance one of our long-standing clients is a global cargo and ground handling organisation. Over the years we have worked with the client to achieve an RPO of zero, which means no loss of

data, and reduced its RTO from eight hours to 20 minutes.

Consider your premises – where will you base your business and house your people if your usual premises are unavailable? The smart choice is to buy a number of seats in a secure, fully equipped workspace recovery centre where your staff can move in and access critical systems and data as usual. It can be challenging to safeguard and support your people through a crisis, you need them working at optimum efficiency so make sure the workspace recovery centre is not just office space but is equipped with VoIP telephony, workstations with PCs, printers, copiers and faxes, plus meeting and recreational rooms.

When we created the North East's largest state of the art data centre in response to market demand we included 20,000sq ft of project, build and repair areas, equipped with high speed secure connectivity and support facilities.

No longer used just for emergencies, a workspace recovery facility is useful if you need extra, fully kitted out space to call on when there is pressure on existing resources and teams.

While we are all at the mercy of external factors such as the weather and global events, having a detailed business continuity strategy in place is essential if you want to be in a strong position should disaster strike your business.

NORTH EAST IT FIRMS JOIN FORCES



Two of the region's longest-standing IT companies are joining forces, with the announcement that David Simpson, Managing Director of Coniston Computers is joining Gateshead-based ICT experts ITPS in a commercial sales role.

The two companies say the move is designed to provide continuity of support to Coniston's client base, as it winds down its 34-year old business.

Established in 2000, ITPS is the biggest independently-owned IT company in the region. Its 110-strong team services a UK-wide client base, and specialises in ICT consultancy, data centre services and unified communications, as well as support services and disaster recovery. The company's £4m 33,000sq ft data centre and workspace recovery facility is the biggest in the North East.

The new deal creates a UK-wide customer base of over 500.

ITPS Managing Director Garry Sheriff said: "Coniston Computers is a long-established company and we have known David for many years. He brings a wealth of experience with him and we are delighted to welcome him on board.

"This move strengthens the services available to Coniston Clients whilst maintaining the excellent service levels. We operate on similar principles of quality and honesty, and believe in forging long-term partnerships with clients to help them navigate the right path through an increasingly complex world of IT choices.

"Our experienced team of consultants and engineers are ideally placed to continue the support of the Coniston customer base."

In 2014 ITPS announced the creation of the North East's biggest data centre, a £4m facility from which it provides a complete data centre services portfolio including ICT infrastructure hosting, backup and recovery, and cloud services.

David added: "This is a very positive move for Coniston clients, and I am pleased to say that thankfully all the Coniston staff secured alternative positions quickly with little or no break in employment.

"The ITPS team has a great reputation for high level expertise, straightforward advice and an ability to deliver even the most complex of jobs so I am confident that our clients will be in safe hands. I am looking forward to working with some former colleagues and to helping ITPS achieve its goals."

AERO NETWORKS

There's something about a family run business which engenders confidence in the clients it attracts.



At Aero Networks, Paul Curry and his son Ben oversee an IT company with a difference. Paul set up Aero in 2006 after working within a different industry sector, although still service focused. He'd always had a healthy interest in IT, particularly applications and solutions for business, the step was logical to progress into a sector in which he had knowledge and expertise.

As a real problem solver, he left his previous employment after sixteen years and set up Aero, initially in an office in Gateshead, "Originally the company offered a support contact number and services to deal with a variety of IT issues but we then moved on until eventually, it led to a more comprehensive organisation where I had to go out and interface with clients, manage back office functions, and crucially, win and close business" says Paul.

The company actively looks to bring on board, organisations with between 5 and 50 IT users. Traditional law firms, for instance would be a good example of the institutions Aero deal with. With those numbers of users, the client probably isn't large enough to recruit their own personal, full time IT individual but it's vital their IT systems work at the optimum level at all times. Aero Networks fulfil a need in that area for them.

"Our first priority is to go in and meet the client, examine their existing arrangements, listen to their requirements and then provide a comprehensive ongoing service," he continues. "Effectively we are their IT department, so when the client needs us, we are there for them."

IT support was the initial service Aero offered, this in time progressed onto hardware and software provision, and more recently, new and upcoming cloud technologies. As computer hardware and software begin to age, the company will be on hand to advise, provide, install and monitor new systems. It takes the worry out for clients, at the same time allowing Aero to be fully conversant with the updated technology at the clients premises.

Internal infrastructure is becoming less dependent and at the same time, remote in many ways. The cloud can provide email, file storage, document management meaning on premise servers don't have to be as comprehensive. A great example would be a client using cloud hosted email. They lose power to their building, simply put email could still be received on their mobile phone.

Aero worked hard to be ahead of the game where the new cloud products were concerned. As a result their clients enjoyed an early transition to the new technologies.

"We have a great team of friendly professionals at Aero. Every member of the team is service focused, this will continue as the business expands."

Acting as a single point of contact, Aero has the ability to look at most technology aspects within an organisation. IT, connectivity, mobile communication and print management.

"One of the things we perhaps have been a bit lax about is advertising and promoting to our best advantage," advises Paul, "We're now in a superb position to expand for the future and that's what we are happy to do. My son Ben, joined us two and a half years ago and is now Commercial Director, he is overseeing expansion, working alongside myself. Ben has progressed through the technical areas of the company and is now in a management position to help Aero into its next phase."

This fresh approach to IT, is an attempt to remove some of the mysteries of technology for clients and provide a long term service with good relationship outlooks.

"Our message is very clear, we are here and are ready to talk business."



aeronetworks
empowering the cloud

www.aero.net

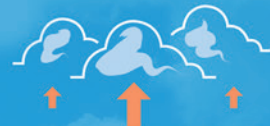
We help UK businesses manage their IT infrastructure and design robust strategies to move towards the cloud



Online Data Backup



Cloud File Storage



Connectivity



Hosted Exchange Email



IT Services



Cloud Telecoms

Utilising the latest technologies across enterprise grade platforms, we will make your transition to the cloud seamless



Follow us: [@aeronetworks](https://twitter.com/aeronetworks)

a: Aero Networks Limited, 7 & 8 Delta Bank Road, Metro Riverside Park, Gateshead, NE11 9DJ

t: 0191 484 1230

f: 0845 643 0596

e: info@aero.net

www.aero.net

AN INTERVIEW WITH COLIN VAN DAM, SENIOR DEVELOPER AT KYKLOUD



On the back of recent high-profile contract wins, Kykcloud- the North East based property asset management software business used on some of the most famous iconic landmarks in the world – has been busy strengthening its software development team.

We spoke to Colin Van Dam, Senior Developer at Kykcloud and the newest member of the expanding Kykcloud team, to find out his thoughts on what it's like to work in cutting edge technology in the North East.

What made you join Kykcloud?

Whilst I wasn't actively looking, I knew there were a handful of businesses in the region that I would be keen to join should the opportunity arise.

I was keen to join a growing SaaS business; often people talk about the benefits of a SaaS model for the customer and end user but the benefits it brings to a developer are enormous too.

Customers subscribe to a SaaS product as opposed to the more traditional route which was to purchase software which quickly becomes out of date. A SaaS product continually evolves which makes it really exciting for the developer. We are constantly adding features to the product to improve its usability and function and because it is an ongoing process we are not restricted by budgets and timescale. Instead we strive to make the best product to meet the needs of our clients as opposed to a product which fits a client's budget.

How did you get in to software development?

We are fortunate in the North East to have a

number of great universities offering various software degrees.

I studied Multi Media Computing at Northumbria University but at the time the UK software industry was in a state of flux with lots of development work being sent over to India. I remember clearly one of my tutors asking the class for a show of hands from those who wanted to become a software developer before telling us that we were in for a disappointment as developer roles were becoming few and far between!

Whilst her words were harsh, they were factual and landing a graduate developer role in the north east in the early 2000s was very difficult. So I started out my working life in IT support and in fact had carved out a successful, pretty lucrative career when the opportunity arose in 2009 to get back in to software development. I took a step backwards to take a step forward sort of speak and have never looked back.

What's changed over the years since you started off in the industry?

Thankfully most businesses have come full circle and have brought their development work back to the UK. And technologies have changed too; I started out writing most of my code in Java but now this has been replaced by .Net and other more

cutting edge technologies.

Also with the growth of SaaS businesses such as Kykcloud, the developer no longer simply implements other people's instructions but now has the opportunity to shape a product and provide their input on the best development approach. At Kykcloud we have the freedom to express ideas and implement these ideas in a way that is really refreshing.

The North East is gaining a bit of a reputation as a hotbed for software businesses, as an employee do you share this optimism?

For a long time we lagged behind other cities in the UK, but in recent years a number of cutting edge innovative tech businesses have set up in the region, many of whom, like Kykcloud, have quickly grown into international success stories. Without doubt, this has improved the opportunities for talented developers who want to stay in the region and the good job opportunities, coupled with a relatively low cost of living has also helped to attract software professionals to move to the North East.

So yes, it's fair to say I share the region's optimism.

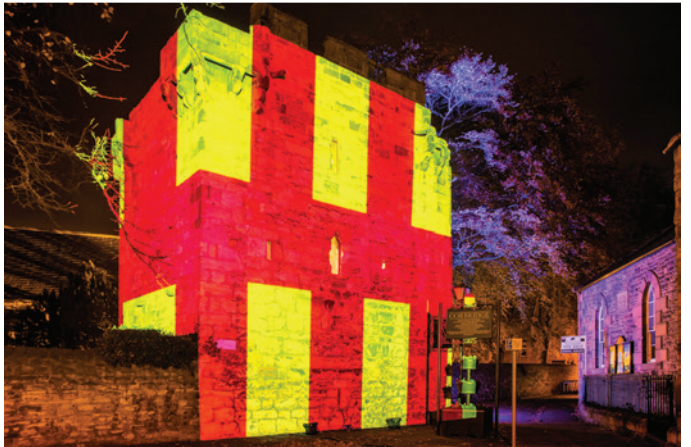
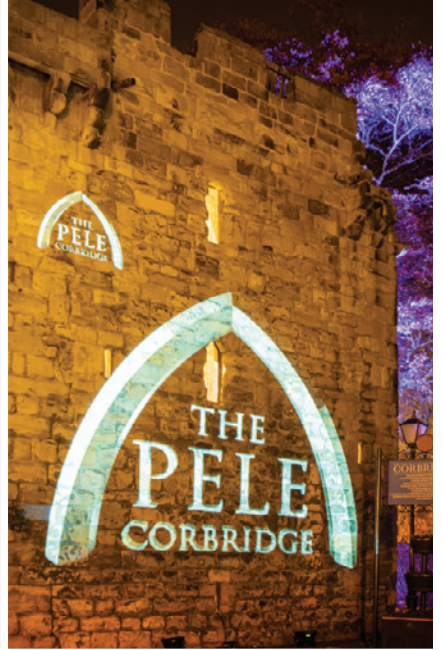
Anyone interested in finding out more about the opportunities available should contact careers@kykcloud.com



RELAUNCH OF THE CORBRIDGE PELE TOWER

To celebrate the opening of the Vicars Pele Tower in Corbridge, the building was lit up with a lumiere show which brought the building alive with light as well as images of past and present. Over 200 people attended the event on November 3rd which marked the official opening of the tower as a private events venue. Restoration work on the Pele Tower is now complete and has been transformed by new owners Shaun & Jane Cutler who were recently nominated for a Historic Angel Award.

They worked closely alongside Spence & Dower Architects and Historic England to ensure that the restoration did not detract from the heritage of the grade I listed national monument. As a result, the building is now an intimate licensed venue with a max capacity of 50 which is available for private hire functions throughout the year. The Tower retains almost all of its original features and character and as such, sensible footwear is advised!





Michael Grahamslaw meets

NEAL BAILEY

Headmaster of Mowden Hall School

What was your background prior to joining Mowden Hall School?

After working in charity investment management for 8 years, I escaped the clutches of the City to pursue a career in teaching. After spending a couple of years as a Maths, French and general sports teacher, I took on the role as Directeur of the Chateau de Sauveterre, a school in the South West of France where English pupils were totally immersed in French language and culture for a whole term. I remained in this unique post for 3 years before moving back to England in August 2014 when I assumed the pleasurable role of Headmaster at Mowden Hall.

What do you feel have been your major achievements at the school?

Since the day of my arrival I have been campaigning for the installation of an all-weather astroturf facility, on which pupils will be able to play hockey, football, tennis, to name a few, throughout the year. Whilst small amounts of fundraising have been gathered from past parents, the vast majority of the project has been funded by the Cothill Educational Trust. Building a development like this in the middle of the green belt was never going to be straight forward, so gaining planning permission on 1st September 2016 was a hugely exciting moment for myself, but ultimately the school.

Being part of the Cothill Educational Trust is not only reassuring, but also can be of enormous benefit to a school like Mowden Hall. Given my experience in other establishments within the Trust, I believe I have managed to strengthen the link between our schools and this has been accomplished through joint music events, sports tours and regular visits. I have also been

delighted with some key personnel changes including addressing the sports and boarding provisions, as well as successfully recruiting a new Deputy Head.

Can you highlight some key student accomplishments over the past 12 months?

I have been delighted that, so far, all leaving pupils in my two-year tenure have gone onto their first senior school of choice and no fewer than 18 pupils have achieved scholarships. These scholarships have ranged from academic, sport, art, drama, music and all rounder awards. Several boys have been selected to represent local and national rugby clubs and one girl was selected for the Under 14 England Rounders team.

What do you consider to be the most important aspect of education?

Of the many decisions in a parent's life, choosing the right school for a child is among the most important. Whether we like it or not, the world today is as much about knowledge, skills and competition, as it is about exploring, growth and fulfilment. Education is one of the key ingredients to shape, guide and even determine a young person's progress in life; so getting the decision right is a moment of pressure for all parents.

We place emphasis on the positivity of teacher-pupil interaction and the friendliness of pupils both to each other, but also to visitors. We are interested in gauging whether different pupils feel a sense of belonging in an equal way. A happy child who feels well supported and enjoys school will naturally be given the best possible chance to be resilient, confident and high achieving in life. This, therefore, defines

our primary objective and is surely the most important aspect of education.

Children learn by testing their limits. Learning is a lifelong process; it is a self-directed and self-paced journey of discovery. Learning unfolds in a vibrant and vigorous environment where pupil growth is cultivated and regularly nurtured. At Mowden we believe that if the children are going to discover their talents, explore their interests and pursue their passions, then they need to look up and beyond just the classroom. The purpose of learning is not to arrive at a particular level of proficiency on time. In fact, the journey never ends...

What are the Core beliefs of Mowden Hall?

Mowden is brave enough to enable its pupils to develop qualities such as inventiveness, creativity and open-mindedness. We say 'yes' to pupil initiatives without falling into the trap of a child-centered pursuit of education. We strongly believe that education does not start and stop at the classroom door. We are an independent school – so we therefore practice our independence. Whilst we are all aware of the National Curriculum and observe its guidance, we are not a slave to the rhythm. The staff actively promote curiosity, as here we believe the future belongs to the curious. Curiosity is the compass that leads us to our passions and interests. 'Challenge the teachers', we tell the pupils. 'Ask that question' that you have been dying to ask but did not know how to. One thing is for sure – curiosity will lead them down new paths and discoveries and it is the spark behind the spark of every great idea.

We work hard at boosting the children's confidence at Mowden. Confidence is such a complex, often misinterpreted word. It is full of nuance, often overlooked in the popular press. Confidence is a virtue. A skill. A feeling. A value, that is attainable by all. It is something earned and something learnt. It opens doors and opportunities way beyond that of exams and degrees. For us it is the most valuable commodity.

One way, and by no means the only way, of enhancing confidence here is through an experience of boarding. Whether the child is here throughout the week, just on a Tuesday night, or simply by being surrounded by the general environment that Mowden creates – we are confident it has a part to play in boosting a child's self-esteem. Boarding done well is a unique way to prepare young people to face the challenges of 21st Century life. It instills independence, problem solving and self-awareness amongst many other fine attributes. Ability on paper is just one of a broad spectrum of skills and qualities young people need to navigate a landscape in which there will be jobs, and ways of working, no one has yet even thought about. This is where the less tangible benefits of this type of environment come strongly to the fore.



How much emphasis do you place on extra-curricular activities?

Imaginative thought, creative responses and clear communication are skills that we foster. This helps to develop the children's character, build their confidence and create an essential route to self-expression. Children's self-esteem is enhanced by the greater opportunities now available to them. A more enlightened curriculum and extra curricular programme have made learning a much more interesting and diverse experience, and have provided so much in the way of individual confidence and collective endeavor.

We believe that the extra-curricular activities are hugely important and we, therefore, place great emphasis on them. At Mowden, every pupil has the ability to be creative. It is our obligation to unlock their creativity to enable pupils to develop qualities such as innovation, imagination and individuality. We can promote this through a diverse and enriching extra-curricular programme, specifically tailored to appeal to all children, regardless of their differing

likes and interests. Children cannot exhaust creativity – the more they use, the more they have.

What positive changes have you seen in education generally during your tenure?

Although external inspection has led towards a bureaucratic overload, it has undoubtedly contributed to a more caring and congenial environment. Emphasis can now allow us to pursue a family atmosphere and greater attention to each and every pupil. The boarding



demand will continue to be tested, so we will not be resting on our laurels. Pupils' confidence has been enhanced by the greater opportunities now available to them. A more enlightened curriculum and extra curricular programme have made learning a much more interesting and diverse experience, and have provided so much in the way of individual confidence and collective endeavor.

What changes would you like to see going forward?

There is ample space within a good school for scholarly teaching, but I believe it is the overall cultivation of mind, body and spirit that counts for most when we are still young. I imagine, and hope, there will be a continuing demand for a holistic education, where schools like Mowden will be in a position to benefit.

As sure as night follows day, so there will be changes in the educational world. One reason perhaps why some resist change is because they



focus on what they have to give up, instead of what they have to gain. I would argue that the secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

Where do you see yourself and the school in five years time?

In 5 years' time, I very much intend on continuing in my role as Headmaster of Mowden Hall, and I will be offering enormous dedication to ensure that it will still be in rude health. In spite of change, the magic at Mowden Hall that so many refer to and revel in will remain. This magic is intangible, but its presence is noticeable. My choices as Headmaster will reflect my hopes, not my fears. I believe that the only way to make sense out of evolution is to plunge into it, move with it and join the dance. Mowden Hall will continue to evolve and, with sufficient energy and enthusiasm from the pupil, parent and staff communities, I am confident it will remain one of the leading co-educational day and boarding prep schools in the north of England.

Away from the school how do you like to relax?

To relax, I normally exercise! There is nothing that clears my head more than either pounding the miles out on my road bike, or heading off for hours on my paddle board. I cherish the time I can spend with my wife, Nici, and 2 sons and am



very fortunate to be able to spend the school holidays with them at our home in South Devon, either creating dams in the streams, walking our dog over the wild countryside, or attempting a BBQ on a windy, wet beach....bliss!



NESMA SELECTED TO PILOT CIM'S TOP QUALIFICATION

Marketing is changing. Business is changing. Many managers are struggling to keep abreast of what is going on in their marketplace. They need to understand what their customers are doing and what they are likely to do in future.

Organisations are operating in a dynamic, often disruptive marketing environment. The qualifications and skills of ten, even five years ago are unlikely to prepare marketers to meet today's challenges.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) has developed a new qualification. This will equip experienced, senior marketers with the skills they need to lead their organisation to success.

The CIM's highest qualification is their new Marketing Leadership Programme. The education team based this programme on the findings of extensive global research.

CIM found that employers of large and small organisations want marketing directors who can identify what is driving the change needed for their business. They want a marketer who can be an advocate for leading change.

As a result of the research, the qualification has two compulsory modules. They are Contemporary Challenges and Leading Change. The candidate then chooses from one of two electives to complete the qualification, either Managing Business Growth

or Consultancy. Each module can be studied as a stand-alone award as well as part of the full diploma.

Veronica Swindale, Director of Newcastle based nesma, is enthusiastic about the new qualification. "From our experience of working with both students and their employers we are confident that this new Marketing Leadership programme will fulfil that need.

"I am proud that nesma has been selected as one of only seven teaching centres across the UK to pilot the new qualification. We have an enviable track record of achieving well above average pass rates, usually 100 per cent. As a result CIM has awarded nesma commendations for student performance at every exam round.

"This is not the first pilot qualification nesma tutors have been part of, confirming the consistent high level of our teaching. All our tutors are experienced practitioners who understand the pressures organizations are under. They can therefore support students throughout their studies.

"Our flexible approach means that students can plan their studies and assessments to suit their own work and personal commitments. Each module has three parts, focussing on the student's own organization. Students and their employers can identify where their priorities lie and use the learning to help the organisation implement the findings as their studies progress.

"The first cohort of students to take this new qualification will start in January 2017. It's a fantastic way to begin a new year and to create personal and organisational changes!"

nesma

BUILDING MARKETING KNOW-HOW

Start planning ahead!



To improve your marketing capabilities in 2017

We deliver a range of marketing, digital marketing and public relations training. nesma is the only study centre in the region to offer access to all three professional qualifications for the development of marketing and communication skills. In addition to our relaxed and friendly classroom style study classes, we also offer distance learning and a blended approach for most subject areas.

nesma delivers courses in Newcastle, Carlisle, Edinburgh, and in-house UK wide.

CIM

Accredited Study Centre

CIPR
ACCREDITED
TEACHING
CENTRE



DIGITAL
MARKETING
INSTITUTE



Talk to us about what you want to achieve.

T: 07900 223721 E: hello@nesma.co.uk

WWW.NESMA.CO.UK



ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Royal Grammar School or RGS as it is affectionately known in the North East, is a premier educational establishment for pupils in the region.

A co-educational institution since 2001, the independent school constantly acquires excellent reports from their independent body, overseeing the work of the school.

Dr. Bernard Trafford, current Headmaster of RGS hails from Somerset and has been in post for eight years. He is due for retirement in 2017 and is rightly proud of the ethos of the school, "Here at RGS we pride ourselves on the academic achievements we've always had but underpinning that is a pastoral outlook and extra-curricular programme which enhances the scholarly duty we have for pupils," he comments.

The school is well known for its prowess in sport and drama, indicating Dr. Trafford's assertion that well rounded individuals are created and sent out into many Universities or professional fields, with enquiring minds and the creative skills to make a real difference for the future.

2016 has been a year of consolidation for RGS and the process is underway to choose Dr. Trafford's successor. That

doesn't mean the school is resting on its laurels. Rather, they are planning for 2017 in the same intense fashion as always, to ensure RGS holds its enviable position in the educational domain.

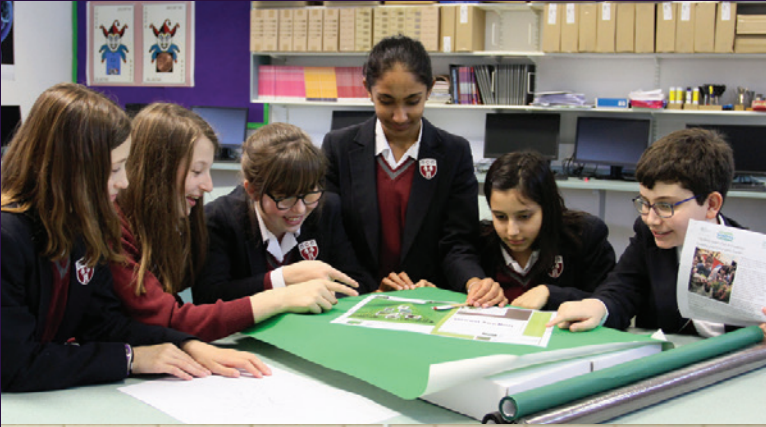
The school boasts 1320 pupils at this moment, putting great store behind a comfortable and happy environment for learning, "Today's modern teaching processes are stringent but at RGS we take very seriously the welfare and wellbeing of the young people in our charge," says Dr. Trafford, "Our pastoral services are in place and second to none, in order to ensure no pupil is overwhelmed or is under mental stress," he continues.

Parents can be secure in the knowledge, the pupils in RGS's care are treated with sound academic principle and individuality, established on good welfare criteria. This is particularly important when considering the more than 250 attendees at the junior school within RGS.

Royal Grammar School is recognised nationally as one of the premier educational establishments in the

country. It can trace its origins back to 1545 but many believe the school started much earlier. It's a happy place borne out by the attitude of staff and pupils alike, "I came here eight years ago and fell in love with the school and the North East in general; there was a feeling around the school of achievement, coupled with a comfortable learning environment. It's a Headmaster's dream; I have strived over the years to carry on that outlook and I am sure my successor will see the benefits of our comfortable, though achievement driven, atmosphere, and will want to continue that for the future, while bringing in his own methods," advises the present Headmaster.

Newcastle is fortunate to have such a respected school in its midst. Academically it has achievement second to none and the bewildering array of extra-curricular opportunities from drama to sport, music to community projects is staggering. RGS will continue to be recognised for its prowess.



Come and share our vision!

Nunnykirk

Centre of Excellence for Dyslexia

Mild-ASD, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia,
Dyscalculia and other needs

*"Young people **achieve academically**
and their
emotional well-being is paramount"*

OFSTED 03/16

Now booking places
for 2016-17
and
2017-18!

Email:
barryfrost.nunnykirk@gmail.com



Nunnykirk Hall
NE61 4PB

(01670) 772685

www.nunnykirk.school



LEARN ACHIEVE DEVELOP

The smart
choice for an
outstanding
education

ENTRANCE
ASSESSMENTS
Saturday
14th January 2017

REGISTER
NOW

Junior School
(boys aged 3 - 11)

Senior School
(boys aged 11-18)

For more information Tel: 0191 255 9300

www.newcastleschool.co.uk  

Junior School (ages 3-7), North Avenue, Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4DT

Junior School (ages 7-11), West Avenue, Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4ES

Senior School, The Grove, Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1NH



Newcastle Preparatory School

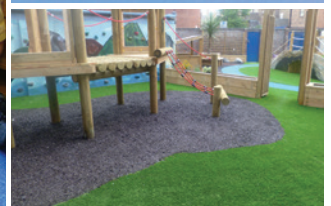
FOR GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 3 -11 YEARS

EST. 1885

A UNIQUE AND FORWARD LOOKING SCHOOL

NPS is an exciting and dynamic place where every individual is valued.

We encourage creativity and inspire life-long learning with children and adults working together to achieve so much.



Reaching potential is a way of life at NPS

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Coates. 6 Eslington Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4RH
Tel: 0191 281 1769 www.newcastleprep.co.uk

FINAL PHASE OF FUNDRAISING GETS UNDERWAY FOR GNAAS AT JENNINGS MOTOR GROUP



Raffle car generates more than 100,000 ticket sales for GNAAS
(l-r) Nas Khan with Andy Mawson-Senior Aircrew Paramedic, Philip O'Donnell-Aircrew Doctor, Jo Patterson-Aircrew Doctor, Bev Stephenson-PA, Jennings Motor Group and Rory Cunningham-Pilot, at Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Staff across Jennings Motor Group have been pulling out all the stops with a final fundraising push for their nominated charity, the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS).

Each year, the North East-based motor dealer group pledges its support to a local charity with the aim to raise as much money over the 12-month period.

The group operates Ford, Ford Direct, Kia, Mazda, SEAT and Mitsubishi branches, in addition to two Harley-Davidson® dealerships and a SUBWAY® store.

At the beginning of 2016, the group's managing director, Nas Khan, and his PA, Bev Stephenson, presented a cheque for the sum of £2,000 to kick-start fundraising for the Great North Air Ambulance Service, which provides air ambulance services across the North of England, including the North East, North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

The charity, which operates three helicopters, 365 days a year across its bases at Durham Tees Valley Airport and Langwathby, near Penrith, Cumbria, relies on donations and fundraising from local businesses and the general public.

Committed to supporting charities and the local community, Jennings Motor Group's managing director, Nas said: "We are delighted and immensely proud to have been able to support and work alongside the GNAAS with fundraising over the past 12 months.

"They are an exceptional team of dedicated and committed professionals."

Throughout the year, on-going fundraising has seen staff taking part in a variety of physical outdoor activities such as sponsored marathons, golfing events and clay pigeon shooting. There has also been a range of other activities taking place across the group's branch network with staff taking part in bake-offs, raffles, coffee mornings, pie and peas, as well as various other raffles and draws taking place to mark significant events across the year, including Valentine's, Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

Nas added: "The response from staff has been absolutely wonderful, everyone has done their bit whether it has involved taking part in a physical activity, organising an event at the dealership, or by just making a donation."

As well as a range of internal fundraising taking place, the motor dealer group also agreed to support the charity's sixth consecutive car raffle by donating a brand new Kia Rio.

The model worth £10,345, was up for grabs courtesy of the group's Stockton and Washington-based Kia dealerships.

The winner of the car raffle promotion, which has sold more than 100,000 tickets, is being announced this month.

Grahame Pickering, GNAAS chief executive, said: "The raffle has raised a six figure sum for the charity which is an astonishing amount. We couldn't have

done it without Jennings Motor Group. Nas and his team ought to be proud of what they have achieved – it's likely that lives will be saved as a result of this support."

In addition to supporting GNAAS, the motor dealer group is also continuing to raise funds for The Emaan Foundation, a registered charity set up by Nas Khan, following the devastating floods that took place in Pakistan in 2010.

Initially, the first phase of fundraising contributed towards providing essential life-saving aid in the aftermath of the disaster, in addition to constructing an entirely new village with livestock and a deep tube well providing clean water for the people of Rahim Yar Khan. Since completion of the village, which has been named The Emaan Village, a second appeal has been launched with the aim to build a new health centre that will provide essential medical treatment for residents.

This year has also seen the motor dealer group support The Salvation Army's annual Christmas Present Appeal for the 18th consecutive year.

Last year, Jennings Motor Group raised funds for Teesside Hospice, which provides specialist palliative care to people suffering from advanced cancer and other life limiting illness.

For more information about GNAAS, or to make a donation, visit www.greatnorthairambulance.co.uk

For information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Motor Group, visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk

JenningsFord - Contract Hire offers that really mean business



New Ford Fiesta 1.25 Zetec 3dr (82 PS)

- Metallic paint • 15" alloy wheels • Air conditioning
- Quickclear windscreen • Electric front windows
- Ford SYNC® with Emergency Assistance featuring Bluetooth® with voice control and USB connection

only **£132**+VAT
per month
with Ford Lease

Advance rental **£796.74**+VAT
followed by 35 monthly
rentals of **£132.79**+VAT

Business users only



New Ford Focus

1.0 EcoBoost Zetec 5dr (100 PS)

- Metallic paint
- 16" alloy wheels
- Air conditioning
- Ford Easy-Fuel capless refuelling system
- Quickclear windscreen
- Adjustable driver's seat lumbar support
- Electronic Stability Control (ESC)

only **£168**+VAT
per month
with Ford Lease

Advance rental **£1009.56**+VAT
followed by 35 monthly
rentals of **£168.26**+VAT

Business users only



New Ford Mondeo

2.0 TDCi Titanium 5dr (150 PS)

- Metallic paint
- SYNC3® with 8" colour touchscreen, Ford DAB navigation and Emergency Assist
- 18" alloy wheels • Automatic headlights
- Keyless entry • Lane keeping aid
- Parking sensors - front and rear
- Traffic sign recognition

only **£213**+VAT
per month
with Ford Lease

Advance rental **£1281.48**+VAT
followed by 35 monthly
rentals of **£213.58**+VAT

Business users only

**Get more from Jennings,
your local Business Partner**

- Minimum outlay, giving you improved cash flow • Additional credit line
- Tax efficient and VAT recovery benefits • Road Fund Licence included
- Fixed monthly rentals allow budgetary control • Reduced administration
- No residual value risk • No disposal or depreciation risk



Jennings
A drive for everyone

STOCKTON, Yarm Road. Call: 01642 632 200.

OPEN HOURS: Mon-Fri 9am-6pm.

www.JenningsMotorGroup.co.uk

Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) Ford Car range: Urban 48.7 - 23.54 (5.8-12.0), Extra Urban 64.2 - 34.87 (4.4-8.1), Combined 57.7 - 29.73 (4.9-9.5). Official CO₂ emissions 115-249g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Ford Lease Contract Hire is available to Business Users only, subject to status. Guarantees/indemnities may be required. Rentals shown based on a 6-0-35 non-maintained agreement (6 initial rentals up front followed by 35 rentals +VAT) with a mileage of 10,000 per annum. Subject to availability. Rentals must be made monthly. Prices exclude VAT. When the vehicle is returned it must be in good condition and not have exceeded the agreed mileage, otherwise further charges will be incurred. Prices are correct at the time of going to print and are subject to change without further notice. Terms and conditions apply. Ford Business Contract Hire is provided by ALD Automotive Ltd t/a Ford Lease, Oakwood Park, Lodge Causeway, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3JA. Cars not necessarily as illustrated. Certain categories of business users may be excluded. Offers end 31st December 2016. E&OE.

OUTBACK IS OUT FRONT

Have you had a ride into the Dales or the Borders lately? Head off the main road and you will spot a strange phenomenon; a swarm of Subaru cars.



The huntin', shootin', fishin' brigade love them for the simple reason that Subarus are tough, reliable and possess a go-anywhere capability. However, there's much more to the latest Subaru Outback. They also make terrific family cars and are ideal for local commutes or long holiday trips.

If you need a car that has excellent on-road manners yet can scramble across muddy fields, pull a horse box across wet grass or reverse a boat into a lake, then the Subaru Outback is worth a serious look. The self-levelling rear suspension makes it an ideal car for towing.

As with most Subaru models, the Outback comes with 4x4 transmission as standard. If you live in an area where wintry roads don't get gritted, the Outback will be a boon. Your engine choice is restricted to a 2.0 litre diesel (auto or manual) or 2.5 litre petrol (auto only). If you want low rev lugging power, go for the diesel. If you prefer refinement go for the petrol. Performance figures for both engines are very similar with 0-60 taking around 10 seconds

and a top speed in the region of 120mph. Economy is the big difference with the diesel 2.0D SE Premium (£30,995) with a manual ' box achieving 50mpg while the 2.5i SE Premium (£31,495) manages 40mpg.

Every Outback is well equipped with kit like sat nav, heated front seats, powered tailgate, powered windows, Bluetooth and USB connection. You also get a 5-year/100,000 mile warranty.

The big difference between this new Outback and its predecessor, is its on-road abilities. The previous version could be a bit floaty and fidgety, but now the ride is more controlled and slightly firmer. The interior quality has also moved up a gear. There's plenty of room for five adults and the boot will easily cope with a family holiday.

Speak to any Subaru owner and you will probably find that it's not their first one. If it is their first, then you'll generally discover that they love it. Go and try one; see what you're missing.

www.subaru.co.uk

THE ALL NEW SUBARU OUTBACK... OUT THERE...OUT NOW...



SUBARU



AVAILABLE AT...

DENNIS COMMON PART OF THE TUSTAIN MOTORS GROUP WEST ROAD GARAGE ROTHBURY ROAD LONGFRAMLINGTON NE65 8HX
01665 570542 WWW.DENNISCOMMON.CO.UK



OUT & ABOUT - KINGSTON UPON HULL

Stationmaster Alex Nelson has been suggesting places to go by train each month and for December, he takes a look around Kingston upon Hull.

The UK City of Culture project was born out of the success of Glasgow and Liverpool which were European Capitals of Culture in 1990 and 2008 respectively. The cultural buzz and economic momentum generated by these events inspired the Government to create the title "UK City of Culture".

The award is bestowed on a city in the UK every four years; the scale is national but the focus is truly local. First to secure the title was Derry-Londonderry in 2013, when Durham was not shortlisted. For 2017, no north-east city entered, and Hull won. On a recent visit to the city I picked up the 96-page brochure outlining the attractions and events for just the first three months of 2017.

Tony Todd, one of the Chester-le-Street station staff, and I were visiting the factory of Bemrose Booth Paragon which produces the majority of rail tickets throughout Great Britain. We arrived by train from York, although it is possible to reach Hull via Doncaster or Leeds as well, and passed under the spectacular Humber Bridge which, when completed in 1981, was the longest single-span suspension bridge in the world. I parked my luggage next to the statue of Philip Larkin, famous poet and son of Hull, whilst we were waiting for our host to arrive at Paragon station to pick us up. Hull lies upon the River Hull at its junction with the Humber



estuary, 25 miles inland from the North Sea, with a population of 257,710.

We were at the factory all day, so we missed the 3,500 fish, sharks and stingrays at The Deep, or learning about the City's heritage in any of the eight free museums (including the Streetlife Museum of Transport and the Spurn Lightship) nor could we take one of the trails that wind through the city and marvel at the cobbled streets of the Old Town. Additionally, two covered shopping arcades remain in the town centre: Hepworth Arcade, and Paragon Arcade.

The town of Hull was founded late in the 12th century. The monks of Meaux Abbey needed a port where the wool from their estates could be exported. The exact year the town was founded is not known but it was first mentioned in 1193.

Renamed Kings-town upon Hull by King Edward I in 1299, Hull has been a market town, military supply port, trading hub, fishing and whaling centre, and industrial metropolis. Hull was also an early theatre of battle in the English Civil Wars. Its 18th-century Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce, played a key role in the abolition of the slave trade in Britain, and it gained City status as Kingston upon Hull in 1897. The city is unique in the UK in having had a municipally owned telephone system from 1902, sporting cream, not red, telephone boxes.

Ferens Art Gallery has been closed for major refurbishment works. It reopens early in January. Admission to the Ferens Art Gallery, including the Children's Gallery, is free. It has a magnificent collection of paintings and sculptures and you can enjoy refreshments in the popular café, Venue Hull. It's a great place for children to show their creativity. With a regular programme of events, guided tours and changing exhibitions, there's always something new to explore. The gallery's permanent collection of paintings and sculpture spans artistic periods from medieval times to the present day. The collection includes European Old Masters, portraiture, marine paintings, and modern and contemporary British art. Highlights include masterpieces by Frans Hals, Antonio Canaletto and David Hockney. I think more visits to Hull will be called for in 2017.

Alex Nelson, Chester-le-Track trades at Chester-le-Street station (0191 387 1387) and Eaglescliffe (01642 200140). To contact Alex, phone/text 07860 953981 any reasonable time. www.nationalrail.com. For National Rail Enquiries call 24hr 08457 484950

GLOBAL SUPERSTAR JOINS LINE-UP AT METRO RADIO CHRISTMAS LIVE

The North East's biggest pop party on Friday 16th December just got bigger as global superstar John Legend will be joining the already impressive line-up of acts performing at the Metro Radio Arena.

Multiple Grammy Award winner John Legend will be flying in from Ohio to deliver modern classics including 'All of Me' and 'Ordinary People'.

2012 X Factor winner, James Arthur, will also take the stage before his 'Back from the Edge' tour commences next year. Fans will be sure to see him sing one of the biggest selling singles of the year, his number one hit 'Say you won't let go'. Louisa Johnson will also be treating the audience to songs from her new album 'So good'.

Commenting on the latest news, Event Promoter, Dom Munnely, said: "It is a great coup for us to secure John Legend. There can't be any event like this up here in the North East where you can see so many top performers all in one night."

The line-up so far also includes Olly Murs, who has recently released his eagerly anticipated 5th album '24 HRS', and Jonas Blue, who has taken the music industry by storm, with his pop and tropical house music hits.

Warming up the crowd on the night are the regional winners of The Big Audition, Craig Roddam from Durham and Danielle Brown from Newcastle.



ICONIC MUSICAL RETURNING TO SUNDERLAND

Flashdance – The Musical will return to the UK for the first time since 2011 and will arrive at Sunderland Empire 11-16 Sep 2017.

Audiences will be blown away with the astonishing musical spectacle of phenomenal choreography and an iconic score, including the smash hits "Maniac", "Manhunt", "Gloria", "I Love Rock & Roll" and the award winning title track "Flashdance - What a Feeling".

Flashdance – The Musical tells the inspiring and unforgettable story of 18 year old Alex, a welder by day and 'flashdancer' by night, who dreams of going to the prestigious Shipley Dance Academy and becoming a professional dancer. When a romance complicates her ambitions, she harnesses it to drive her dream.

Based on the Paramount Pictures film, Flashdance is an inspiring musical about the power of holding onto your dreams and love against all odds.



STRICTLY SET TO WALTZ INTO NEWCASTLE

Presenter and singer Louise Redknapp, model Daisy Lowe and actor Danny Mac are the first celebrity contestants announced to appear on the 10th anniversary Strictly Come Dancing Live UK Tour. The show will arrive at Metro Radio Arena for 2:30pm and 7:30pm performances on Tuesday 24th January.

Louise, Daisy and Danny will join new tour host Anita Rani and the new live tour judging panel of Len Goodman, Craig Revel Horwood and former Strictly professional dancer Karen Hardy for the 30 date live arena tour extravaganza.

Louise Redknapp first rose to fame as part of the pop group Eternal before embarking on a successful solo career. She said: "I really can't wait to dance my way around the UK!"

Daisy Lowe is one of fashion's most recognizable faces, having worked with Chanel, Vivienne Westwood and Burberry. She said: "I'm so lucky to be joining the tour and keeping my Strictly dream alive. Roll on January!"

Danny Mac, best known as Mark 'Dodger' Savage in Hollyoaks, has been acting since the age of 10. He said: "I've heard how amazing the live tour is and I can't wait to get out there!"



the customs house
arts and entertainment for all

Box Office: (0191) 454 1234
Mill Dam South Shields NE33 1ES
www.customshouse.co.uk

"LET YOUR EVENT TAKE CENTRE STAGE"

Weddings, Conferences & Events





THE KILL FEE

by Fiona Veitch Smith

Local novelist, Fiona Veitch Smith returns with her second work of detective fiction after the runaway success of her delightful debut, *The Jazz Files*. Following on from the events of the first novel, Poppy Denby's star is on the rise. Now the arts & entertainment editor at The Daily Globe, Poppy covers an exhibition of Russian art at the Crystal Palace. A shot rings out, leaving a guard injured and an empty pedestal in place of the largest fabergé egg in the collection. Once more, Poppy is plunged into the murky waters of political intrigue. Steeped in flapper girls, scandal and jazz age glitterati, *The Kill Fee* is a potent mix of history, mystery and sharp observation. A great thriller for the festive period and every bit as good as her initial offering.

TUNNEL OF LOVE

by Martin Hardy

Penned as a follow up to the acclaimed *Touching Distance*, Martin Hardy's *Tunnel of Love* is another study in the heartache of being a Newcastle United Supporter. Beginning with the marquee signing of Alan Shearer in 1996, *Tunnel of Love* reflects on a dramatic 13 year period following Newcastle's near title winning campaign in 1995/96. It takes in unforgettable nights at St James' Park- the beating of Barcelona and the apparent taming of Manchester United. Although by its conclusion, Newcastle are fighting to remain in the Premier League as they head to Villa Park on the final day of the 2008/09 season. As any reader of The Sunday Times will testify, Hardy possesses a masterful knowledge of the beautiful game which is something that translates well into these pages. The perfect gift for Christmas.



RECORD OF THE MONTH -

THE ROLLING STONES 'BLUE & LONESOME'



On 2nd December, The Rolling Stones are set to release their first studio album in 11 years. "Blue & Lonesome" marks a desire to return to their roots in blues music and is a tribute to their formative years as a young blues band in London.

No tracks have been penned by The Glimmer Twins themselves as the album instead features cover versions of tracks by Jimmy Reed, Little Walter and Howlin' Wolf to name but a few.

Recorded over the course of just 3 days in December 2015, the album aims to capture the spontaneity which defines their live performances with old friend and fellow Blues maestro Eric Clapton joining the band on two of the twelve tracks. And, if recent singles "Just your fool" and "Hate to see you go" are anything to go by, it's set to be a real corker!

What's on this December?

James and the Giant Peach

December 1 – 31

Northern Stage T: (0191) 230 5151
www.northernstage.co.uk

Jack and the Beanstalk

December 1- January 7

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234
www.customshouse.co.uk

Cinderella

December 1 – January 15

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatroyal.co.uk

Beauty and the Beast

December 2-30

Tyne Theatre T: (0844) 2491 000
www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk

Elton John

December 3

Metroradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

The Human League

December 4

Newcastle City Hall T: (0191) 277 8030
www.newcastlecityhall.org

Madness

December 8

Metroradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

Sleeping Beauty

December 9 -31

Sunderland Empire T: (0191) 566 1040
www.atgtickets.com

The Bootleg Beatles

December 10

Newcastle City Hall T: (0191) 277 8030
www.newcastlecityhall.org

Metroradio LIVE

December 16

Metroradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

The 1975

December 17

Metroradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

Jools Holland

December 20-21

Newcastle City Hall T: (0191) 277 8030
www.newcastlecityhall.org

Lindisfarne

December 22-23

Newcastle City Hall T: (0191) 277 8030
www.newcastlecityhall.org

Stand By Me

December 29

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com



the customs house
arts and entertainment for all

Box Office: (0191) 454 1234
Mill Dam South Shields NE33 1ES
www.customshouse.co.uk

"MORE THAN JUST A THEATRE"

THEATRE • CINEMA • RESTAURANT
EVENTS • GALLERY





IN CONVERSATION WITH...

Mary Ann Rogers

OWNER OF MARY ANN ROGERS GALLERY

Tell us a little about your background, did you always have artistic tendencies growing up?

I am one of five children, brought up in Newcastle, but very lucky to spend all our weekends and holidays on the Northumberland coast, where I developed a passion for nature, everything from birds, cows, flowers and trees to things found in rock pools. I learned to draw, and used it to record what I saw. No trip would be complete without a sketchbook.

Who would you say are your main influences?

My art education is negligible, and I have never spent much time in art galleries, preferring the great outdoors, and learning about animals, how they move, eat, move etc.

My mother was a huge influence - she encouraged us to be creative as part of everyday life rather than something special or unusual. She was very good at drawing, and I recall writing stories, and she drew the pictures to go with them for me. We were encouraged to look, whether it was at waves, rocky cliffs, birds or farm animals - this was a very good habit to get into!

Following on from the likes of David Shepherd and Beryl Cook, receiving the "best selling published artist" award from the Fine Art Guild was a momentous achievement. What did that mean to you?

I still find it surprising that people hand over hard earned cash for something I have described on paper, so to discover the sheer volume of interest in my work was astonishing. It seems that there is a distinctiveness about my work, which I can only put down to the fact that I have followed my own instincts, discovered techniques and methods of using my chosen medium that mean I can describe, with an honesty and an immediacy, the subjects that interest or fascinate me.

Although my background is in closely observed, accurate drawing, I use watercolour to its fullest potential to convey a sense of movement, or fleeting light, or humour.

Watercolour is the most wonderful medium. The

pigment behaves in very different ways when water is added, and it travels across the paper in ways which can't be predicted. There is almost an alchemy to the process which is intensely exciting, and frequently leads to work which has an added dimension.

What are you currently working on?

This is the season of dramatic, breathtaking skies, vicious showers, colder weather and startling colours.

It is only in the later months of the year that I am compelled to paint the landscape, in particular, the hills and valleys I am very familiar with, where traces of generations of peoples are etched onto the landscape, in the form of features like iron-age forts, Roman settlements, ancient forms of farming and more recently, forestry and drainage. The low, winter sunlight brings these features out, and are incorporated in the paintings I am currently working on.

You've got some lovely gift ideas out for Christmas. Tell us a little bit about those?

Among all the lovely people I have come to know through my work are bankers and financial journalists, so back in 2007, when they all spoke of a financial downturn that would hit the people of the north east particularly hard, with such a high percentage working indirectly for the government, it occurred to me that people would be heading for a hard time ahead, and Christmas would be particularly difficult.

At the time, there was nothing available inbetween a card, for £1.50, and a small, mounted print, for about £50, so we came up with a small, affordable range of gift ideas including bone china mugs, calendars, printed aprons and bags. They proved extremely popular, and over the years the range has been added to each year and now include mens trunks, rubber stampers, scarves and even towelling robes with embroidered motifs!

How does the business side of things compare to the artistic?

My personal belief is that a creative mind is capable of adapting to whatever problem it is

faced with. Artists are a type of engineer, working out how to convey the idea, solving problems along the way. Running a business is simply another problem, which requires creative ways to solve the problems. I find it quite an interesting 'foil' to the much simpler problems faced by painting, which comes quite naturally, like eating and sleeping!

What motivates you?

Different things at different times motivate me in terms of what subjects I paint. It might be the way the light falls over the hillside opposite the house, or a moment's view of a hare at full tilt running across the field when disturbed by me walking the dogs, but I have a general sense of urgency that has something to do with knowing this is a short life, and I feel my best work is yet to come. I am reminded of a quote from my cello teacher, quoted to him, when asked about a wonderful performance. The answer was 'the more I practice, the better my performances get'.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

I would not give any specific advice to my younger self apart from just the one thing, which is to keep your integrity, and always be honest in your work.

What does the future hold?

2017 will bring some changes to the business side of things, as we shall be taking all the distribution of prints, cards and gifts 'in-house'. This will begin with a launch at the Spring Fair at the NEC, Birmingham in February, and is very exciting. It will mean taking on more staff, with responsibility for distribution, credit control etc. Although this will mean more responsibilities for me, I very much hope it won't mean more work, and I'll be able to delegate!

My work is a narrative of my life, and takes the viewer through the landscape of the places where I spend my time, the animals and birds that are part of my everyday life, and a whole lot more which result from so many of the encounters made along the journey.



For more information visit www.marogers.com

2016 - WHAT AN AMAZING YEAR AT COMMISSION AN ARTIST!



We are celebrating another great year at Commission an Artist, and I'm delighted to report that we have really stepped up the pace with our commissions. As we drive into the Christmas period full steam ahead with art commissions on Santa's list, it's a great time to reflect on the brilliant work we have done this year. The ideas didn't come from us of course, they came from you and we feel very privileged to be part of your special piece of artwork, created especially for you.

We wanted to share some of these with you, as we would need the whole magazine to let you see all of them! Did you also know that we have a great process for completing these commissions, where for starters your money stays in an escrow account until the artwork is completed. The process works very well and we have very happy customers, with not one single complaint since we launched.

2016 Completed Commissions

Sculpture for a ball at Cambridge University: We are looking for an artist who could produce a sculpture which shows the head and shoulder of a man/woman and looks like they are bursting out of the ground. We were hoping the final sculpture would be 2.5/3 metres wide.

Sculpture for Public Health Award: We are a public health charity which are developing an award based on partnerships between other public health organisations and projects in local communities. We would like to commission a small sculpture which represents partnership in public health as the prize for receiving this award.

Rave Cards Collage: I'd love to have a large montage of over 100 flyers from 20 years ago.

I'm not too fussed if some are cut up and overlap each other etc. I'm just keen to get my favourites together on one, what could be, huge montage.

Pokemon Scene: I am looking for an oil painting of a scene from the original Pokemon game as a birthday present for my boyfriend. I know this is a strange request, and was wondering if this was at all possible.

Painting of a Horse and Rider in an action shot from a showjumping event: This is a painting of my wife 20 years ago and I would love to recapture the moment for her.

Tattoo Design of Heart: I would like to get a tattoo in the near future, I have a great idea but I can't draw it. My idea is a heart that is captured with strings and black arrows are shooting the heart free. Its a line from Billy Talents "White Sparrows".

Painting of Wedding Clothes: I'm getting married 3rd September, I would like an A2 canvas of my fiancée's wedding dress (her sister or mum will provide a photo of this) and my suit (I can provide a photo of this) as a wedding present from me to her. Maybe a Beatles reference 'with love from me to you' or 'can't buy me love' set behind the dress and suits profile.

Digital Images of Catering Kiosks: We are looking for digital images to be created for use on the side of catering kiosks. We are looking for ideas for external and internal decor.

We wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year

Commission an Artist are professional and experienced project managers, so to get them involved visit www.commissionanartist.co.uk

www.twitter.com/uk_artists

www.facebook.com/commissionanartist

**Commission
an artist**

A CUSTOMS HOUSE PRODUCTION

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

The Little Panto with the Big Heart

Hays Travel

Tickets
from
£9.75

**November
29th 2016 -
January
7th 2017**

Box Office: 0191 454 1234
Group Bookings: 0191 427 8183
www.customshouse.co.uk

The Customs House, Mill Dam, South Shields, NE33 1ES



the customs house
arts and entertainment for all



AUCKLAND - THE HARD WAY

BY TRAVEL WRITER, KEN SPEAREN

Following a gruelling 28-hour journey with BA/Qantas from Newcastle Airport to Auckland, New Zealand via Heathrow and Los Angeles, we finally arrived in Auckland for a three day stop over before boarding Cunard's Queen Elizabeth en route as part of its world tour. Although a well meant gesture by a local travel agent who thought he was doing me a big favour by circumnavigating the world as "not a lot of people have actually done that" (oh really?), I would have gladly paid anything to get off even with the added comfort of business class flights.

Having never visited Auckland before, we set about some serious sightseeing but not before getting the feeling back into our bruised derrieres. The time difference (+12 hours GMT) initially slowed us down somewhat but we quickly became acclimatised thanks to the amazing recuperative powers of New Zealand's famous Sauvignon Blanc. It worked for us anyway.

From my pre-trip research, apparently it was the Māoris who were the first people to arrive in New Zealand from the Polynesian Islands around 1,000 years ago. Dutchman Abel Tasman was the first European to see New Zealand following his previous discovery of Van Diemens Land (now Tasmania) but it was the British who

actually claimed NZ for their Commonwealth Empire in 1840, when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the British Crown and the Māoris. British law was quickly adopted and the founding document remains an important part of the country's history. This hugely popular tourist attraction is still housed in the building where the treaty was signed over 170 years ago. Auckland is a major city in the north Island of New Zealand and has a population of just over a million people. It is based around two large harbours. The central part of the urban area occupies a narrow isthmus between the Manukau Harbour on the Tasman Sea and the Waitemata Harbour on the Pacific Ocean. It is

one of the few cities in the world to have two harbours on two separate major bodies of water.

On central Queen Street, the iconic Sky Tower has views of Viaduct Marina (the home of the America's Cup in 2000 and 2003) which is full of super yachts and trendy bars and cafes.

Auckland Domain, the city's oldest park is situated on an extinct volcano and home to the more formal Winter Gardens. The pristine Mission Bay Beach is also just minutes from downtown and very popular on a weekend. By contrast, the South Island has a mix of beautiful sunny beaches and the most amazing craggy mountain ranges where some of the Lord of the Rings trilogy was filmed.



Auckland has a rich and fascinating history reflecting a unique fusion of Māori and European cultures. It offers great seafood, wine and shopping opportunities at reasonable prices and on our three days based there, we tested, tasted, enjoyed and examined all we could in the time available but it was simply not enough to do it justice. The highlight of all the tourist attractions was the Sky Tower. At 328 metres high and with supersonic, ear-popping lifts, it is the tallest man-made structure in the Southern Hemisphere. Unassumingly located on a street corner in the city centre, the Sky Tower is an observation and telecommunications tower that attracts over 1,000 visitors per day. The upper portion of the tower boasts two restaurants and

a café. It has three observation decks at different heights providing amazing 360-degree views of the city. The main observation level at 186m has 38mm (1.5 in) thick glass flooring giving a view straight down to the ground. It's one of those places where your brain refuses to do as it is told and you find yourself rooted to the spot and unable to move. I have a great video of my wife feeling her way across it with her eyes tightly shut which totally defeated the object of the exercise. Is it me?

The tower also features the Sky Jump, a 192-metre jumping platform from the observation deck, during which free-falling speeds of 53 mph are achieved. That said, jumpers are attached to a cable to prevent them from colliding with the

tower in the event of high winds - which is most of the time. We watched people with some kind of death wish pushing their luck to the limit. My reasoning of the situation quickly went past "how" to "why"?

It is also used for the Amazing Race (similar to our Iron Man contest) where competing teams use the tower's exterior maintenance ladders to climb from the sky deck to the red light at the top of the structure itself before completing a Sky Jump and continuing the race at another location. What? Exhausted by just watching the training regime of some of its contestants, we opened another bottle of Sauvignon Blanc. In my opinion, it is the only sensible way to fly unaided.

SAMSON AVIATION

The name may not be instantly familiar but Samson Aviation have been operating their executive private jet facility at Newcastle Airport for years, the airport purchasing the company in 2008 as a private jet facility or FBO.



It's a company which has an enviable reputation in a number of areas, from its traditional executive operations for the likes of sports teams, celebrities and business travellers, to military aircraft and handling aircraft for airshows, as well as their medical facilities teams.

Mix of passengers are therefore diverse, from VIP's, through to military flights under 70 ton, handling crews and passengers, to medical teams, which handle transplant units, organ transportation, to casualties from other parts of the UK, who need treatment at Newcastle's specialist medical facilities.

One area which is perhaps not so well known is their charter flight services. For anyone seeking a specialist flight to any destination globally, this service is both comprehensive and surprisingly less expensive than might be first thought.

All services are provided for these flights, from catering, documentation processing to greeting and advisory services. The most important aspect of Samson's dealings with famous or sensitive clients is the fact that the company and its employees are usually unknown to them. Facilitating smooth, uninterrupted service is Samson's credo.

Confidentiality is key to Samson's operations, their security procedures second to none when handling sensitive travellers or military movements. It's something which the company prides itself in, being recognised within the specialist passenger community for their circumspection and attention to requirements. Everything is on a 'need to know' basis, so only those staff with direct reason to be involved in a flight, will have access to sensitive information.

Paula Ives is Operations Manager of Samson, "To give an example of other services we can offer to clients, it's probably good to talk about the shooting season. From the glorious 12th of August, through to January, the shooting fraternity arrive from destinations overseas; Samson will ensure their paperwork for weapons is current and up to date, we take that need from their shoulders and there are countless other examples of diverse things we can offer to clients," she says.

Taking things a step further, the company will pass on information to immigration. Depending on nationality or destination clients have arrived from, Samson may be able to get them pre cleared or present them for processing, although they will not have to stand in line for that processing.

It comes down to smooth transition for clients. Samson are not an operator of aircraft themselves, their expertise comes from handling aircraft, passenger, crew, and ancillary baggage handling and documentation. Where their medical teams are concerned, the operatives are multi discipline trained and that means whatever the medical calling, it can be satisfied promptly.

Reputation is the key factor for Samson. A testimonial about the company to friends, business associates or colleagues ensures new business continues to flow in, keeping the company at the forefront of their industry.

The name Samson, might not be widely known in the North East business community but what the company can offer in handling, chartering and supervising executive travel, certainly should be.

Samson is first class in chartering private jet aircraft to local businesses for general national and global business trading or to transport company employees to meetings and a variety of other duties. It's a service within the budget of many companies and with the speed of travel and the comfort factor, employees will arrive ready to face the rigours of the day.

For more information, visit: samsonaviation.com

Suffering from spiralling travel costs and lost productivity?

Kick start 2017 with a FREE* 'travel health check' and get your business travel back on track. Let us:

- Review your policies and procedures
- Identify areas of inefficiency
- Recommend ways to reduce time and cost
- Simplify the complexity of business travel

The new half day 'travel health checks' are part of Travel Bureau's corporate service, which offers 55 years' experience in travel planning and management. Arrange yours today. Call Travel Bureau on 0191 285 0346 or email consulting@travelb.co.uk.

Travel Bureau

69 High Street, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 4AT
0191 285 0346 consulting@travelb.co.uk www.travelbcorporate.com

Corporate Travel

Luxury Holidays

Cruises

Honeymoons

*T&C'S APPLY



It's time to pipe in the Haggis and pay tribute to the great Robert Burns, as we celebrate this special occasion with our very own Medieval Burns' Banquet & Ceilidh in the Barons Hall.

Lumley Castle presents...
BURNS' NIGHT
Friday 27th January 2017

Wine, Feasting & Merriment...

£41.50pp

Evening Includes:

- Four Course Banquet
- Dram of Whisky to toast the Haggis
- Entertainment by the Lords & Ladies of the Court and Lumley Castle's Piper
- Two Goblets of Wine, Two Goblets of Mead
- Ceilidh & Disco
- Ye Baron's Borde

More information on our website.



LUMLEY CASTLE
no ordinary hotel



Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester Le Street, County Durham, DH3 4NX. Tel: 0191 389 1111 banquets@lumleycastle.com www.lumleycastle.com

MAJOR MULTIPLE ACQUISITION AUGMENTS GROWTH FOR NORTH EAST LEISURE GROUP



Cairn Group Finance Director Richard Warren, HSBC's Anna Gregory, Deloitte's Stephen Hall, Cairn Group Director Neeraj Handa and Mincoff's John Nicholson

A leading North East Leisure group has announced the major acquisition of five hotels across the UK against a list price of £75 million, a move which is set to significantly expand the company's reach across the UK.

Newcastle-based hotel and bar operator Cairn Group has successfully acquired five properties in County Durham, Stirling, Harrogate, Cardiff and Brighton, adding 665 rooms to its now 3,000 room portfolio.

It is the biggest hotel acquisition by a North East company this year, allowing the family-owned business to employ over 3,000 staff.

The acquisition includes County Durham's Redworth Hall Hotel, The Old Ship

Hotel in Brighton, The Angel Hotel in Cardiff, The Majestic Hotel in Harrogate, and The Stirling Highland Hotel; all of which are of high quality and boast prime locations and rich heritage.

This most recent acquisition marks the Group's third of 2016, following a £101m refinance deal completed in May.

Mincoffs Solicitors LLP and HSBC Bank plc have supported Cairn Group on the lucrative acquisition of the business. Mincoffs also oversaw Cairn Group's successful acquisition of 11th century, grade II-listed property, The Parish bar in York in August, and the purchase of Stoke Place in January.

AWARD-WINNING SPA OFFERS A WINTER TREAT...



Couples looking for a pre-festive break can enjoy a gift of an offer from a leading North East hotel.

Ramside Hall Hotel, Golf and Spa near Durham has created a Winter Indulgence package, allowing guests to sample its first class facilities with a special overnight stay.

Visitors who book will enjoy a stay in a Premier Room, a two course dinner in the hotel's acclaimed Fusion Asian restaurant and a spa brunch the following morning.

The package, only £199 a couple, includes full access to the spa facilities which boast five pools, a thermal suite, sleep sanctuary and a state-of-the-art gym.

Couples will also be able to enjoy a private mud Rasul therapy for two, which involves a range of nourishing muds that can be applied to the body, face and hair before being washed off under a monsoon rain shower.

CHARITY BALL RAISES RECORD AMOUNT FOR PREMATURE BABIES

Guests at a charity ball have raised a record of £22,441 to help premature and sick babies in the North East.

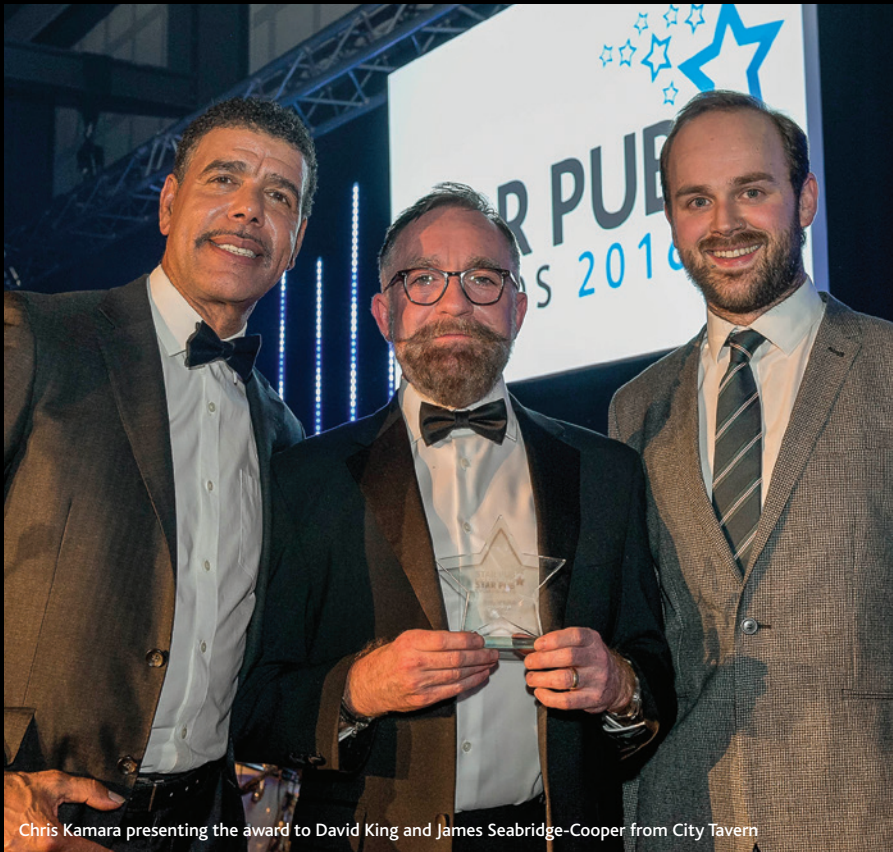
212 guests competed to outbid each other on unique auction and 'money can't buy prizes' at the Tiny Lives Charity Ball, held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Newcastle.

Hosted by Heart drive time radio presenter Tom Campbell, the annual event raises money so Tiny Lives can continue to support families at a really critical time in their lives.

The live auction started with sporting memorabilia prizes from the charity's patron Jonny Wilkinson. Other prizes included overnight stays at Close House, Matfen Hall and Linden Hall and the chance to become a ball boy or girl at Newcastle United.

The Tiny Lives Trust is a registered charity that helps to care for premature and sick newborn babies and their families in the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) of the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle.





Chris Kamara presenting the award to David King and James Seabridge-Cooper from City Tavern

NEWCASTLE PUB NAMED BEST FOR CASK IN NATIONAL AWARDS

A leading North East pub has once again beaten off competition from around the country to be named the country's Best Cask Ale Pub.

City Tavern, Northumberland Road, Newcastle, has been announced the winner in the national annual awards run by Heineken-owned Star Pubs & Bars, beating more than 1100 other venues.

Licensee David King received the prestigious award at a gala celebration night in Liverpool from football legend and broadcaster Chris Kamara.

The pub scored full marks for the quality and range of its ten cask beers including its two house ales, City Tavern Ale and Bar Hound Gold Ale.

The judges singled out City Tavern's 35 staff for their "remarkable" cask ale knowledge and commended David for his investment in training. They loved all the 'little touches' in City Tavern that educate customers about the cask range, from display jars showing each beer's colour to the provision of free samples to customers deciding which beer to choose.

AWARD-WINNING LOCAL HAIRDRESSER JOINS PAUL BRYAN SALON

Jesmond-based Paul Bryan Salon have strengthened their team by appointing James Fitzakerly as General Manager.

An immensely popular figure on the local Hairdressing scene, James, formerly of The Sandyford Salon, brings with him a raft of experience and a unique set of customer service skills. During his tenure in Sandyford, James won a string of awards and built up a loyal following of regulars in the process. Now in his latest venture, James is looking forward to welcoming customers old and new to the chic city salon and remains passionate about delivering bespoke hair tailoring to those in the area. Established in 1994, Paul Bryan have been providing exceptional consultations for over two decades. Their range of specialist services include cutting, restyling, colouring, wedding hair & make up treatments alongside a host of other beauty packages. By placing the customer at the centre of everything they do, both James and the Paul Bryan team share similar core values and are set to be the perfect fit for each other in the months and years ahead.



INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS SHORTLISTING FOR NEWCASTLE FIRM



The Newcastle-based interior design, architecture and visualisation studio, Dakota House of Design (Dakota), has been shortlisted for an international industry award for its project 'Soho' in Basel, Switzerland.

The Dakota team works extensively in the hospitality, leisure and residential sectors and with major brands such as Premium Country Pubs, Best Western Hotels and the European casinos belonging to Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

They began working on Soho, a bar situated on Steinenforstadt, one of Basel's busiest

pedestrianised streets, at the end of 2015.

The company's appointment came about when Arton Krasniqi of Gastro Basel seen and liked many of Dakota's past projects in Europe and London. His brief was to create a modern twist on a classical theme within a former three-storey shoe shop.

Now, only three months after its official launch, Dakota's managing director, Peter Hodgson, is thrilled to discover that his company is one of only six finalists in the iDogi 2016 International Architecture and Design Awards.



Come on board for great PR

@HighlightsPR

www.highlightspr.co.uk • 07814 397951





KICK OFF YOUR BOOTS APRÈS-SHOPPING AT THE BOTANIST

City centre pub and restaurant The Botanist has unveiled an outdoor après-ski bar set within its roof terrace, which has been transformed with a classic Nordic ski resort theme, complete with log cabins, for Newcastle shoppers and revellers alike.

Visitors can expect all sorts of alpine paraphernalia to adorn the walls whilst the enclosed garden shed-like areas have been made to look like snowy, mountain-bound wooden chalets.

The bar boasts outdoor heating and unrivalled views over Grey's Monument, Grey Street and the International Christmas Market – a perfect spot from which to watch the world go by below.

For a winter warmer, the bar team are serving up mulled wine and hot spiced cider alongside its extensive cocktail and ale offering.

The Botanist ski shack terrace officially launched on the evening of Thursday 3 November and will run until early January. It can also be booked for private functions in part or fully.





Slaley Hall

The perfect place to say I do.....



SLALEY HALL

Northumberland

YOUR wedding vows are among the most important words you will ever say, which is why the scene needs to be perfectly set.

One thing we are passionate about is making your day as special as it can be, which is why we vow to give it our full attention.



Uniquely Yours wedding package from only
from £5499

- * 60 day guests
- * 3 Course wedding breakfast
- * Welcome drink, 2 glasses of wine, sparkling wine for your toast
- * Freshly ground tea and coffee with chef treats
- * 90 Evening guests
- * Moonlight munchies
- * DJ, Dance floor and stage
- * Room hire for your wedding breakfast & evening reception

Slaley Hall, Hexham, Northumberland. NE47 0BX 01434 676508
Slaleyweddings@Qhotels.co.uk

WINES FOR THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

Christmas means lots of different things to different people, but somewhere down the line there is going to be a celebratory meal or two and with it perhaps some wine. Over the next few weeks we will be asked umpteen times "What to drink with the Christmas Dinner?" so here are a few thoughts for the wines to have on Christmas day.

Thought number one is to drink what you enjoy. Certainly, some wines are particularly suited to certain dishes but if you don't like that style of wine then don't drink it – go for something else that you do enjoy, even if the "experts" disagree!

The best way to start off the celebrations is with a glass of fizz. Champagne is still at the top of the list for celebrations and whilst it is delicious it can be expensive and is often quite heavy so perhaps an alternative that is lighter in style and lighter on the pocket is no bad thing. For the last few years the popularity of Prosecco has increased hugely and this is the ideal Christmas morning fizz if you don't want the expense of Champagne – light and fresh.

Smoked salmon is a very popular starter for the Christmas meal but it can be a tricky food to match with wine – the oily richness can make a very dry white wine taste rather metallic. Try a richer white, perhaps a simple white Burgundy, Saint-Véran is great, or my own personal favourite, the

delicious Sancerre "Grande Cuvée" from Domaine Jean-Paul Balland that takes Sancerre to the next level. If you're feeling a shade adventurous go for an Alsace Gewürztraminer, these are wines with great character, full of rich, spicy flavours (some say lychees) and a wonderfully mouth-filling texture that is a fine match to the richness of the fish.

Turkey is still the number one bird for most of us and it provides a wide range of possible wine choices. As a general guide go for either a fairly rich white to stand up to all the trimmings or a lighter red. New World Chardonnay does a very good job for a white and the lovely, elegant wines of Fleurie in Beaujolais are ideal as a red.

Goose and duck are also seasonal favourites and here again it is the fatty richness of the bird that presents the challenge. I would always go for a red, but nothing too hefty. Pinot Noir is an excellent match – the fresh acidity and elegant fruit cutting through the richness of the bird. Burgundy is the

classic home of the Pinot Noir with great wines like Gevrey-Chambertin and Nuits-Saint-Georges, but again the New World Pinots are a brilliant match, especially those from New Zealand's Central Otago, Australia and California.

If you are going for beef or game for the main event then look for a fuller style red. Claret from Bordeaux is great as are the rich reds of the Rhône Valley or maybe a fine Rioja from Spain. The New World is also great for these style, especially a big Aussie Shiraz.

To finish the meal off it tends to be Christmas Pudding, full of rich and spicy fruit that needs an equally robust wine to stand up to it. The sweet Muscat de Beauges de Venise is great as is its red cousin from Banyuls, or how about a glass of intensely sweet Pedro Ximénez (PX), perfect with the pudding or a slice of Christmas cake.

Whatever you choose I hope you have a wonderful time!

Further information about the aforementioned wine can be found at www.richardgrangerwines.co.uk or instore at Richard Granger Fine Wine Merchants, West Jesmond Station, Lyndhurst Avenue, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 3HH



CHRISTMAS

WITH ADDED

Sparkle



FESTIVE DINING

Leave the prep and washing up to us this year while you catch up with friends and family and really enjoy the festive season.

FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA

£18.95

PER PERSON

CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY LUNCH

£62.95 **£25.00**

PER ADULT

PER CHILD

www.MacdonaldHotels.co.uk/LindenHall

Macdonald Linden Hall Golf & Country Club, Longhorsley, nr Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 8XF

BOOK ON 0344 879 9084 OR EMAIL SPECIALEVENTS.LINDENHALL@MACDONALD-HOTELS.CO.UK

MATFEN HALL HOTEL TWELVE DEALS FOR CHRISTMAS

SPA TREATMENT & LUNCH ONLY £40

Usually £55.00
Choice of Spa treatments and lunch, Mon-Thurs.

BLISSFUL DAY SPA PACKAGE ONLY £65

Usually £82
Spa use, lunch, welcome drink, taster facial & back massage, 60 minutes. Valid Mon - Thurs.

AN EIGHT VISIT LEISURE PASS ONLY £90

Usually only for members. Valid Monday - Thursday

ONE NIGHT B&B AND BOTTLE OF HOUSE WINE ONLY £99

Usually £120 per room. Valid Mon - Thurs.

ONE NIGHT B&B AND BOTTLE OF HOUSE WINE ONLY £149

Usually £220 per room. Valid Friday to Sunday. 2 sharing a Classic Room.

DATE NIGHT STAY! ONLY £140

Usually £195.00
Bottle of Prosecco, chocolates, bathrobes & slippers. Valid Monday to Friday.

18 HOLES OF GOLF, SOUP & ROLL FOR TWO ONLY £30

Usually £40.00
Valid Monday - Thursday

AFTERNOON TEA FOR TWO ONLY £25

Usually £33.90
Classic Afternoon Tea. Valid Monday - Thursday.

DINNER FOR TWO IN THE LIBRARY ONLY £55

Usually £75.00
Valid Mon - Thurs. £72 allowance, must be used for food.

KEEPERS LODGE 2 SIRLOIN STEAKS & BOTTLE OF HOUSE WINE ONLY £38

Usually £44.00
Fri - Sun in the Keepers Lodge, 4pm-8pm.

PROSECCO AFTERNOON TEA FOR TWO ONLY £37

Usually £49.50
Valid Mon - Thurs.

2 STEAKS & CARAFE OF HOUSE WINE IN THE CONSERVATORY ONLY £35

Usually £55.00
Valid Mon - Thurs.

Matfen Hall, Matfen Village, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 0RH Tel: 01661 886 500

Buy on-line at www.matfenhall.com/gifts

Deals are redeemable from 2nd January - 31st March 2017, excludes Mothers Day and Valentines. Full voucher details, T&C's at www.matfenhall.com

MEET THE GM

DENIS FRUCOT

LINDEN HALL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



Whilst growing up did you always envision yourself working within the Hotel Industry?

I fell into it as my parents bought a hotel in central France when I was 8 years old. I grew up in this hotel environment and started up working in it from about 14YO. It is pretty much a vocation!

Can you briefly outline for the readers your career path to date?

After moving to the UK in early 1997, I worked for Hotel du Vin for 16 Years. I started as a breakfast waiter and worked my way up to General Manager. During this time, I worked in Winchester, Bristol, Birmingham, Henley, Glasgow and Cambridge. I joined Linden Hall in January 2016 and relocated my whole family in July.

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

Would I be satisfied with this? This can be applied to almost any situation.

We imagine that working in hotels can be exciting and varied. Is it really true that each day offers something different?

Most certainly! Not only each day but even each hour within a day, is different! Because of the nature of our profession we deal with people. Everyone is different and has different expectation. This in turns, make every single interaction, and there are a lot daily, completely unique.

What do you feel is Linden Hall's greatest asset?

Its people. I don't know any hospitality business

who will tell you any different. Without our team, we are nothing.

Can you summarize some of your greatest achievements to date?

We are in a tremendous period of regeneration so it is still quite difficult to pinpoint one single event within the whole year. I would be quite proud of re-establishing our golf course, closing in on one of the most successful year in the past 5 years and launching a program of outdoors team building activities.

Which ideas are you currently working on?

We are constantly looking for ways to make the experience better. We are currently getting a full decorating schedule for the whole hotel to get under way in January, we have a full schedule of bed replacement to start early in 2017 as well.

With various new hotels emerging only recently in the region can you outline how you adapt to the changing trends in the hotel industry?

Keep it simple. The trick is to never losing sight of what is important: our guests are loyal to us because we deliver what they want from us. Knowing your customer and what they expect is essential and usually, if you can give them what they want, they will keep coming back.

How do you relax after hours?

This industry can be quite punitive on personal life, so any minute spent with my wife and young children is golden and has to be taken advantage of. I do simply like to go home and see them. This said, I do have a soft spot for Cuban cigars and will invariably find an excuse to light up whenever I get the opportunity.



HORTON GRANGE

COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL & RESTAURANT



HORTON GRANGE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL PROVIDES THE PERFECT VENUE FOR YOUR FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS.

JASON ISAACS PARTY NIGHTS

Enjoy a wonderful 3 course meal with Prosecco and Canapés on arrival with the fabulous Jason Isaacs on Thursday 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd December - £43.50 per person.

PETER BROWN PARTY NIGHT

Horton Grange is delighted to be welcoming back local singer Peter Brown. Sunday 11th December - £29.50 per person including a wonderful 3 course meal.

PETER ALLAN PARTY NIGHT

Horton Grange is excited to announce the return of the exceptional vocal talents of Peter Allan Friday 30th December - £29.50 per person including a wonderful 3 course meal.

CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHTS

Join in the festive spirit at Horton Grange with delicious food and fabulous entertainment from our resident disco letting you dance the night away with friends, family or colleagues!

Friday & Saturdays, 2nd | 3rd | 9th | 10th | 16th | 17th December, priced at £34.50 per person.

BOXING DAY LUNCH

Spend Boxing Day at Horton Grange with friends & family whilst enjoying a delicious 3-course meal £34.50 per person, £19.50 children under the age of 10.



WE ARE OPEN EVERY DAY FOR FESTIVE LUNCH & FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL DETAILS OF CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR EVENTS.

Horton Grange Country House Hotel, Berwick Hill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 6BU

T: (01661) 860686 E: info@hortongrange.co.uk W: www.hortongrange.co.uk

Facebook: Horton Grange Country House Hotel Twitter: @HortonGrange

A UNIQUE COUNTRY HOUSE EXPERIENCE

MAGAZINE PUBLISHER TURNS COUNTRY SQUIRE AS MICHAEL GRAHAMSLAW VISITS ESHOTT HALL IN NORTHUMBERLAND.



My wife Lisa and I have been extremely fortunate to enjoy some lavish mid-week escapes over recent months and I can assure you that this one ranks up there with the best of them.

Eshott Hall, around 6 miles North of Morpeth is a hugely elegant boutique hotel which was reachable in a mere 30 minutes from our basecamp on the outskirts of Newcastle. Wrapped up in acres of leafy woodland, the property itself is an imposing 17th Century Country House, with the walled garden areas and manicured croquet lawns lending a further sense of rural charm. Our imaginations were certainly captured on arrival as we both revelled in this sense of feeling deep out in the sticks, whilst still within a close proximity to Newcastle. I hadn't packed my tweed smoking jacket but I was certainly itching to get amongst!

Eshott Hall boasts 11 individually designed bedrooms and naturally, being a part of the Robert Parker collection, they're all gorgeously appointed. Opulence was the name of the game in our "Versailles Bedroom" a French-themed room complete with elaborate furnishings, fine linen and a very ornate Louis XIV style headboard. *Après moi la deluge*, as they say in Dordogne. Other notable bedrooms include the four-postered "Collingwood Bedroom" and the "Tedsmore Bedroom" bedecked with various hunting lodge novelties. Each room boasts its own unique twists and is therefore steeped in its own brand of luxury.

Already thoroughly impressed, I unpacked my belongings and headed for a bracing walk around the grounds whilst Lisa luxuriated in her bubble bath. Or is that her new code word for prosecco? Sadly our stay was to be very much a whistle stop visit, yet there's plenty to do nearby with a little more time on your hands. Eshott is actually the perfect base from which to explore Northumberland. Alnwick Garden, Bamburgh Castle and Holy Island are all within a close radius whilst horse-riding, clay-pigeon shooting and a range of watersports can all be arranged by those friendly folk on reception.

After changing into our evening attire, we headed down for a swift aperitif in The Library Bar before taking dinner in the flickering candlelight of their 2AA rosette restaurant. There's just a lovely, warm glow about the whole place. The current winter dinner menu is in keeping with the countrified setting and is characterised by a local slant. Ingredients are sourced fresh from nearby whenever possible and often from Eshott's on-site kitchen garden.

I begun with a piping hot tureen of Northumbrian Broth with Ham Hock Dumplings whilst Lisa decided on Assiette of Salmon, a tantalising medley

of Salmon Gravadlax, Hot Smoked Salmon Mousse and Pickled Cucumber which proved to be an exquisite arrangement, singing with flavour. A main course of Venison Loin, Pumpkin Puree, Glazed Salsify and Potato Terrine was enjoyed by Lisa, whilst I opted for Eshott's signature Fillet Steak Rossini served with Wild Mushroom Ravioli and a Truffle Jus. An entirely justified £8 supplement, chaperoned excellently by a Bordeaux red. This was then followed by a dessert pairing of Treacle Tart accompanied by Clotted Cream Ice Cream and a Hot Lemon Souffle. Needless to say we enjoyed a feast befitting our magnificent surroundings!

Rising early the following morning, we breakfasted on a full english before chatting to Eshott Hall's recently appointed, General Manager, Margaret Livingstone-Evans. Nestled away in the village of Eshott, it's almost easy to forget you're only half an hour away from Newcastle, something Margaret is keen to stress. Eshott Hall is an exceptional venue which I imagine would provide the perfect backdrop to any event, be it business or pleasure. It was with some reluctance that we headed for that A1 home.

For further information, visit www.eshotthall.co.uk

Eat

drink and be

Merry



Sachins Christmas Tapas Menu

Poppadoms and Pickles

Tapas Starters:

Achari Chicken Tikka | Lamb Channa Tikka | Amritsari Fish | Machi Tikka | Aloo Tikka

Tapas Mains:

Kashmiri Chicken | Fish Makhani | Nilgiri Goshat | Daal | Rice & Nan

Tea or Coffee to finish

Lunch £14.95 | Dinner £19.95

£10 deposit is required on bookings over 8 guests
Christmas menu must be pre-ordered

Forth Banks, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3SG

t 0191 261 9035 or 0191 232 4660 e info@sachins.co.uk www.sachins.co.uk

Opening Times:

Monday – Saturday Lunchtime: 12:00 – 15:00 Evenings: 18:00 – 23:15 Sundays 17.30 – 22.30 in December

LOW FELL'S HIDDEN GEM

MICHAEL GRAHAMSLAW CHECKS INTO ESLINGTON VILLA



Following on from an unusually hectic week at the office, my wife Lisa & I decided to book in for an overnight stay at Eslington Villa in Gateshead.

Tucked away in a nicely secluded spot, the location offers breathtaking, panoramic views over the Team Valley whilst the building itself is a renovated Victorian Mansion boasting 18 well-appointed bedrooms. Despite the urban location, it's a real oasis of calm and it's easy to forget you're only five minutes from the hustle and bustle of downtown Low Fell.

Having been checked in spritely, we were left to explore our abode for the evening. With a strong emphasis on comfort and tranquillity, the guestrooms at Eslington Villa have been carefully designed with the visitors wellbeing in mind. Large windowed and four-postered, our bedroom was a haven of relaxation and was also fitted with all your usual mod cons including telephone, hairdryer, wifi access and a large LCD TV – Match of the Day was later enjoyed in glistening HD! Meanwhile, lending a real semblance luxury, a traditional freestanding bath stood proudly in the centre of our marbled bathroom. Just the setting then for some much-needed R&R.

Following on from this, we headed for a quick pre-dinner throat cleanser before dining regally at the hotel's very own 1AA rosette restaurant. Having entertained clients there on numerous occasions, I was aware of Eslington's longstanding association with good food and I was eager to sample their updated winter dinner offering. Eslington Villa prides itself on using local produce wherever possible and its dishes are tasty, innovative and always well presented. The menu is punctuated by several moments of culinary excellence and features a pervasive focus on modern British and French cooking which certainly appeared to be a hit with their glamorous Saturday night clientele. This is little wonder given that the team is spearheaded by Jamie Walsh, a former North East Chef of the Year recipient.

I kicked off with a magnificent cream of white onion and beer soup which was served alongside some crunchy croutons whilst Lisa despatched the ham knuckle press with deepfried pickles and confit tomatoes, an experimental choice for her.

I followed this with the obligatory 28 day 10z steak accompanied by double cooked chips and a bernaise sauce while Lisa strayed away from her comfort zone once again with the breast of Gressingham duck with potato terrine and pickled pears. Both were absolutely spot on and induced the widest of smiles across our faces.

After a brief digestive break, a Sticky Toffee Pudding accompanied by clotted cream ice cream and a Brown sugar and Hazelnut Torte provided an unforgettable finale. Of course the enjoyment of a meal is so often enhanced by the surroundings in which it's consumed which was very much the case in Eslington Villa's cosy conservatory dining area.

After a restful night's sleep, followed by a freshly cooked full English breakfast, we set off for home feeling suitably re-energised and ready for another fun-packed week. A new suit is on my Christmas list however, as this one seems to have shrunk considerably!

PEOPLE - 'INT THEY BRILLIANT!

By ANDREW FOX, GENERAL MANAGER, CROWNE PLAZA NEWCASTLE

For those of you who can remember, or are stuck in a 90s time warp Paul Whitehouse, from the Fast Show, recorded a series of sketches about various things being 'brilliant'. See this appropriate link for this time of year. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv_662lqKto&t=13s.

As 2016 draws to a close, we all review trading, the many successes, the learnings and highlight opportunities for 2017. Something that has recurred to me all year is about my team; 'int they brilliant!

Opening the hotel has been the most rewarding experience I think I have ever had (in work). This is down to many people but started with the vision of my owners, Clouston Group and my employers, IHG; 'int they brilliant!

Their support, patience and trust have been and continue to be in abundance. However, with such a great product comes great expectation. My children often remind me what Spiderman says; 'With great power comes great responsibility' (sorry, I couldn't resist!). www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKmQW7JTb6s.

Yes, profitability and market share are the key indicators, but as we know, it's impossible to achieve without people and moreover their attitude and engagement.

The hotel market in the City has seen its supply/demand relationship tipped the wrong way



in 2016, especially for a new, enormous hotel establishing a business base. A lot of bedrooms and meeting rooms needed filling, at the right price, according to brand values and with the right market position. Newcastle has also seen some excellent limited service properties open together with some effectively spent defensive capital by existing competitors. Great, thanks! However, we had a strategy, we held onto the rail tightly, waited, our sales team performed and the customers came. My Commercial team; 'int they brilliant'.

It's no good getting people to try you because you look great if customer expectations are not met or actually exceeded these days. Process driven, functional transactions with a smile are not enough. It's the experience these days and boy have we delivered. Great social media feedback and a UK topping service position all year, periodically in Europe too. My Operations team and their supporting functions of Finance, HR, Admin and Maintenance; 'int they brilliant!

There have been other stakeholders who have influenced the Crowne Plaza's success. The welcome, anticipation, support and feedback from the public and private sector, the willingness of the press, PR and marketing organisations to promote the hotel and the understandable 'understanding' from my fellow hoteliers; all have been nothing but exceptional. The local community; 'int they brilliant!

With recent announcements about the World Transplant Games, the Great Exhibition of the North, the British Masters and Freedom City, Newcastle; 'int it brilliant'.

Here's a clip of my brilliant team and here's to more brilliance in 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtPxxKtoYZs

Right, Christmas jumpers on everyone!

www.crowneplaza.com/IHG

Eshott Hall voted one of the 10 best wedding venues 2016 by **The Daily Telegraph**



ESHOTT HALL

WINTER WEDDING PACKAGE

Eshott Hall is one of Northumberland's most beautiful 17th century country houses, a beautiful venue for your magical Winter Wedding.

Our Exclusive Winter Wedding Package is based on 34 guests, and includes:
Accommodation based on 2 guests sharing for 1 night, Afternoon Tea,
Glass of Bubbles on arrival or as Toast Drink,
Evening Reception based on 80 Guests with Bacon / Sausage Baps.

FROM £3950

(Subject to availability) November 2016 - March 2017.



Further information and reservations from our Wedding Co-Ordinators - Tel: 01670 787 454

Eshott Hall Country House, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9EN. Discover more at www.eshotthall.co.uk



THE FIGHTER AND THE WRITER

After enjoying The Broad Chare last month, our intrepid pair continue their tour of the region's culinary hotspots. For December they check out The Cherry Tree on Osborne Road, Jesmond.



Christmas is a festive time of joy for all families and so when the Fighter and Writer took themselves off into Jesmond's bustling Osborne Road they decided to stick with tradition.

Their destination was The Cherry Tree restaurant which much earlier in life was the Jesmond telephone exchange and even a scouts house which can be detected by a small window high up in the bar declaring its scout connection.

However from 2008 it has flourished under main host Peter Wardle, a splendid man with a great love of tennis who for 11 years brought us the Northern Electric Open ATP, a 50,000 dollar challenger event just up the road from his current abode.

He also built the first tennis centre in Newcastle near the Freeman Hospital before selling it to David Lloyd.

The general feel of The Cherry Tree is modern - simple, restrained and high spec, providing a light and sophisticated atmosphere that is enhanced by the residency of a pianist.

An open spiral staircase and mezzanine floor with glass balustrade add to an elegance which is reflected in its various menus.

Our intrepid pair decided, in true tradition, to stick with the Christmas menu rather than a fine a la



carte which includes such extravagant temptations as Tempura King Prawns, Asian slaw, Vietnamese crab satay, and lime as a starter at £9 and cote de boeuf for a spanking £52.

So it was on to Christmas fayre which after a complimentary hot mulled cider or apple juice saw Glenn start with scallops, wrapped in pancetta, celeriac puree, hen's egg, and pine nut relish while John took to whisky and orange chicken livers parfait, cranberry, marmalade onions and crispy bread.

"To die for," announced a more than satisfied Gibbo.

The mains put six choices before customers making it difficult to decide. The Fighter went totally traditional, the Writer a little less so.

McCorry tackled butter roasted turkey breast, roast potato, pigs in blankets, caramelised red cabbage, stuffing, honey carrots and gravy while Gibson took to a fish course - fillet of salmon, potato cake, baby spinach and beetroot veloute.

"When it's Christmas we inevitably think of turkey which is why I chose it to get in the festive spirit," smiled Glenn.

Festive spirit...that meant a traditional Christmas pudding infused with creamy brandy for his dessert with Gibbo ordering a selection of British and French cheeses with Cherry Tree chutney.

The set menu is priced £26 for two courses, £29 for three and is true value.

We decided to wash down our delicious meal with a bottle of Les Boules Blanc at a modest £17.50 rather than at a time of huge financial outlay going for an Amarone DOCG Ca Rugate Veneto from Italy at £65. The options are wide.

Naturally in a highly competitive world the Cherry Tree throw up a lot of excitements. Live music every Wednesday night proves hugely popular as does a student supper club every Tuesday with bedland all around Jesmond.

All in all, a splendid way of spending a festive evening with friends or family.

If you would like Glenn and Gibbo to review your venue, please contact Mike on mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com to co-ordinate.



Personal Training – Private Air Conditioned Studios
Injury Rehabilitation And Prevention – Sports Conditioning
Health Kinesiology – Biosignature
Nutritional Advice – Massage – Active Isolated Stretching

EXERCISE AS INDIVIDUAL AS YOU ARE



Gift Vouchers Available

7 Kenton Shopping Centre, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne
t: 0191 213 5300 e: info@be-fit.co.uk www.be-fit.co.uk

MIRACLES HAPPEN



Jacqueline Shaw was an outgoing and successful businesswoman who was forced to give up her thriving company due to ill health. After years of suffering from an unknown illness, she made an enquiry at Spire Washington Hospital. From there her life was turned around, she tells us her story here:

"People say there is no such thing as a miracle, well I disagree completely. For years I had been ill, some days were a real struggle. I could hardly put one foot in front of another. After numerous visits to my GP I was diagnosed with a variety of conditions from vitamin D and iron deficiency to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Rheumatoid Arthritis and depression as a result of all of this.

"My health deteriorated and in 2000 I was bed bound. I had to sell my business which I was devastated about. My husband became my carer and my life was non-existent. I had excruciating pain in every joint and needed a wheelchair; I could barely walk. I had constant bladder and kidney infections and a swollen stomach, I couldn't even speak – nothing I said would make sense.

"After another visit to my GP, this time I was diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation which is an abnormality in heart rhythm. This was the final straw, I felt like I was getting nowhere and I needed to do something.

"I carried out some research and realised that the symptoms I was having matched those associated with a disease called Hyperparathyroidism. This is where one or more of the parathyroid glands

becomes enlarged, produces too many hormones, cuts off the production of vitamin D in your body and affects your calcium levels, causing everything to become out of balance.

"I went back to my GP for help but due to Hyperparathyroidism being a rare disease he was unable to help. I was distraught. I went back to my research and found a support group - there were hundreds of people with my story, I couldn't believe it!

"I decided to look into private healthcare and was recommended to Mr Bhatti, a consultant general surgeon at Spire Washington Hospital, so I made an email enquiry and received a reply almost immediately. I booked an appointment to see him as soon as I could, he told me I most probably had Hyperparathyroidism and would require surgery.

"Mr Bhatti referred me internally to an Endocrinologist who carried out further tests and gave me an official diagnosis. Mr Bhatti was lovely, down to earth, realistic, knowledgeable and approachable. He put me at ease immediately. He

warned me of the complications of surgery and gave me no promise of the outcome, but he was open, understanding and truthful. I was astounded when he offered me a surgery date for the following week!

"Immediately after surgery I felt the benefits - the fog in my brain and my low mood was gone and my speech and vision had improved significantly. Over the following weeks my health kept improving. The pains in my feet, my stomach and joint pain were all gone! My life was worth living again. I regained the positive, cheerful outlook on life which I previously had. People were complimenting me and telling me I had my sparkle back.

"On my final follow up appointment at Spire Washington Hospital I didn't even need my wheelchair! Mr Bhatti was genuinely delighted in the improvements.

"I'll never be completely free of the effects of Hyperparathyroidism, but since having surgery my life has changed dramatically.

"I'm back to driving and enjoying life once more; I couldn't thank Mr Bhatti and Spire Washington Hospital enough for what they have done for me."



SPORTING DINNER CELEBRATIONS

Forest Hall Football Club recently held their 20th Anniversary Dinner at The Village Hotel in West Allotment.

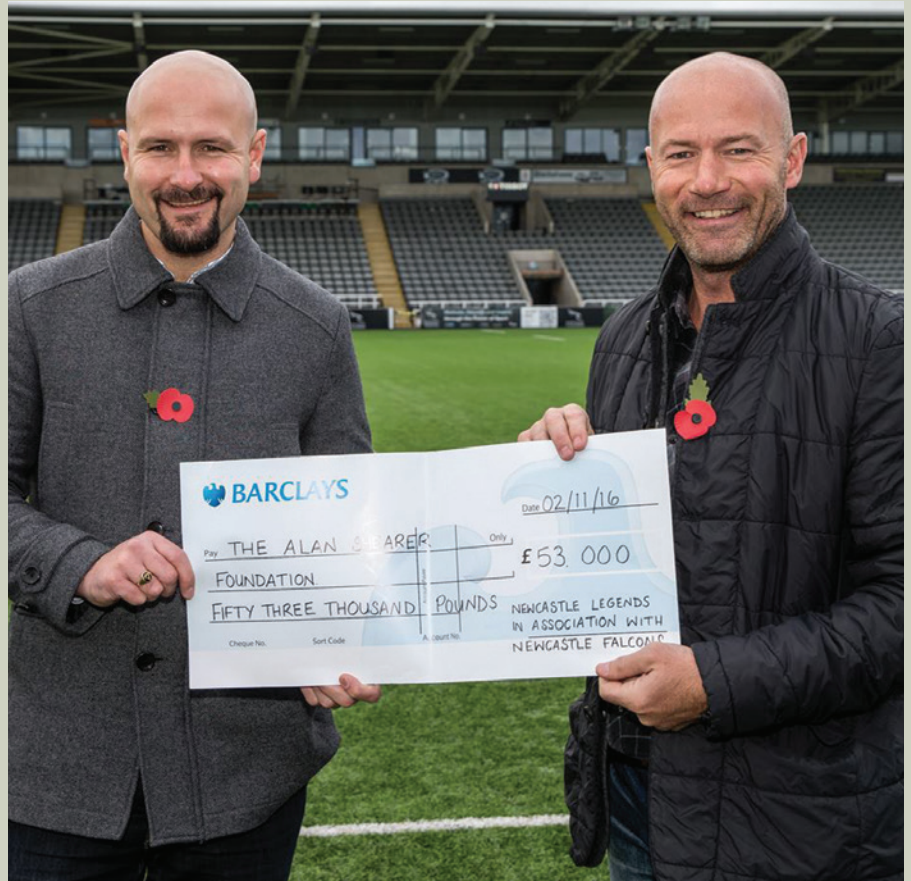
Guests enjoyed a 3 course meal followed by entertainment provided by Newcastle United legend Micky Quinn and the amazing Billy Flywheel.

The event was compered by Graeme Forster.



A LEGENDARY YEAR FOR THE NEWCASTLE LEGENDS

The passing of a legend proved to be the catalyst for a year of remembrance for those in and around Tyneside event management company, Newcastle Legends.



Much has been written about the untimely departure of our good friend and colleague, Pavel Srnicek, and for those who travelled out to his home town for the funeral, it's a time that'll live forever in their hearts and memories.

Even as the New Year began it was a sombre time as the cold chill brought with it a reality check as the tears flowed under the shadow of St James' Park. Colleagues, friends and family gathered for a moving memorial service which proved a time of reflection for many, the aforementioned catalyst of what was to come.

Pavel's biography 'Pavel is a Geordie,' written with Will Scott and published by Mojo Risin' Publishing mere weeks before the unthinkable happened, was soon to be translated into his native Czech tongue and, with a few extra additions before the summer, the inaugural Pavel Cup came into play.

As England were, rather embarrassingly, crashing out of the European Championships at the hands of minnows, Iceland, many back home, press, celebs

and former players alike, were preparing themselves for their own finals day.

Harper and Howey, Solano and Bernard, Gillespie, Wraith, Ryder and Graves all donned their boots in aid of St Cuthbert's Hospice on the day of the European Championships final, and one of the region's favourite sons, Jack Charlton, entertained in the UTS Stadium, Dunston, clubhouse afterwards, ensuring all-round success.

Not long after the Pavel Cup reached its successful conclusion, the focus was placed firmly onto October's extravaganza and the 20th Anniversary Entertainers Game between Shearer's Newcastle Legend's and Gillespie's Manchester Select in aid of the Alan Shearer Foundation.

Numerous events were put together in the run-up to the big day as first, One Night in Antwerp and One Night at St James' paid homage to two of the biggest, and best nights, in the Entertainers' European sojourn, with games against Royal Antwerp and Barcelona.

At the latter, and beginning 'Entertainers Week,' a special guest arrived in the shape of Milan Srnicek, prompting the first of many chants that weekend of 'Pavel is a Geordie' in honour of the Czech's late brother.

Milan played in the Entertainers Game that Sunday afternoon, quite admirably in fact, as the two sides played out a rather entertaining 2-2 draw with an impressive £53,000 being raised for the Foundation, enabling the year for Newcastle Legends to finish in a style and manner even somebody of Pavel's status would have been proud of.

There's also been time for Will Scott and Mojo Risin' to focus on, and release, another Entertainers' story as Lee Clark recently put out 'Black & White No Grey Areas' to mass acclaim - there's high standards before him to reach though...

This is dedicated to Milan and David, Steve, Natalie, Denis, Tom, Lorenzo, the Newcastle Legends, and to Pavel Srnicek.



For more information visit www.newcastlelegends.com or follow on Twitter @NCLE_Legends or call 0191 2299632.



THE COSMETIC
DENTAL CLINIC



THE COSMETIC DENTAL CLINIC

BESPOKE DENTISTRY IN THE HEART OF NEWCASTLE

The Cosmetic Dental Clinic is situated in the very heart of Newcastle City Centre in an elegantly converted grade II* listed building. Step into a warm and relaxing spa-like environment loaded with the latest dental technology fused with traditional architecture.

Our practice is designed to provide high quality Private Dentistry whilst maintaining exceptional value for money. Our team will help assist you every step of the way, whatever your dental goals. The ethos of our dentistry is focused around listening and fully understanding your needs before discussing a comprehensive range of options.

SPECIALIST DENTISTRY

Our multi-disciplinary practice offers an extensive and comprehensive treatment menu. We aim to provide everything from high quality general dentistry to complex dental transformations within our extensive city centre practice.



0191 260 3688

info@thecosmeticedentalclinic.com

2 Old Eldon Square, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 7JG
www.thecosmeticedentalclinic.com



SELLING THE REGION'S FINEST PROPERTIES



rare! From Sanderson Young

0191 223 3500 | www.sandersonyoung.co.uk