

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

JULY 2018 - 3RD ANNIVERSARY EDITION



THE SHOREDITCHIFICATION OF HEATON

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issue 37

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the third anniversary edition of Northern Insight which we hope you enjoy reading as much as we enjoyed compiling.

Our cover stars are regular columnists Heaton Property who look at a fantastic area very much on the rise.

Look out for our feature on the recent Northern Law Awards which celebrates the region's leading legal talent.

For Business Lunch we make a long overdue return to 21, an absolute jewel of the North East dining scene.

Amongst some terrific social coverage we showcase the Brewin Dolphin Garden Party at Matfen Hall and Sponsors Day at the ever-friendly Newcastle United Golf Club.

On behalf of the NI team a heartfelt thanks for the goodwill and support we have received since our launch.

It has been a wonderful journey so far. Till next month...

M.J. Grahamslaw
Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher



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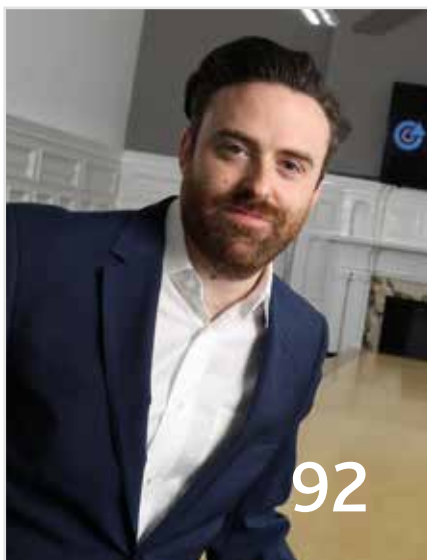
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NORTH EAST SME'S GET HELP TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES

A series of two seminars aimed at helping SME's to make informed decisions about their businesses when Brexit arrives are due to take place in Newcastle.

The seminars will be hosted by the Business and Intellectual Property Centre at Newcastle City Library and will bring together experts in law, finance, economics and procurement to give business owners an easy to understand overview of what might happen once the UK leaves the European Union.

The first event on 19 July entitled 'Countdown to

Brexit' will examine current thinking and look at opportunities and issues as they stand now. SME's will be given information and support to help them make the right decisions for their individual businesses and to plan ahead for changes that could affect them.

The stimulating and practical event will include talks by experts from the Bank of England, HSBC, the Intellectual Property Office and legal and procurement experts, plus Brexit specialist Bryan Ellis. After a networking lunch, sessions will turn to exploring new opportunities with talks by the

North East Chamber of Commerce's International Trade Team, The Intellectual Property Office, business finance specialists and North East funding experts. The North East Chamber of Commerce will also offer their view on the changes that leaving the EU may have on SME's.

Each session will be interactive and participants will have the opportunity to take part in Q&A workshops with the speakers.

The second seminar will be held on 15 November and will focus on the detail of Brexit once more information is known.

HEALTHWATCH INVESTS IN FUTURE GENERATION



A former pupil from a Wallsend high school has been given the best prognosis for his future after being prescribed an apprenticeship with Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead cover all publicly-funded health and social care services for both adults and children. They work hard to champion the rights of people using services in their areas and ensure that social care and health systems correctly engage with the public.

Joining the Healthwatch team is 16-year-old Harry Malby from Battle Hill in Wallsend. The ex-Burnside High School student has secured an administration apprenticeship and is looking forward to learning everything from data bases to customer service skills.

22-year-old Beth Nichol also started working with the team as an apprentice in the same role as Harry. Just three years later, Beth has gained NVQ Levels 3 and 4 in Business and Administration and currently has the position of Finance and Administration Officer within the organisation. Beth is looking to progress further by studying for a higher level NVQ in leadership and management.

Healthwatch CEO Steph Edusei is a great believer in investing in today's young people. She said: "Having young people working in our team creates a buzz that encourages everyone. Beth is a shining example of how a young person can achieve a lot within a relatively short period of time. The signs are good for Harry too and we are delighted to have him on board."

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PARK ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS WIN TOP INDUSTRY AWARD

Gateshead-based Park Electrical Distributors have recently gained national acclaim at a presentation evening at London Tower Hotel.

After a decision-making process, which saw industry professionals pledge their support through an online vote, Park won the Best Wholesaler of the Year award. The awards are organised by Datateam Business Media, publisher of the Electrical Wholesaler magazine.

The company, which was established in 1990, has a near £25 million turnover with branches in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Teesside and Durham.

The judges had special praise for Park's lighting design department. Particular reference was made to the longevity and growth of this, remarking that even in the 1990s Park was putting forward services that many are only just getting around to now.

The judges were also impressed with Park's investment in stock holding to meet customer demand. This was reflected in the customer/supplier voting section where the firm also came in first place.



GRADVERT CELEBRATES EXCITING NEW COLLABORATION

Gradvert has teamed up with fellow North East company Madventurer to create a unique overseas leadership development service.

Madventurer offers community volunteer placements in some of the most exciting destinations in the world, including Peru, Thailand and Fiji. It also offers clients the opportunity to partake in overseas corporate social responsibility projects.

Gradvert's role in the new partnership is to build an overseas element into their already successful leadership programme so skills developed in the UK can be transferred to communities abroad. The collaboration will therefore see delegates using the skills they learn during Gradvert's leadership training in Madventurer overseas community development placements.

Gradvert will also work with companies before, during and after the trip to assess the impact of the projects on individuals, as well as measuring return on investment.

The first collaborative effort recently saw representatives from the companies spend two weeks in Kenya working with Siemens employees from across the world.



LEADING WINDOWS BUSINESS SOLD IN MBO

A family-owned Northumberland window manufacturer and supplier has been sold in a management buy-out.

Kitson Windows, owned by Neil and Zoe Finlay for almost 35 years, manufactures, supplies and installs a high-quality range of windows, doors and conservatories to both the trade and public throughout Northumberland and the Borders. The business, based in Alnwick, was the first in the North of England to manufacture energy rated window frames and to achieve coveted ISO9001 standard.

Now, Kitson Windows has been acquired by John Currah, the company's Sales Director of 20 years. The jobs of all employees have been safeguarded and plans are in place for the business to continue its path of steady growth.

Law firm Sintons, based in Newcastle, acted for Neil and Zoe in the sale of the business. Partner Matt Collen and Solicitor Luke Philpott handled the corporate aspects whilst Associate Danielle Dale dealt with real estate matters.

HR FIRM INVESTS IN GRADUATE TRAINEES

HR and employment law advice firm HR Dept Newcastle has announced the employment of its first graduate trainee as part of its long-term drive to invest in the region's young talent.

Led by Director and Owner Jayne Hart, the company, which has just celebrated its fourth birthday, has hired Sunderland University graduate Emma-Leigh Miller and has pledged to recruit further graduates to double its headcount from four to eight in the next 18 months.

Business graduate Emma-Leigh, who applied for a position through the university's graduation scheme, will now undergo a 12-month full-time intensive training programme at HR Dept with the view of becoming a full-time HR advisor at the firm.

During HR Dept's in-house training programme, Emma will cover HR and employment law delivery and get to grips with the company's approach to marketing. She will also be encouraged to actively engage with the North East business community to prepare her for a long-term career in the HR industry.

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THE SHOREDITCHIFICATION OF HEATON

Yes, that is a word. 'Shoreditchification' refers to the London Borough of Shoreditch and its transformation from a post-industrial backwater into Hipster Central.

This is slightly different to 'Gentrification' which is simply estate agents calling an area something different and hiking the house prices. Personally, I still call 'High South Gosforth' Longbenton but I am sure the £10k uplift in house prices is welcomed by the newly gentrified residents of that ward.

To suggest Heaton is experiencing Shoreditchification is silly. Heaton is a largely residential area bordered by some of the finest parks in the city. But as young professionals replace students in Heaton there is a buzz about the place that was not evident ten years ago.

Grotty old student lets have been transformed into high standard accommodation and some exciting new businesses have sprung up. The latest of these is the Naked Deli on Chillingham Road which is backed by serious investment following the success of their Naked Deli in Gosforth.

While big money now sees Heaton as a safe bet, I am more interested in the 'let's give it a go' school of entrepreneurship. Today, Cal's Own in Jesmond is one of the finest authentic pizza restaurants in the UK but Calvin started out in Heaton on a shoestring.

Similar success stories include The Wild Trapeze, The Sky Apple Café and The Butterfly Cabinet. The latter has a breakfast queue of at least twenty people every Saturday morning come rain or shine. All these businesses had an idea to do something a little different and all are thriving thanks to the Heaton mix of families and young professionals.

I would class myself as a young professional but my wife may read this and I do not need the ridicule. So, I will own up as a Heaton family man. As a family we are never short of a stunning local meal but Heaton has more to offer than eclectic dining.

Heaton Park is as good as it gets for free family entertainment. A stroll through the woods along the banks of Ouseburn will take you through parks and historic landscape to the Tyne River. Newcastle Council has invested heavily in walks, cycle tracks and play areas. Perfect to let children let off steam in safety.

All this has brought about a new trend in the lettings sector. Where once Heaton was where you lived because it was all you could afford, today Heaton is a destination of choice. A standard two bed apartment in Jesmond will cost £700 per month. In Heaton this will be £580. But the interesting trend is, we are seeing young professionals saying "I can afford £700 a month. So, I want a luxury apartment in Heaton rather than a standard one in Jesmond.

I am delighted at the resurgence of the area I live in, work in and love. If you live in Heaton you will know what I mean. If you do not and your view is one of grotty bedsits, come along and be surprised. Take a stroll along Heaton Park Road, stop for a snack (vegan, vegetarian or carnivore) then walk down to our newly refurbished parks. As Samuel Johnson would undoubtedly have said if he lived on Lesbury Road, "When a man is tired of Heaton he is tired of life".







NEWCASTLE UNITED SUMMER SPONSORS DAY

Sponsors of Newcastle United Golf Club, enjoyed another traditional summer golf day last month and despite the agonisingly close results, the teams did well to keep smiling when the final scores were announced.

Those attending not only enjoyed some competitive golf but also a fine and dry day on the course and the ever-friendly hospitality back at the clubhouse.







WALK THIS WAY

People say that many a great thing is hidden in plain sight; that's perhaps nowhere truer than Newcastle's Ouseburn Valley.

Neatly nestled behind the bustling Quayside, the Ouseburn Valley's rich history carefully mirrors that of the city itself. The Ouseburn was once Newcastle's link to the world; it was from here that the city's industrial goods were loaded onto ships and sailed out to sea, to be transported across the globe.

Like the city itself, the valley has in recent years flourished, no longer marred by post-industrial decline. By replacing coal with code, docks with designers, engineers with entrepreneurs, the Ouseburn has boomed - that's why the Great Exhibition of the North's Get North Design Trail cuts right through the heart of the valley.

So, to celebrate this journey, we challenged our fabulously creative team to do what they do best, and capture the most Instagram worthy spots from this vibrant, bustling place we call home...

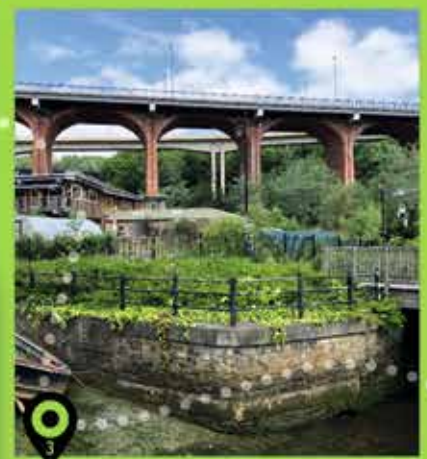
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Enjoy good beer, tasty vegan food and the cheeriest of graffiti at The Ship Inn @ShipOuseburn



Marvel at the wonder of 'An Ancient Place' and read David Almond's poem that speaks of lost trades and the future endeavours for @7Stories #WingedTalesNorth #GETNorth2018



Take a walk on the wild side at @OuseburnFarmNewcastle ...



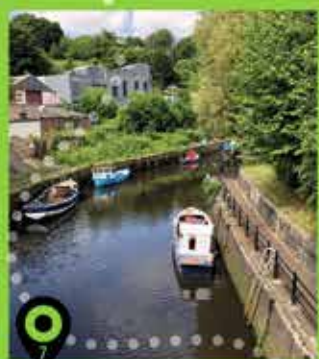
Stand in the spotlight and take centre stage at The Kiln (and then pop inside to try their yummy cakes!) #KilnOuseburn



Take in the ever changing art-scape of the Ouseburn's #graffiti walls



...And meet some of the animals (we promise no animals were harmed in the taking of this photo!)



Take a stroll along the Ouse river and watch the fishing boats sail past



... and while you're at it, enjoy the view!



Pause for a pint at the iconic Tyne Bar #thetynebar....



Last but not least, don't forget to pop into the Karol offices and taste our #geordieinspiration ale!

COMMENT WITH... Barry Speker

barry.speker@sintons.co.uk



The World Cup is now underway in Russia despite recent diplomatic trauma involving radio active poisoning, expulsion of diplomats and threats of more sanctions. As we know the World Cup is just about sport - 'Football vincit omnia' as they say in Senegal.

The opening of the tournament, complete with Robbie Williams, was a great spectacle and an opportunity to showcase the wonders of Mother Russia and all of that was achieved without the need of a visit from Nobel Peace Prize Candidate Donald. It would have been interesting to see him try his bone-crunching 5 minute handshake upon the macho President Putin.

Russia enjoyed a great victory over Saudi Arabia in the opening match. They have not had a successful World Cup since 1966 so they share with England 52 years of hurt. We need to be optimistic.

I noted on Twitter: 'The England football team visited an orphanage in Russia yesterday. "It's heartbreaking to see their little faces with no hope" said Vladimir, aged 6.

But think of poor Italy, who failed to qualify for the finals for the first time since 1958, and can see the likes of Iceland, Morocco and Panama competing with the world's best.

With all the talent on show, Rafa Benitez may be spotted with his cheque book ready to spend some of Mike Ashley's millions - or maybe not.

I attended an amazing concert at the Barbican to see the prodigious young Chinese pianist Yuja Wang. Well known for her style, mini skirts and signature 6inch stiletos, this was staggering virtuoso performance of such a technically demanding programme which amazed the audience. Lightening speech interspersed with lyrical sensitivity made this a memorable evening featuring Rachmaninov, Scriabin, Ligeti and Prokofiev played with speed, stamina, energy and quality.

Despite the brilliance of the pieces, the evening was not over yet as Yuja played a total of 7 encores including Horowitz's Carmen Fantasy and Chopin's Waltz Op 64/2 after which the cheering audience finally let Yuja go.

Congratulations to the North East Chinese

Association on the announcement that they are to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This is a great tribute to Chairman Jimmy Tsang and his dedicated committee for their amazing and innovative work on behalf of the Chinese community in the area. Clearly time for another celebratory banquet.

Time to get more control of the misuse of mobile phones? Music mogul Simon Cowell has said he became infuriated by meetings where everyone's eyes were glued to their handsets. He decided not to use his mobile phone, and after 10 months he described how this had improved his life and his mental health.

We should all ban handsets at meetings and the dinner table and should restrict use by children for whom they can become an obsession.

The National Literacy Trust has reported that only one in 50 children can tell if a news story is real or fake. The report has been published by the all-party Parliamentary Commission on Fake News (now that IS true, there is such a commission). Most children and young people only get their news from websites and social media which may lead to a skewed view and the report said 'will risk damaging young people's democratic futures along with the well-being of an entire generation'.

A study of 16 year old pupils by the LSE found that British schools which banned mobile phones recorded a 6.4% improvement in marks. Of more current significance has Gareth Southgate limited the access by the England team to social media - to save them believing everything written about them?



“
The England football team visited an orphanage in Russia yesterday. It's heartbreaking to see their little faces with no hope...
”



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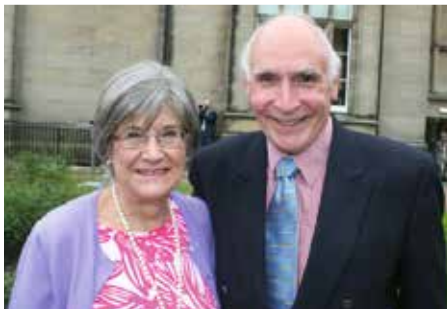
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**BREWIN DOLPHIN
SUMMER GARDEN PARTY
AT MATFEN HALL**

Brewin Dolphin's annual Summer Party was held this year at Matfen Hall in Northumberland. The wealth management company took the East Wing and Dutch Garden, and transformed it with a Gin Bar, Cocktail Bar and entertainment for almost 300 people comprising clients, intermediaries and guests of the firm.

William Baker Baker, Head of Office for Brewin Dolphin in Newcastle thanked all those who attended, who he described as "...the life-blood of Brewin Dolphin, and the reason we strive to provide the very best service to all our clients and friends in the business community."



Northern Law Awards 2018



Thursday 7th June

at the

Hilton Newcastle Gateshead





2018 NORTHERN LAW AWARDS

The 4th Northern Law Awards were recently held at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead. Hosted by radio presenter Alfie Joey, and organised by Echo Events, the evening celebrated the great wealth of legal talent and success in the region.

Highlights included Lawyer of the Year to Toby Gibson of Gibson and Co and an Outstanding Achievement award to Jonathan Blair of Womble Bond Dickinson.

£2325 was raised on the night for the Calvert Trust Kielder.







L-R: Bri Cheng, Chris Hughes, Paul Hughes, Peter Robinson, Daniel Smith, John Nicholson

DOUBLE AWARDS SUCCESS FOR MINCOFFS SOLICITORS

Mincoffs Solicitors' corporate team has enjoyed double award success recently. The firm was delighted to be named 'Corporate Law Team of the Year' at the Northern Law Awards ceremony on Thursday 8th June at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton.

Mincoffs' corporate team was also recently recognised in the 10th Annual International M&A Advisor Awards, in which they received the 'Industrials Deal of the Year' award for their involvement in the sale of Sheffield-based Cooper & Turner to the US-based investment firm the Watermill Group.

During 2017, the Corporate team at Mincoffs team delivered 56 transactions for their clients, with an aggregate deal value of circa £400 million. This followed on from a terrific year in 2016, during which the team delivered 43 transactions, with an aggregate value of £380 million. As Peter Robinson, partner in the corporate team, explains: "We have exceptionally long standing and very strong client relationships. That comes from providing services which are second to none. We're not trying to be the biggest player in our region, although we are trying to be the best we can be when delivering our services."

Corporate head Paul Hughes adds: "Our team has gone from strength to strength. We

advise businesses in the region, nationally and internationally. We differentiate ourselves on our service levels and by building long standing relationships. At a time of mass mergers in the legal sector, it is important to understand that it is always human relationships that make the difference."

Whilst smaller in size than some corporate teams in the North East, the team (comprising 6 lawyers, including 3 partners) has a huge amount of experience. Indeed, the team was ranked as second most active advisor on North East transactions by information services giant Experian for 2017. Some of the deals the team worked on in 2017 include:

- Private equity investment into engineering consultancy practice Parsons Group and a related acquisition;
- Extensions to the Cairn Groups' banking facilities and related transactions;
- Disposal of the entire issued share capital of Ashchem, the largest independent pharmacy chain in the North at that time;

- Disposal of the Litterboss group, a provider of ground clearance and similar services, to Ground Control (an industry consolidator); and
- Lugano Group's mezzanine finance arrangements with Matterhorn Capital and Topland Jupiter.

The M&A International Award has also come as a welcome surprise to the team. As Peter Robinson says: "With the success we had over the last two years we were really keen to try and get recognition for all our team, and not just corporate so it was fantastic to win the Corporate Team of the Year Award. The International M&A Award was something else entirely: it came totally out of left field as it wasn't something we had submitted or campaigned for. Yet the deal has been recognised by our peers in the USA as the deal of the year in the 'Industrials' sector, which is simply terrific".

Mincoffs Solicitors has been advising businesses and their people for 70 years, and is one of the North East's oldest commercial law firms. Its aim is to provide the best service it can to all its clients and to add value by becoming part of their team.

For further information on how Mincoffs can help you, please contact Claire Fenwick, Marketing and Business Development Manager on 0191 281 6151 or visit www.mincoffs.co.uk

Led by Partner Paul Hughes, our award-winning team is one of the most experienced in the North East with expertise in all areas of corporate law including company sales and business acquisitions, corporate finance and funding, flotations, share options, private equity investment, complex turnarounds, reorganisations and restructures, mergers and acquisitions and management buy-outs and buy-ins.

Our team will give your business a competitive edge.

For expert advice designed to give your business the competitive edge, contact:

Paul Hughes

Head of Corporate

T: 0191 281 6151

E: phughes@mincoffs.co.uk

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Mincoffs

SOLICITORS

LAW AWARDS SUCCESS REFLECTS BREADTH AND QUALITY OF SERVICE AT HAY & KILNER

By Jonathan Waters, managing partner at Hay & Kilner Law Firm



Jonathan Waters, Nicola Tiffen & Richard Freeman-Wallace

The Northern Law Awards provides a very valuable annual staging post at which the North East's legal professionals can assess the progress that their practice has made over the preceding 12 months.

For Hay & Kilner Law Firm, the recognition we've enjoyed this year is a reflection of the way in which we're increasing our focus on the commercial services we provide while continuing to deliver the personal services for which we're often more regularly recognised.

We've enjoyed great success over the years at the Northern Law Awards, having picked up the Crime team of the year award on three separate occasions and winning the Private Client team of the year category last year.

Given the high quality and strength-in-depth of the North East legal community, we were extremely pleased to be shortlisted in every single one of the ten Law Awards categories that we entered this year.

Our teams were nominated in each of the Awards' Corporate & Commercial, Litigation & Dispute Resolution, Employment, Commercial Property, Residential Property, Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence, Private Client, Crime/Regulatory and Family categories.

And alongside this, Jan Rzedzian, a member of the firm's specialist Constriction team, was also

shortlisted in the Awards' Rising Star category, which is a real achievement for a very impressive young practitioner.

Receiving this sort of independent external affirmation of the quality of our work is always gratifying, especially with the Awards' entry criteria placing such emphasis on the levels of client service that entrants deliver.

The breadth of nominations not only highlights the top level expertise and service delivered by our different teams, but also the comprehensive range of services that the practice provides to clients within and outside the region.

At the Awards dinner itself, we were delighted to be chosen as the winner of the best Commercial Property team award in the face of some very stiff competition.

The most recent edition of legal sector 'bible' The Legal 500 described our commercial property team as providing "a service that has always been second to none" while "the partners have in-depth knowledge and are supported by an excellent team."

It has had a very successful year undertaking development and re-finance work for both local and national clients, and has been particularly busy in the care home sector and on a range of residential developments.

The team members' expertise has been central to a wide range of projects coming to fruition over the last 12 months, and they fully deserved the recognition that this award rightly brings.

Hay & Kilner's ambition is to now build on the success we've enjoyed in the last 12 months and to continue to help our clients achieve their personal and commercial ambitions, so that when the 2019 Northern Law Awards come around, we'll have even more success to celebrate.

Established in 1946, Hay & Kilner is one of North East England's leading independent law firms and provides a full range of legal services to businesses and individuals from both within and outside the region. It was named as a 'regional heavyweight' in the latest edition of the Legal 500, with its services being recommended in 19 different practice areas.

To find out more on the range of services provided by Hay & Kilner Law Firm's specialist teams, please contact Jonathan Waters on 0191 232 8345 or visit www.hay-kilner.co.uk

WARD HADAWAY NAMED LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR 2018 AT NORTHERN LAW AWARDS

Ward Hadaway has been named Law Firm of the Year at the annual Northern Law Awards as the business celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Hundreds of attendees from the region's foremost legal firms and business leaders attended the black-tie event held at the Hilton Hotel.

Hosted by North East comedian and radio presenter, Alfie Joey, the awards celebrate the great wealth of legal talent and success within the region.

Ward Hadaway was the recipient of this year's large Law Firm of the Year Award, sponsored by SD Legal Services.

The team was recognised for the quality and calibre of their work, including excellence in the delivery of legal services, outstanding business performance in client service, financial performance, strategy and winning work. It was also praised for the development of its people, CSR and business progress and improvement over the past year.

Martin Hulls, Managing Partner of Ward Hadaway said the top award reflects the firm's reputation and its work across all of its teams in the last 12 months.

Martin said: "Winning this prestigious Northern award was very much a team effort. It's a statement of confidence in us as a leading Northern law firm and to win Law Firm of the Year in our 30th year of business is a great achievement for all of the hard work the teams do.



"These awards are well deserved and we are very proud to be part of the Northern Law Awards, which do a great job of highlighting and celebrating the excellence of legal services sector across the region."

Jamie Martin, Senior Partner, collected the award on behalf of the firm alongside Ward Hadaway's

Head of Healthcare, Jeffrey Keeble.

Jamie added: "Winning Law Firm of the Year is a fitting tribute to all of our people's hard work and commitment in our 30th year. We were nominated in nine other categories, so it was a huge achievement to receive so many individual and team nominations."

www.wardhadaway.com

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TLW SOLICITORS - SECOND TIME WINNERS OF LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR

North Shields based TLW Solicitors again picked up the Law Firm of the Year (1-5 partners) award at the Northern Law Awards 2018, having won the same category two years earlier.

Partner, John Burn said: "To win Law Firm of the Year for the second time shows that we must be doing something right and consistently too. This is what happens when you have a great team around you". Fellow Partner, Peter McKenna added: "TLW has always focused on being innovative whilst at the same time maintaining high service levels across all of our practice areas as reflected in our fantastic client satisfaction reviews."

With its experience of complex litigation at its core, TLW is an approved member of the Head Injury Solicitors Directory for national charity, Headway. In a year that saw TLW retain the quality mark, Lexcel, another highlight was winning the Feefo Gold Trusted Service Award, an independent seal of excellence rated by clients.

TLW is becoming regarded as leading national specialists in a technically challenging aspect of professional negligence – namely financial mis-selling. TLW's team deals with claims following negligent and/or unsuitable advice given to clients not properly informed of the risks and potential downsides of investments. This includes advice around Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPP's), high risk products (for example store pods, foreign property, carbon credits), tax avoidance schemes, transferring out of Defined Benefit/Final Salary Schemes and annuities.

Financial mis-selling claims are complex, with well-



resourced opponents and where strict time limits often apply. TLW receives referrals from other solicitors, financial planners/advisers, insolvency practitioners and accountants, as well as existing and former clients.

Peter McKenna said: "Our specialist lawyers have used their experience and exemplary client care to develop a niche practice in the complex arena of financial mis-selling. All too often we are contacted

by professionals doing a good job for their clients who come across "horror stories" from previous advice given by another company and asking if we can put things right."

John Burn concluded: "To be recognised by our clients through the Feefo Award and our industry peers at the Northern Law Awards is a great place to be and a solid foundation from which to continue extending the value that TLW adds".

For further details visit www.tlwsolicitors.co.uk or speak to us on 0191 293 1500.

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BASKING IN AWARD SUCCESS

Swinburne Maddison LLP (Swinburne Maddison), one of Durham's pre-eminent law firms, is reaping rewards by adding another prestigious accolade – Team of the Year – Private Client- to the firm's growing collection.

Recognised for its integrity and strong business and work ethic, Swinburne Maddison's strengths lie in the depth of its in-house resource and the calibre of its team which has recently expanded with new appointments.

According to the judges, the law firm showed an extremely strong team ethic, demonstrated by their loyalty, sense of family and dedication to staff development, which in turn has provided them with particularly positive client appreciation. Their focus on exceeding clients' expectations and putting in the same level of work and effort, no matter the value of the work was also commended.

Speaking about the win managing partner, John Davison, said: "I am thrilled that our dedicated private client team has been recognised in this way against strong competition from the other shortlisted firms. The judges' comments bear testimony to what we believe to be the case not only of the private client team but everyone within the practice irrespective of their role and accolades such as this will only help us with our plans for growth and further recruitment."

The latest new appointments include the arrival of qualified solicitors, trainees and admin staff as well as key promotions.



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Employment solicitor Sharney Randhawa, brings a wealth of experience to the firm. Representing doctors before the General Medical Council and bankers, before the Financial Conduct Authority, Sharney received the accolade of being named as a recommended lawyer in the Legal 500 for this area of work. She is joined by Rory Ogden as a trainee solicitor.

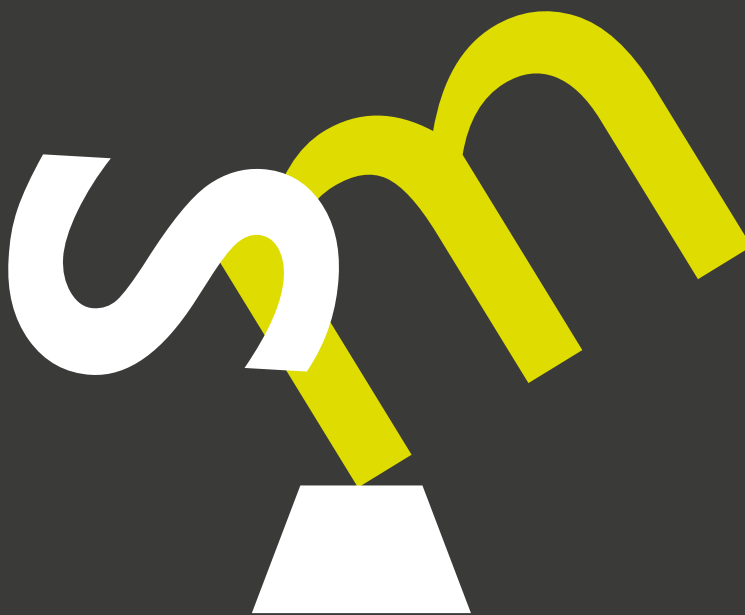
A second trainee solicitor, Eleanor Fisher-Thompson, has joined the corporate and commercial

department along with Ashley Patterson, who has been appointed personal assistant.

Meanwhile, commercial property solicitors Gillian Moir and Chris Ross, and Anna Stephenson, a private client solicitor, have been promoted and appointed as managing associates.

A further solicitor will also be joining the dispute resolution team in the summer to work with its litigation arm, bringing the headcount at the firm to 57.

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Though we're growing rapidly in size, we're still extremely agile.

Agility and flexibility are very important at Swinburne Maddison. Though we've doubled in size over recent years, we're still nimble enough to offer our clients a tailored bespoke service that fits their needs exactly. We call this approach 'Legal solutions that fit'.

Our recent success at this year's Northern Law Awards (Team of the Year - Private Client) tells us that it's a strategy that seems to fit the bill perfectly.



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SINTONS FUNDRAISING EVENT

The first fundraising event in a new partnership between law firm Sintons and an inspirational children's charity has raised over £1,300. More than 100 people attended a quiz night in aid of the Child Brain Injury Trust, held at Nine bar at St James' Park, which was organised by Newcastle-based Sintons.



Clients and contacts of the law firm collectively bought 21 tables at the event, and further support was given through the donation of prizes for the raffle. The quiz was won by leading accountancy firm Leathers.



The event marked the first event in Sintons' partnership with the Child Brain Injury Trust - a national charity which supports children, young people and their families to adapt to life after an acquired brain injury - which has seen Sintons selected as the sole North East legal firm to work with the charity.



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VARYING CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT - DEAL OR NO DEAL?

At various times during the employment relationship there may be a need to vary the contract of employment. The most obvious example of a variation of contract is a pay rise.

In the majority of situations, variations are either expressly accepted by the employee (such as by signing a new contract or a letter setting out the change) or it can be inferred by their conduct, such as continuing to work without protest (as is the case when a pay rise is given).

However, problems can arise where the change does not immediately impact on the employee and/or where the change is wholly disadvantageous to them.

Disadvantageous variations

In the recent case of *Abrahall v Nottingham County Council*, the Court of Appeal confirmed that even where an employee continues to work for a prolonged period of time, without protest, following a variation of contract, their acceptance of the change will not necessarily be inferred.

In the *Abrahall* case, the court found that the employees had been contractually entitled to annual incremental pay progression. However, the council had unilaterally imposed a 2 year pay freeze. This action was taken as an alternative to making mass redundancies and was made following strenuous objections by the union representing the employees although no industrial action was taken. Neither the council, union nor the employees, clearly set out their positions in relation to the pay freeze once it had been implemented and the employees continued to work without protest.

The Court of Appeal held that in the circumstances of the case, it could not be inferred that the employees had accepted the variation of their contracts despite the lengthy period of time that the employees had worked without protest. As such they were all entitled to back pay in respect of the pay increases they should have received during that 2 year period.



Why wasn't acceptance of the change inferred?

This case may sound concerning to employers but its impact is likely to be limited to cases where the changes are wholly disadvantageous.

In those cases, depending on the circumstances, it may be possible to infer another explanation as to why the employees continued to work, such as being concerned about being made redundant, as was found to be a factor in the *Abrahall* case.

Further, where there has been a collective protest or objection by a union on behalf of the employees and then the situation not clarified, by either side, a court may be reluctant to make an inference.

How do I make changes?

Changes that are advantageous to an employee, or changes which are part of a package (such as on promotion) containing some good and some bad parts, are still highly likely to be taken as accepted by the employee if they continue to work without protest.

Where changes are wholly disadvantageous,

the following steps should always be carefully considered:

- Can the employee be compensated in some way for the proposed change by you being able to offer them something advantageous?
- Have you consulted the employees (and/or their representatives) over the reasons for the proposed changes?
- Have any suggestions by employees or their representatives been taken on board? If they are not workable, can you clearly explain why?
- Can you agree to review the changes and circumstances after a certain period of time?
- Have you a clear record of their consent to any changes that have been agreed?

In the event that the changes cannot be negotiated, the safest course of action in terms of providing certainty would be to go through a process of dismissal and offering re-engagement on the new terms. Depending on the number of employees involved, this could require you to comply with collective consultation requirements as well as a fair process for the individuals involved.

CLR Law is a law firm specialising in employment law. Contact Claire Rolston or Yvonne Atherton for advice on this or other employment law related matters 0191 603 0061 or hello@clrlaw.co.uk



HIGHLY-RATED TECH LAWYER JOINS SINTONS

Specialist tech lawyer Lucy Cook, whose previous roles include working in-house at FTSE 100 software giant Sage, has joined growing law firm Sintons as a senior associate.

Lucy advises businesses of all sizes on commercial and intellectual property matters and has a particular focus on the tech sector. She has been praised by Chambers for "standing out as a solicitor who genuinely understands how technology businesses work" and has also been hailed by Legal 500 as a "Next Generation Lawyer for IT and telecoms in the North".

Lucy's appointment further strengthens the Commercial team at Sintons at a time of strong growth for the firm, with a focus on the recruitment and retention of outstanding legal talent.



COLLINGWOOD LEGAL APPOINTS NEW SOLICITOR

Newcastle-based employment law firm Collingwood Legal has appointed highly-experienced solicitor Helen Scott. The appointment follows a significant rise in business, which has seen a 25% increase in new matters dealt with in the last three months.

Paul McGowan, Founder of Collingwood Legal, said: "Helen is an excellent employment lawyer and we are thrilled to welcome someone of her calibre to the firm. We deliver exceptional client service and I believe Helen will be a brilliant addition to the team."

The Collingwood Legal team has many years' experience as employment law specialists, successfully working with a variety of public and private sector businesses across the country in defending and resolving employment issues.

SQUARE ONE LAW SUPPORTS DELIVERY OF NORTH EAST FUND

Square One Law has entered into an exclusive relationship with NEL Fund Managers to support the implementation of the £120m North East Fund.

The North East commercial law firm, which has offices in Newcastle and Stockton, will work with NEL on the investment of two of the NEF funds, the £18m North East Growth Capital Fund and the £9m North East Small Loan Fund.

The North East Growth Capital Fund has been designed to create around 790 jobs in more than 70 regional firms and offers unsecured investments of up to £500,000 to established businesses. Targeted at smaller companies, the North East Small Loan Fund is designed to create 1200 new regional jobs in over 320 SMEs.



COMPLETION NEARS FOR LANDMARK NORTH TYNESIDE DEVELOPMENT



Completion is nearing of a sought-after seafront residential scheme in North Tyneside, which has breathed new life into the site of the former High Point Hotel.

Construction of High Point View, a development of 14 townhouses in Whitley Bay that offers spectacular sea views, is due to be finished by late summer.

The three, four and five-bedroom properties have seen significant levels of popularity due to their 'smart home' innovative and eco-friendly design. The site has now unveiled its show home, which was recently opened by Norma Redfearn CBE, the Elected Mayor of North Tyneside.

Law firm Sintons, based in Newcastle, has handled the real estate development work of the site from the outset and is now handling the plot sales.

WATSON BURTON OPENS ITS DOORS TO PROVIDE CAREER INSIGHT



Newcastle-headquartered law firm Watson Burton has demonstrated its continued commitment to providing a launch pad for legal careers by hosting a Career Insight Day in partnership with the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF).

The SMF, which has an office in Newcastle, is a charity which aims to make a practical improvement in social mobility for young people from low-income backgrounds.

Chris Graham, Partner at Watson Burton, opened the event before attendees heard from two trainees on their experience at the firm. An interactive session also gave students an in-depth exposure to Watson Burton's application process.

Watson Burton is also mentoring four students as part of the SMF's APP City programme, which supports high achieving students from low-income families into competitive universities and professions.

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DIVORCE AND HOLIDAYS – WHERE DO PARENTS STAND?



Sarah Crilly

Family law specialist at Ward Hadaway, Sarah Crilly, looks at the issue of children's holiday arrangements after divorce.

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

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

However if no orders are in place, you must obtain the permission of everyone with parental responsibility for the child. It is a criminal offence for any parent to take a child out of the UK without the permission of every person with parental responsibility for the child.

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

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

We can assist with the preparation of such documentation. If a parent will not agree to the

holiday, you can make an application to the court for a Specific Issue Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 to enable you to take your child on that specified holiday.

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

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

For more information on the issues raised in this article, please get in touch with Sarah Crilly at sarah.crilly@wardhadaway.com or 0191 204 4463.

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STAYING POWER...

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

This month we chat to...

MARTIN SOLOMAN

Qualified solicitor for 40 years, Senior Partner, Hay & Kilner from 2001 to 2016, now a busy Solicitor and Consultant at Hay & Kilner and Chair of the Chronicle Sunshine Fund.

Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

No, I did wonder about a career based upon Economics but then I think I favoured dealing with all the words in law rather than the numbers! Mind you, the economics has come into a lot of factors in my working life and The Economist is my favourite reading matter, after that is, Northern Insight!

What is your favourite aspect of the job?

Genuinely, dealing with a wide range of challenging issues and where you develop close and longstanding working relationships with clients some of whom I have worked with since 1984 – and working with great colleagues here at Hay & Kilner.

What has been your career defining moment?

Probably becoming Senior Partner of Hay & Kilner in 2001 at a time of significant potential growth and at the same time Chair of the Chronicle Sunshine Fund thus taking on substantial responsibilities whilst retaining a lot of clients with interesting and challenging needs.

How do you measure success?

Building Hay & Kilner as a law firm which is big enough to have genuine specialists in all key areas of legal business whilst at the same time retaining a very personal partner led service to many clients who retain a very long relationship with us – and at the same time providing a long, enjoyable and rewarding career for many colleagues.

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

There have been huge changes, 2 probably stand out, one is exciting the other "less so". When I joined Hay & Kilner in 1984 we had something called a telex machine and then faxes – much time was spent sending "opposing" solicitors multi page faxes!! Now we have email and smartphones which makes communication hugely quicker with the result that client service is significantly more demanding in speed and responsiveness – but in many ways easier to deliver – except when one is conscious of a client trying to absorb your very detailed report on a smartphone! The upside is that

communication is so much more efficient, the need is to continually be aware of the reality that we must all be constantly contactable particularly when dealing with issues involving other continents. I have however tried to stop myself repeating the flaw of reading and responding to emails when on a precipitous mountain path on holiday in the Alps!

The other big change is the huge growth in regulation not all of which seems to be time well spent – which is a significant resource and time need. Fortunately the legal industry is not alone in that and our clients seem to understand.

How has your skillset developed accordingly?

Having a management responsibility means that you have to think hard on the overall shape and needs of the firm and learn where to intervene and take a lead and provide support and where to step back and encourage colleagues to do what they need to do and give them space to do it. Managing a substantial firm is a constant process of considering what is needed and taking decisions, some relatively minor and straightforward and some which are really very substantial. At all times maintaining balance between the management of the firm and demanding client work. Hopefully, being consistently named as a Leading Individual in Commercial Disputes in Legal 500 indicates that I have achieved that balance, for the most part at least!

Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

Something that we have learned over decades at Hay & Kilner is that providing that full and personal range of services consistently across a diverse range of clients and services is a very good business model. High risk taking can be exciting but can go badly wrong and take a long time to recover from. But one cannot run a business without taking risks which is part of being a dynamic business. We have taken risks for example with acquiring the Private client function of Eversheds back in 2001 which has proved to be a hugely worthwhile investment of effort and funds. I tend to spend time thinking it all through. So it's probably right to say that I am a cautious risk taker – probably as a result of having spent time as a scaffolder's mate in an oil refinery in one of my many labouring student jobs all those years ago where risk had different connotations!!

To what would you attribute your success?

I think I am a reasonably determined person, maybe some of those labouring student jobs taught me that! But I owe a huge amount to my wife Liz, daughter Charlotte and son Peter, who make a very positively minded and determined family "team". I have been very fortunate to work with a wide range of colleagues and clients who are themselves hard working achievers and who are great to work with.

What's your biggest weakness and how have you managed this?

Well, I possibly tend to take too much on but have tried to address this not least by working on my succession plan by involving my younger colleagues in the management issues of the firm so that our Managing Partner at Hay & Kilner Jonathan Waters was able to take over the leadership of the firm with the support around him of younger colleagues who were well grounded in the issues of the day.

How do you remain motivated?

Ah well, even when a job has gone well there is more to do, I have never felt I have been short of challenges and I always like to meet that challenge! My involvement with the Sunshine Fund since 1994 keeps my feet on the ground as a reminder of the immense challenges that some families have to face.

Would you prefer to be liked or respected?

It would be nice to be liked, but respected is very much the priority whether acting in client matters or in managing the business or in chairing a charity with a high public profile such as the Sunshine Fund. If it's possible to be liked too, then it is so much easier to persuade people whether clients, colleagues or opponents. And persuasion is an underestimated and very necessary skill.

I'll retire when....

It seems right for me, my clients and Hay & Kilner. No date set, I am enjoying concentrating on client work and relationships, having had a leading role in management since the 1990s. Retirement does not intimidate me, I am fortunate that despite having had a career of long working hours I also have a lot of outside interests and friends and family to share them with.

IF YOU'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA – YOU SHOULDN'T ALWAYS SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS



Patents Director at Murgitroyd, Peter Wilson, discusses the importance of good communications when it comes to protecting your intellectual property.

Having worked with tech based SMEs and universities in Yorkshire and the North East for the last 18 years I've built up a wealth of experience in how to get the best for my client and to know when they are on to a winning idea. This almost always stems from a conversation.

At Murgitroyd, we all follow a similar mantra with our clients in that we get to know their business and products through regular meetings. With over 25 years' experience in industry and private practice I can offer a commercially realistic and proactive approach to their needs. I have invention harvests with my clients where we talk through all projects and ideas they have, no matter how well thought out they are at the time – as is often the case some of the best ideas start life as a drawing on the back of an envelope.

Once we have the ideas on the table we discuss how to protect their IP, as the type of protection should fit with how the business works and most importantly, fit their budget. Applying for a patent

can be expensive and can take time. Options may include patents, trademarks or taking the decision to publish in the public domain or protect it by keeping it secret. All of which we review in light of the client's business strategy and budget.

For something to be patent protected it must be new and it's down to you to confirm that it is a new idea before filing. Undertaking such research may leave some SMEs at a disadvantage if they haven't yet engaged in an attorney as large organisations will often have access to a research department who can conduct searches. This means that SMEs may need to spend time trawling through the internet and archives to check if a patent can be applied for. If you get this far and you can confirm your idea is new and you have the budget you may want to look at a patent and most certainly open up a discussion with an attorney.

When you have a great idea, you most likely will want to enlist a partner or talk your idea through with someone who may not be within your

organisation, but without a patent first being filed, or some strong confidentiality papers being signed, you could be putting your asset at risk. There really is limited exception if you disclose in the public domain something you later patent. Which is why I often find that there is a sense of urgency to patent. There was one case where a client realised they were talking at a conference but had yet to file a patent on the subject – so a colleague and I worked quickly over a weekend filing six separate patent applications of which three were granted. Though this was a success, it would have been better to have been involved earlier.

For example, at the end of last year, a colleague of mine, through an informal chat discovered his client was developing a new footwear product and had not considered any patent on the project. Recognising the potential a patent was quickly filed which led to them receiving global recognition and a new patent to their portfolio. Which goes to show you don't always know what you've got until you talk it through and get expert advice.

If you would like to discuss protecting your IP more information can be found at www.murgitroyd.com or you can request a meeting with one of our patent and trade mark attorneys on +44 (0) 191 211 3550.

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WHAT NOW, FOR OUR BRAVE NEW GDPR WORLD?

Gillian Scribbins, data protection specialist at leading law firm Muckle LLP, rolls away the rubble and rubbish that ravaged our inboxes in May to review what really matters for businesses.

The run-up may have seemed to last for months; but in fact for many industries the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had been visible on the horizon since it was passed in 2016, and for others even longer still. So after the fever pitch (unfortunately this is not a joke or a World Cup pun) of activity in the second last week of May, what has been happening in the world of data protection?

The 25 May, when the new rules launched, has been and gone. The new age of data protection law is (finally) here. It's safe to say that the run up was mildly comical; a combination of dawning awareness and sheer panic meant we all saw swathes of privacy update emails: some good, some bad, some altogether unnecessary. The European Commission released a statement calling personal data the gold of the 21st century. Comedy memes abounded.

The upshot of this of course is that GDPR is now in the public consciousness, which was, you might say, much of the intention. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will find this public discussion of data protection a great springboard for their new 'Your Data Matters' campaign, which uses a cartoon fingerprint family to help visualise the personal data rights we all have, as individuals.

Launched at the annual ICO conference in March (a hotly anticipated and sold-out event this year), the Your Data Matters campaign is aimed at members of the public, to inform us of how we can control our own personal data, and the requests we can make to any organisation that may hold this personal data.

The ICO's GDPR blog on 25 May, rather than lauding the new enforcement, spoke solely about this focus



Gillian Scribbins

on protecting the data subject, and says: "The GDPR gives people more and stronger rights when it comes to their personal data. Your Data Matters will help people understand how they can exercise those rights."

What we didn't see on 25 May, as many were anticipating, was a huge push of this campaign. Although it is sitting pride of place on the ICO's homepage, where it links to detailed explanations of our rights and how to exercise them; @YourDataMatters has its own Twitter account; and it is being co-hosted by large consumer organisations.

The blog reported that 'the ICO has collaborated with a range of public and private sector organisations to produce publicity materials that can be used by anyone wanting to spread the message to their customers or clients'. But so far these organisations,

the likes of Barclays, BT, Comic Relief and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, have been seemingly quiet on personal data rights.

Similarly we are yet to see any evidence of the rumoured mass subject access and right of erasure requests; and enforcement actions of course will take time to come through, with many waiting cautiously to see where the first increased fines will strike.

In short what this means is that the 25 May was exactly as Elizabeth Denham, the UK Information Commissioner, said - 'just the beginning'.

GDPR responsibilities don't suddenly vanish now the 25 May has passed, although we suspect for many organisations, data protection may have slid back down the priority list on the agenda.

Compliance is an ongoing task that requires regularly reviewed and updated procedures, security measures, privacy notices and data protection policies; a living, well-maintained record of a data processing document; and routine staff training.

What we have seen is an increased push of the guidance available for organisations to aid this continued compliance and awareness. The ICO has issued more sector-specific guidance for micro-organisations, who they recognise may not have the resources to manage or fund their own compliance projects. They have also turned some of their focus to establishing codes of conduct and certification schemes, which could in time potentially supersede measures which are currently considered compliant.

For anyone pushing it under the rug now the 25 May has passed, be wary, GDPR is a new way of working, not a 2018 project to be shelved.

To learn more or for help data protection, GDPR compliance or any IT legal issues, email data@muckle-llp.com or call 0191 211 7777.

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IS THERE A DIFFICULT EMPLOYEE IN YOUR ORGANISATION? FEAR NOT? YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Senior Associate Solicitor Jane Sinnamon, from Collingwood Legal, examines the impact difficult employees have on business.

As an employment lawyer, I get first hand exposure to the challenges employers face in employing people. Please don't misunderstand me – most organisations employ good hard working people who present little problems. However, my job gets interesting when an employer calls me to help them deal with 'that' individual who displays persistent and difficult behaviour. The employee who makes it their business to make life for the organisation in which they work and the people they work with incredibly challenging. The reason they do this, who knows! But it nevertheless happens and needs managed.

The individuals I'm referring to are those who are tirelessly relentless in their own agenda, who manipulate those around them (including management), who know (or think they know) their rights, are never wrong, can be argumentative or have a tendency to blame others for their failings, who do things 'their way', who believe they are being treated unfairly or that the business is doing something unacceptable. Does this sound familiar? From experience, every organisation has 'that' one person (or at least they will at some point).

It is these individuals that employers tend to be reluctant to manage because of the distinct characteristics they possess and contentious nature and way in which they raise issues. Do you wait until the problem disappears (knowing they are disrupting the organisation and the people within it) or try to get the employee to see things from the company's perspective? If so, evidence has



Jane Sinnamon

demonstrated that the problem will not disappear, but indeed worsen.

So, how do you deal with this small but very toxic element of your workforce?

From experience, I have found that employers are more confident in dealing with relatively 'conventional' employees who present more minor issues compared to those genuinely disruptive employees.

Our advice is that this approach needs to be avoided in order to free up time and resource and allow your organisation to flourish. Provided you take control of the individual and manage the matter closely, consistently and robustly, combining organisational and interpersonal perspectives, you should be able to effectively manage the employee.

I appreciate this can be daunting and take a lot of

time, strategy and patience to achieve.

With that in mind, and in light of an increase we have seen in employers having to deal with such behaviours, we are hosting a masterclass event at Kingston Park Stadium on Thursday 5 July in collaboration with Martin Smith PhD (Senior lecturer in Psychotherapy at Nottingham Trent University) who, like us, specialises in extreme difficult behaviour in the workplace. The purpose of the masterclass is to help develop understanding, strategies and practical skills to help manage these individuals and minimise risk to your organisation in doing so.

There are limited places available at this event so if it is of interest we would encourage you to make contact as soon as possible to reserve a place by calling 0191 282 2880 or sending an email to sue.graham@collingwoodlegal.com.

If you require advice in the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me on 0191 282 2884 or email me at jane.sinnamon@collingwoodlegal.com to discuss further.

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ARE YOU HARNESSING THE POWER OF PURPOSE?

By Gillian Marshall, Entrepreneurs' Forum



At the Entrepreneurs' Forum we have the pleasure of working with some of the region's fastest growing and most successful businesses and, regardless of sector, they all have a number of things in common.

There is almost always strong leadership and a clear vision around what they want to achieve, but the key ingredient in their success is a capable and highly motivated workforce, pulling together to drive the business forward, find new customers and make a positive difference.

At our recent entrepreneurs' conference, Angus Thirlwell, co-founder of Hotel Chocolat, spoke with great passion about how, with co-founder Peter Harris, he has built a brand with a purpose that his staff believe in and will protect at all costs.

By forming the business with very clear principles and sharing these constantly and consistently, Angus has created an environment where his staff not only live and breathe the three 'brand pillars', but they remain true to their original mission. Hotel Chocolat is now the UK's leading premium chocolate company, with revenues in excess of £100m.

In truth, being aligned with a common purpose is a more powerful motivator than any drug. It not only gets employees out of bed every morning, but it drives them to go above and beyond in the pursuit of making a positive difference through their work.

One of the Entrepreneurs' Forum's newest corporate partners, Unwritten Creative, works

with organisations day in, day out to amplify their brands, often leading to the creation of new company identities that harness and shape the way they operate.

Based in the heart of Newcastle, Unwritten help marketing managers and company directors through a unique approach which identifies the personas of their key customers, what motivates them, how they differ from one another and what triggers them to engage and make a purchase.

If your business wasn't founded with a distinct purpose, like Hotel Chocolat, this is a simple but highly effective way to work out what's important and align your brand and communications with your aims; bringing clarity to your team and helping you to make strategic decisions with more focus.

Sometimes business isn't just about making money, it's about contributing to something bigger and doing something good. If this is your purpose, then it's critical your team buy into it completely, which must begin with your recruitment.

When interviewing, it's easy to distinguish between those who see work as just a 'job' and those who see it as an opportunity to make a difference and build a career.

At a recent Entrepreneurs' Forum round table event

on this very subject, Mark McGough, MD of Ithica Films, spoke about how he values attitude over skills and only looks to attract candidates who actively want to work for his company. This is because he believes that people who are enthusiastic about what his company is trying to do will work harder and come across more passionately when they are speaking with clients and potential customers.

In order to get the best out of your team and keep hold of the best people, they need to feel like they are contributing toward something meaningful and that they are valued, otherwise the true meaning of the company may be lost on them and placed firmly at the back of their minds.

The power of purpose is key to building a successful business and is led from the top down; the founder creates the idea and the reasons why they have started the business and it is then up to those individuals to communicate this to their team, to inspire them and get them inside.

In the end, it's the people that make up the business that are the most important part of its purpose and identity. They will not only be contributing towards this, but will be shaping it and driving it forward; so does your business have a true purpose and do your staff really know what it is?

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

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An Entrepreneur Interview with...

STEVE PEARSON

Phusion IM

Tell me about your background in business

I was an instrument technician at ICI, then studied towards a degree in the field, before moving on to BP as an instrument engineer. It was while at BP that I moved on to information handover on major projects over a 10 year period, and also when I decided to start my own company. I decided I could do a better job than what was the norm in the industry!

How was Phusion IM formed and your involvement in the company?

I got talking to someone while at BP who ran his own business, and who was always available on the phone or for a chat on how to go about setting up a company, and offered clues. He was even interested in forming the business with me, which gave me confidence!

I essentially followed my dream by having the ambition to set-up the company and came across someone who could handle the IT aspect of Phusion, complementing my engineering expertise.

In your own words, describe what Phusion IM is and does.

We are primarily a service company that helps clients when they are moving from one system to another, and they recognise that they need their information in good shape, whether it is documentation, equipment or spare parts, so their users can easily access this data. Using our IT and engineering expertise, we essentially bring all of this together, validate it and make it accessible.

So, if a system goes down in the middle of the night, for example, the user would have the instructions and part information to hand, and can use their skills to quickly

rectify the issue. Traditionally this would take several hours to source the information.

We also provide software solutions and build apps and a variety of tools to support the information handover for clients.

What is your proudest moment with Phusion IM?

We are involved in hosting the documentation and supporting the two largest natural LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) projects in the world – the Chevron Gorgon Project and the Inpex Ichthys projects – which are worth around \$100bn AUD combined.

I am very proud to be involved in such prestigious projects and often shout about it to our clients, which demonstrates our capabilities and that we can handle work of any size. Although we think small projects are great to!

Is there a particular mistake you have made while in business? And how did you overcome/learn from it?

Being in business 25 years, I have made many! But, entrepreneurs always make mistakes; we just hope not to make the same one twice.

I have found putting all your eggs in one basket can be costly. We previously worked in the nuclear industry on a project, putting many of our resources into it, before the Government withdrew its assets and led to suppliers being served their notices. This had an impact on our business and took time for us to rebuild. The wider energy industry, including oil and gas, is a bit of rollercoaster, so we have learnt which industries to focus on and have built up a diverse portfolio so we don't open ourselves up for this again.

What is the company's USP?

We've got a talented team and excellent relationships with more than 5,000 manufacturers, so we are able to drill down to every product detail. I am finding that our competitors aren't necessarily capable of getting down to this level of detail, whereas we understand it and together with our IT and engineering skills, the client sees the benefits of this.

We have been building our library of data up over the last 25 years, so we don't come to the game empty handed.

How has the firm grown and what do you attribute this to?

We have enjoyed steady, organic growth in an industry that is now understanding information management. There is more awareness about what we do and our capabilities, and I envisage rapid growth in certain areas in the future.

I have always been financially prudent (although my financial people would disagree!) and are continuing to plod along very nicely in our niche area.

Do you live by/do business by a certain motto?

The job is easy; it's the people that make it harder.

What are the future plans of Phusion IM?

There are areas where we can leverage what we've been doing, as we're sat on a lot of content. I have plenty of initiatives and ideas to explore these.

Our steady work is good and we believe we can continue to transform the industry.

Steve Pearson is a member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, a group of like-minded people who come together at inspirational events to share best practice, create valuable connections and help each other to grow their businesses. For more information, visit www.entrepreneursforum.net



LONG-STANDING EMPLOYEE SUPPLIES 25 YEARS OF DEDICATION TO THE NBT GROUP

North East-based The NBT Group is celebrating 25 years of service from one of its longest-serving employees who joined the business at just 16-years-old.

Louise Fisk was first appointed as an office junior in 1993 and quickly rose through the ranks working across the business' marketing, sales and accounts departments, before taking up her current role in purchasing as supply chain buyer.

Louise has played an integral role in supporting CEO Toby Bridges, great grandson of the business' founder who stepped up to take over the helm in 2012. The transfer of leadership has seen the expansion of the group's service offering, as well as staff growth and extensive client acquisition.

Established over a century ago, The NBT Group has become a fully integrated supply chain management company that carries out transactions for a range of clients, including those in the automotive, food & drink and manufacturing sectors.



THE EXPANDED METAL COMPANY APPOINTS NEW TERRITORY SALES MANAGER

Expanded metal mesh manufacturer The Expanded Metal Company has strengthened its team with a new sales appointment.

Daniel Baxter, who has been appointed as Territory Sales Manager, brings over 18 years' experience to the Hartlepool-based company. In his new role, Daniel will be overseeing sales operations in the Midlands and will be responsible for developing key accounts, accelerating growth through new customer acquisitions and creating strategies to expand the company's current markets.

The Expanded Metal Company supplies high quality expanded metal mesh products for sectors including construction, engineering, transport, utilities and architecture. The firm also serves the security sector and has its own security range, ExMesh, which offers a wide range of innovative fencing systems and security solutions.

Prior to joining The Expanded Metal Company, Daniel held a number of sales positions across the UK, including sales representative at VKF Renzel and sales engineer at Metsec.



SENIOR APPOINTMENT DEMONSTRATES GROWTH AMBITIONS AT ARCINOVA

Multi-service Contract Research and Development Organisation Arcinova has appointed a new Chief Scientific Officer to further accelerate the company's growth.

Experienced senior business leader Dr Gareth Jenkins has joined the Alnwick-based firm to support it in applying new technologies which enable the implementation of continuous manufacturing processes.

Gareth has joined Arcinova from Britest, a manufacturing process consultancy where he was CEO. His experience includes research, development, scale-up and commercialisation spanning laboratory, kilo-lab, pilot and commercial plant scales.

In his new role, Gareth will focus on identifying technology that will enable Arcinova to further enhance its innovation-led approach to pharmaceutical development. An initial area of focus will be to drive Arcinova's adoption of flexible, modular continuous manufacturing processes.

Gareth said: "Arcinova has seen impressive growth over the last two years and I feel that I'm coming on board at an exciting phase in its development."



RECORD-BREAKING DEAL FOR NORTH EAST FORK LIFT COMPANY

North East fork lift truck specialist Permatt has been awarded a record-breaking contract to supply a fleet of new machines to JDR Cable Systems, the leading supplier of subsea umbilicals and power cables owned by the TFKable Group.

The deal, estimated to be worth six figures, is the largest single contract win in the history of the 37-year-old North Tyneside company, which is the regional dealer for CAT Lift Trucks. The fleet of new vehicles includes trucks capable of lifting up to 37 tonnes, the largest ever supplied by Permatt.

Mark Percy, Managing Director of Permatt, said: "This is fantastic news for us. CAT Lift Trucks produce some of the world's market-leading trucks and through our relationship, we're now in a much more flexible position to offer customers the best fork lifts for every materials handling job, combined with outstanding service."

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Jim Mawdsley, CEO at Generator
and Samantha Davidson, Managing
Director at Horizonworks.

OUR JOURNEY WITH...GENERATOR

Samantha Davidson, managing director of leading B2B marketing agency Horizonworks, explains how the company took the longest-standing music development agency in the UK on a journey which led to clarity and success.

Generator has nurtured talent in various forms since 1991 from its base in the North East of England. However, times have changed in recent years. It acquired Digital Union in 2015 which focuses on the region's renowned creative and digital sector, it is continuing to offer support to music artists via Tipping Point and it is providing business growth support through its Digital Futures Programme.

The company appointed Horizonworks so it could gain a clearer understanding of how these separate entities should be positioned. We were also commissioned to help the organisation take on a more focused approach, support its growth locally and nationally, and to help the team better communicate their skills and services in the music, creative, digital and technological fields.

We conducted a communications audit with internal and external stakeholders, as well as thorough market research, to create a structured marketing strategy which provided the tools for

Generator to work in a new integrated, consistent and coherent way.

We also translated Generator's complex messaging for its different audiences and refreshed the Generator brand as well as the sub-brands for Digital Union and Tipping Point: these remain separate, but the relationship with Generator is now clear. We have been able to give the company a clearer identity that has truly positioned it as an industry leader – and one of the UK's leading business support agencies for the creative, digital and music sectors.

Jim Mawdsley, CEO of Generator, said: "We're thrilled with what Horizonworks delivered, the manner in which they delivered it and the speed of execution. The team took the time to fully understand our business and what we wanted to achieve. The strategy they created has underpinned our offering and gives us much more clarity to a wide range of audiences. Not only has our branding been overhauled but our culture as well. We have

a really vibrant and ambitious team who are all onboard to propel Generator further."

Horizonworks specialises in championing and supporting innovators from complex sectors with marketing that is clear, connected and purposeful. We offer marketing, strategy, PR, creative and digital services - all under one roof - to ensure all elements of marketing work together to generate the best results for our clients.

Horizonworks has a diverse portfolio of clients including US-based AmeriWater, a premier provider of water purification equipment; Cellular Solutions, a business communications and systems provider; The Expanded Metal Company, an expanded metal mesh manufacturer; Arcinova, a contract research and development company which serves the pharmaceutical sector; and Fera Science, a national and international centre of excellence for interdisciplinary investigation and problem solving across plant and bee health, crop protection, sustainable agriculture, food and feed quality, and chemical safety in the environment.

For further information please contact Horizonworks on 0345 075 5955, email hello@horizonworks.co.uk or visit www.horizonworks.co.uk

RICHARD SWART - 3 DECADES OF SUCCESS

Richard Swart arrived in County Durham exactly 30 years ago to establish Berger UK and is recognised as one of the region’s leading international businessmen. Indeed, in 2016, Manufacturing magazine recognised him as one of the top 100 leaders in the sector in the UK.

As an international businessman operating in the manufacturing sector, Richard Swart knows a thing or two about global trade.

As head of global sales and quality director for Berger Group Europe, he spends much of his working life travelling the world.

In one of life’s curious twists, Richard came to the North East as a young man with no experience in business - he had been a political journalist in Durban - to establish a manufacturing plant for Berger in Peterlee exactly 30 years ago and stayed.

He is now a senior executive within the Group which is floated on the German stock exchange as Ringmetall AG, employs 500 staff and is looking to achieve a 200 million Euro turnover by 2021. So, when he has a strong view on a subject, people listen.

While international trade is his forte, he is very specific about the regions of the world that are most dear to him.

Born in Durban in 1962, his father Ray was an MP in the Progressive Party. He was a principled, conviction politician who challenged the oppressive apartheid regime and believed in justice for all people.

Richard’s love for his country of birth and his adopted United Kingdom runs deep and he supports the countries in any way he can. This includes being a board director of International Relations for the South African Chamber of Commerce in the UK.

Underlining this commitment, Richard recently facilitated one of the most powerful delegations of politicians and business leaders to visit the UK in recent years, building on earlier links established.

The delegation, including a Zulu Princess, government minister and the Mayor of Durban, appropriately headed for the North East of England.

While the challenges that South Africa has overcome are well chronicled and it still has a long way to go to fulfil its true potential, it is the UK’s future that now worries Richard.

The cause of that anxiety is Brexit! Regardless of extensive trade with Europe, Richard has strong views on Brexit and is a passionate ‘Remainer’.



South African delegation of politicians and business people about to attend the offices of solicitors, Ward Hadaway, to discuss trade and investment opportunities.

“There is no self-interest other than speaking up for what is right and served us so well for decades.”

Richard is determined that “noting the damage so far, sitting back and saying we told you so is not an option.”

“Brexit is on track to be the greatest act of self-harm a top nation has done to itself in recent times. In 2015 we were the fastest growing economy in the G7. Now we are the slowest!

“Every impact scenario commissioned by the government confirms we will be worse off, particularly so in the North East. We all have an obligation to help engineer a way out of the current quagmire.

“We had a black and white vote on a rainbow of issues. UK attempting to come out the EU is like trying to take an egg out of an omelette. So messy, damaging and unnecessary.”

In his discussions with prominent figures in the UK and abroad as part of his business and non executive roles, Richard is privy to the views of people who have real insight on Brexit and its implications to the UK in terms of trade and investment. These conversations further reinforce the fear he holds that action must be taken.

“Since the vote to leave, the currency has devalued and pushed up import costs dramatically. As the UK is by far a net importer, most of us have become poorer by the day.

“The UK received the most Financial Direct Investment (FDI) in the EU, because it was a great place to access hassle-free the largest single market

in the world and by far our largest trading partner.

Sadly, we appear on track to give this up and the impact on jobs and communities over time will be huge. Lack of clarity is damaging to FDI and every-day business decisions for key multinational businesses and the many in the supply chains,” said Richard, who was recognised in 2016 by Manufacturing magazine as one of the top 100 manufacturing leaders in the UK.

“People always have the right to change their mind. If this means courting unpopularity in the national interest by speaking truth to power, so be it. For me, this means continuing to strive to be as close as possible to the EU and the range of benefits experienced since joining.

“Joining the EU pulled us out of the 70s doldrums, making us one of the strongest growing global economies.

“We have a serious leadership vacuum in the country with major political parties dominated by right or left wing ideologues fixated on misguided, illusive political utopias and selfish ambitions clearly at the expense of truth, the national interest and what I believe to be the majority middle ground of British politics, who are desperate for bold leadership whom they can trust to lead them out of this mess.

“Why did the government invoke Article 50 – starting the 2 year count-down – when they clearly had no coherent view on Brexit?”

Richard who is a council member, chair of international trade and non executive director for the North East England Chamber of Commerce, added: “We had the best of both worlds, not part of the Euro but a leading part of the largest single market and customs union and negotiating block in the world, with the option to veto anything we did not like.

“We are now retreating in the clear direction of being a marginalised trading nation, aspiring for a world as it existed over 50 years ago. Sadly, the world has moved on but our ideologues haven’t. We owe it to our children to do better.”

Footnote: Richard’s views on Brexit are his own and he is not speaking on behalf of the NEECC.



Richard Swart

PUPILS SEE THEIR DESIGN VISION REALISED AS AKZONOBEL LAUNCHES STEM SUITE AT CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children at a Northumberland primary school are enjoying an exciting and colourful new learning experience with the opening of their brand new 'Inspiration Suite', designed and decorated by AkzoNobel.

The leading global paints and coatings company worked with pupils and staff at neighbouring Central Primary School in Ashington to design the suite where all-important STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects will be taught.

To help inspire the children to get creative with their designs, the pupils visited AkzoNobel's new state-of-the-art plant in Ashington in the weeks leading up to the transformation to participate in a colour masterclass; where they created bright 3D canvases with guidance from instructors at the Dulux Academy training centre.

Officially opened by Ian Lavery MP, the newly decorated suite also includes the main hall, adjoining corridor and staircase and is the culmination of a four-month long project delivered by AkzoNobel as part of its Dulux Smarter Spaces initiative and commitment to 'bring colour to people's lives'.

Dulux UK and Ireland creative director at AkzoNobel, Marianne Shillingford, said: "The most important thing to remember when enhancing a school environment is to create something beautiful and high-impact that both the teachers



Ian Lavery MP with Jeff Hope and Jill Johnston from AkzoNobel Ashington and pupils from Central Primary School.

and the pupils will enjoy, but that will also be easy to maintain.

"The colour palette that we distilled for Central Primary School uses a range of colours varying from forest greens and azure blues to fiery oranges and deep violets to create a stimulating environment which is both functional yet playful.

"The energising colours embody the children's thoughts on positivity and help to modernise the spaces beautifully. The finished result is truly spectacular!"

Executive principal at Central Primary School, Andy

Roberts, added: "We're absolutely delighted with the work that AkzoNobel has done to freshen up our school and make it inspiring for the kids.

"The new Inspiration Suite, school hall and the colourful staircase and corridor are an asset to the school and on behalf of all of the staff and pupils, I'd like to thank AkzoNobel for their hard work and generosity."

Best known for its Dulux, Hammerite and Polycell brands, AkzoNobel is the world's leading producer of decorative paints and coatings.

For more information, visit www.akzonobel.com

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Our nationwide office network allows us to serve client and project needs across the UK.

Having serviced the North East for 30 years, our Newcastle office provides ample opportunity for us to deliver services at a local level and be an active part of the local communities that we serve.





Kerrie Hood

COULD YOU BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR?

Improving skills in the North East and access to quality careers education for children and young people is a key area of work for the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and features in the region's Strategic Economic Plan to create 100,000 more and better jobs by 2024. A better skilled workforce will help drive economic growth.

School governing bodies increasingly have a vital role to play in supporting the skills agenda in the region and the LEP is working closely with schools and colleges to encourage more people from the private sector to consider a role as school governor.

Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the North East LEP, interviewed Kerrie Hood, Head Teacher at Fellside Community Primary School, about the importance of good school governance, and why it's vital to our economic future.

Michelle Rainbow: *For those who don't know, can you please explain what school governance is?*

Kerrie Hood: I like to think of school governance as a three-fold approach. The first, and possibly the most important, is the level of leadership and focus on the strategic direction and aims of the school that it brings. The board of governors helps to steer the ambitions of a school and to realise its mission, its vision and its values.

Schools are accountable to the public and governance provides a layer of transparency at leadership level that promotes this.

Finally, school governance examines and monitors the integrity of how we operate; the deployment of our finances; our policies, practices and procedures; and, of course, our school performance standards.

Michelle Rainbow: *What makes good school governance?*

Kerrie Hood: There are some general traits including unwavering trust; a strong desire to work with



Michelle Rainbow

integrity in the spirit of collaboration; and having a good understanding of the local community that the school serves. We want to attract people with a strong moral compass; people that want to make a positive difference to young people, teachers and the wider community.

Increasingly schools are more open about what they need from their governors. At Fellside, we generally look to where we have a shortage of skills or knowledge from our skills audit, and then seek to recruit someone whose aptitudes and competencies will best fulfil this.

Michelle Rainbow: *What are the current challenges facing school governing bodies?*

Kerrie Hood: There are many, the most obvious one being the strain on school finances. Standards are

expected to rise year on year, yet we're generally less able to provide the quality or volume of resources and levels of staffing we'd like to have in schools.

Ensuring governors get access to key information to assist them in carrying out the key tenets of their role among a seemingly relentless 'sea' of initiatives or change to policy is increasingly challenging.

Michelle Rainbow: *How connected is school governance with the regional economic landscape (e.g. preparing students for the world of work)?*

Kerrie Hood: Increasingly so, and that includes at primary level. Governance provides us with the opportunity of bringing colleagues from the private sector into the public sector domain. If we can positively influence the skill set of young people through an early introduction to role models from many varied professional backgrounds, we can help to promote aspiration and social mobility, which benefits the region.

Michelle Rainbow: *If people have been inspired to learn more about being a school governor, what should they do?*

Kerrie Hood: I would recommend anyone interested in becoming a school governor to either speak to the head teacher of the school or, as I often do, arrange for them to speak to the Chair of the governing board.

There are some fantastic websites too that provide lots of helpful information. I know many of my board members have used www.governorsforschools.org.uk and www.inspiringgovernance.org.

For more information about how the North East LEP is improving skills in our region, visit www.nelep.co.uk/skills



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THE FUTURE OF WORK

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, considers how we'll be working in the future & the skills we'll need to succeed.



The extraordinary pace of digital change is set to have a huge impact on the way we work, the places we work in and the skills we're going to need to be successful in the future.

Big data, artificial intelligence, robotics, automation and global connectivity are just some of the topics being discussed by HR and recruitment professionals, with advances in these fields offering the opportunity to genuinely transform the way many industries and organisations operate.

Of course, the idea that machines are going to take all of our jobs isn't new, but it does seem more prevalent today than ever before because of the ground-breaking nature of the innovations and the speed of change.

Technological advances are helping businesses across the world make cost-effective productivity gains and are improving accuracy and efficiency levels in a growing number of disciplines, particularly those involving data collection, processing, analysis and highly structured and predictable work.

The lines between physical and digital are blurring more every day and delighting customers in the process, with the knock on effect thought by many to be an unavoidable future of mass unemployment; but that's not necessarily the case.

With a focus not only on the application of new digital improvements, but also how these advancements will affect jobs and talent in the workplace, we can all adapt our working practices so that they start to help people develop the skills they need to thrive alongside machines, rather than be replaced by them.

This might feel a little overwhelming - and a source of major concern for a lot of people - but

the truth is that most jobs consist of around 20 to 30 different kinds of activity and, while some may be easily replaced by technology, it's unlikely that every aspect will be, so rather than be made obsolete, it could be that most jobs will simply change.

This means if you're a business leader or manager, you have a responsibility to begin redesigning the way your company not only works with technology, but the environment in which people operate and the way you recruit and manage talent.

Consider how your working models might change when there's no longer a need for physical proximity in order to stay connected with your colleagues. Will you join the growing number of companies who are crowd-sourcing people with the skills they need for a particular contract? Perhaps you'll utilise the more and more skilled people who are choosing to work as freelancers so they can pick and choose projects they are passionate about?

Whatever you do, it seems that, in the future, successful careers will most likely be built around learning and skills rather than specific jobs. If that is the case, we will all need to be recruiting people who not only have the right attitude and

outlook, but who can also solve problems, lead well, communicate expertly and have excellent technology skills.

Emotional intelligence, empathy, curiosity and the understanding and creative application of what we can do with the information that computers create will also be critical to the new way of working, which is also going to mean companies have to operate in a nimble and agile way - thinking big, but acting small.

Although it may feel like this workplace transformation is still a long way from impacting on your particular sector or business, as a leader it is your job to start preparing for the future of work rather than simply training people for today's jobs.

Some of the technological innovations we are seeing will be truly transformational and it's imperative that we don't slow things down. Instead, we need to embrace the opportunities because of the huge benefits they can bring.

At the same time, we also have to face up to the challenges of transition and try to help workers manage their way through this change. That's the simultaneous challenge we have ahead of us.

If you work in tax & accountancy and are looking for a new challenge, or need someone to help drive the business forward, get in touch: bryony@bryonygibson.com | (0191) 375 9983.

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Making its mark in this area for over 30 years is Training Development Resource Limited (TDR), a registered charity which specialises in the education and training of such subjects as engineering, manufacturing, science, business administration, customer service and team leading. With an excellent reputation for delivering on their promises, TDR work with learners and organisations who wish to take full advantage of the training given by experts in their field.

With a staff of over 50, Ian Young, TDR's managing director told us what makes their company stand out from the competitors within the region:

"It's quite simple; we put the learner at the centre of our decision making. The quality of service we offer to employers reflects this, so we will never make compromises and always emphasise on quality.

"Many of our management and staff have come from the industry they represent, so understand the job inside out.

"Within the companies we work with, we help them realise their training objectives and become an integral part of their current and future staff developments."

Indeed, their values, which they state on their website; www.tdrtraining.co.uk speak for themselves, as do the testimonials from both learners and businesses alike.

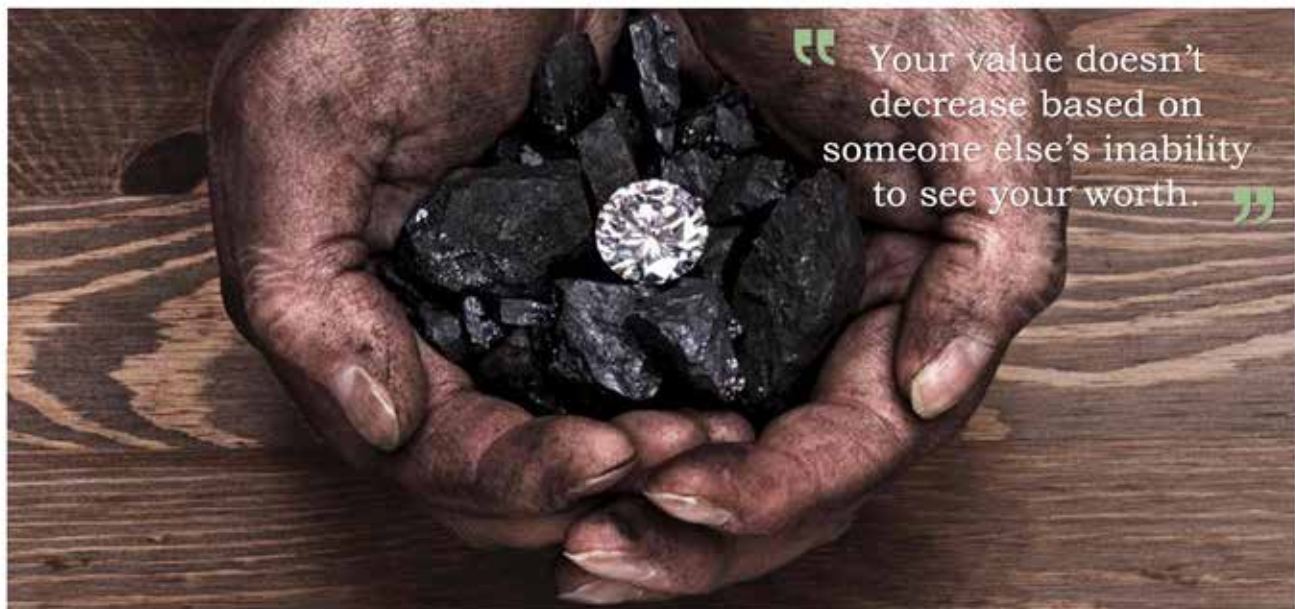
After the news of one the region's most prestigious training institutions, closing after only four years of operating, you would be right in thinking that there is a shortage of good training and development organisations in the region, that deliver on their promises.

It was announced recently that the Discovery School in Newcastle is to close in the autumn following the Minister for Schools termination of their funding earlier this month. The £9M school

only opened in 2014 under the free schools' programme, which was specifically designed to offer an alternative educational experience for teenagers interested in science and technology.

Although it was explained that it was due to low pupil numbers, poor Ofsted grades and safeguarding issues, as a parent, many of us are asking, what are the options for our kids if they choose to go into these areas, and more importantly, which institutions out there are well respected and

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CAN 'SALES' EVER BE A PROFESSIONAL CAREER?

If you're a parent, imagine how you would feel if your thirteen-year-old, whilst sitting around the dinner table one evening, proudly announced that they were choosing their 'options' at school based on their intention to pursue a career in sales.

How would you feel? Proud? Inspired? Relaxed? Or perhaps, worried? Anxious? Annoyed even? Would your natural response be to encourage or discourage them?

What if your child announced they wanted instead to study and pursue a career in Marketing? Would that make a difference to your perception? Hummm an interesting thought.

Many of my peers who have created huge success following a career in sales, can recount this exact conversation with their own parents and in the vast majority of cases, they all describe how their parents did everything they could to dissuade them. Instead suggesting alternative careers. Accountancy, Law, Medicine or Teaching appear to have been the top recommendations. Not overly surprising when these are still considered the typically middle-class, highly skilled, well-paid and stable career choices.

Many fell into sales later on in their careers once their natural ability had come to the fore, or when they started businesses and realised that marketing skills alone are not enough to negotiate and close deals. Yet even in the previously mentioned middle-class, highly skilled careers such as Accountancy, Law and Medicine, in order to rise to the top of the ranks an ability to influence others is still a required skill.

So, if we acknowledge that the ability to sell and to influence others is a core life skill (along with learning to speak in public, and learning to make and manage money), and that our ability to successfully influence others to buy-into whatever it is we're offering is a prerequisite to success in almost all walks of life - why is society (particularly



Nicola Cook, CEO of Company Shortcuts.

in Britain) so slow to recognise, teach and reward its merits?

It's still a hard-held stereotype that to be a self-proclaimed out-and-out salesman gives you the same amount of credibility as Del Boy, but I'd like to think that times are slowly changing. Hurrah!

Since I was first spat out of the American Express sales-sausage-making factory almost twenty years ago which back then, a graduate training programme with a blue-chip, was the only way to be trained in B2B sales skills, the education sector is slowly waking up to the need to focus on these skills, rather than treat them as an add-on to degree in Business Management or Marketing. Many business schools now offer post graduate certificates in elements of selling and Anglica Ruskin university is (to my knowledge) the first university in the UK to offer a full BA degree in Sales.

In addition, the two main professional organisations in the sector, the ISM (Institute of Sales Management) of which I'm a Fellow, and the APS (Association of Professional Sales) are working hard to both raise the profile of sales professionals, whilst also improving standards and credibility.

The challenge of course, is in order to make sales an entirely accredited career such as the other professions would require accreditation. Would it ever be possible to make every shopkeeper or small business owner hold a license in sales skills before they could trade?

So, what can we all do to help crush the negative association of sales as a true profession;

1. Hold high those that wear their salesman badge with pride.

When someone, of whatever age, shares with you their sales ambition or sales success – give credit where credit is due. Remember, particularly in a business context, without a customer – no other department or role in a business is required. Sales people keep everyone else in work.

2. Support the (albeit slow) change in the education sector

Get trained, or get your people trained. Either through the formal courses offered by the Higher Ed sector, or from credible industry experts with proven sales results.

3. Join the professional bodies

Get involved. Seek to continuously self-improve. Just as technology and industry changes, so too does the need to top-up your own skill set. Since I first qualified twenty years ago. The role is vastly different today and will continue to evolve.

And finally, if your fourteen-year-old announces at the dinner table their desire to study and follow a career in sales, then congratulate them. Chances are, if they have that amount of desire at that age they do very well, and you never know - later in life they will likely have the financial means to ensure you end your days in the poshest retirement home!



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in association with Gainford Group



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MY LOVE ISLAND

The world seems to have been taken over by this programme called Love Island. People are finishing meals early, or not even socialising, to get home in time for a 9pm curfew.

I have even lost my wife to a group of young, model like individuals that talk about nothing and have nothing to talk about. My wife describes it as mundane TV that allows her to switch off and sleep better! Hmmm...I am not convinced.

My initial reaction was, what has the world come to wasting time on such nonsense, and then I realised that actually TV programmes like Love Island give people something to talk about. They bring communities together, regardless of their background, wealth or status. Whilst I would much rather that we all came together behind something more action orientated that makes a real difference, I am not adverse to commonality conversations. These are starting points that hopefully can lead to us all taking more of an interest in other people around us.

We seem to live in a world where complaints rather than compliments are the norm. Some of our local politicians appear to constantly complain

about cuts and how poor our region is, rather than recognising the amazing opportunities available in our area, together with exploring better ways of working. The more the politicians keep stating things are bad, the more local communities assume that position and others switch off. This rhetoric starts affecting the mind-set of our local people and before you know it we have third and fourth generations of unemployment with no ambition or aspiration.

In any business, it is incumbent upon the leader to demonstrate leadership and motivate the workforce to engender a sense of achievement, accomplishment and show them a better way. We should be able to expect the same from political leaders too. Yet if all we do is complain about our lot, how can we expect anything different from our people, how do we provide them with hope?

The North East is an incredible land filled with opportunity. We have one of the fastest growing

tech sectors, which is worth £1bn. Our arts and culture offer is world class, and as we embark upon delivering the biggest event in England this year with the Great Exhibition of the North, we will further showcase this. We have the friendliest of people. Our Universities are some of the best in the world. Our industrial, manufacturing, automotive, offshore, and life science offer is considered to be pioneering, and the list goes on.

We have so much to be thankful for and to get behind, which is exactly what we should all be doing. Promoting opportunities to our future generations, equipping them with the personal and professional skills to achieve their ambitions, but more importantly instilling a "can do attitude" through positive reinforcement and compliments.

I love my island. The United Kingdom, and in particular the North East is the greatest place in the world to live, we just need to believe and promote this a little more....

Ammar Mirza CBE is the founder and chairman of Asian Business Connexions, Board member of North East LEP and holds various other positions across the private, public and third sectors.

ONE VISION. ONE MISSION



OUR VISION

"SME CofE aims to be the physical default and de facto Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Support Hub for the Northern Power House. A truly collaborative and ethical approach that will provide a one stop high-quality centre for ALL support needs, helping SMEs to start, scale and sustain."

OUR MISSION

"To bring together credible enterprise support and service delivery partners with the single goal of providing the right support, at the right time, for the right price for all SMEs to grow."

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PLANBEE HELPS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BRIDGE SKILLS GAP

Mark Clasper, director at Ryder Architecture, explains how PlanBEE is revolutionising the way the built environment industries train and recruit new talent...



It's no secret that the built environment industries are suffering from serious skills shortages but over the last two years, at Ryder we've been doing our level best to tackle this.

Since 2016, Ryder has been working with Gateshead College and several top employers in the region to deliver PlanBEE, a flexible higher-level training programme designed to attract and retain the brightest new talent, plug skills gaps, and create a more flexible workforce capable of working across several key disciplines. Rather than follow a traditional training model, where students complete their qualifications while working in one company, trainees have had the chance to work in different companies – giving them a more rounded understanding of the industry.

PlanBEE is a bold, innovative scheme that provides a vital pipeline of new talent for companies across the built environment spectrum, such as architects, designers, contractors and engineering specialists. It also creates much-needed jobs for young people. The first group of 12 students have now completed the programme and have been offered positions with some of the sector's leading employers, including Bowmer & Kirkland, 3E Consulting, Sir Robert McAlpine, Tolent, Brims, Patrick Parsons and, of course, Ryder Architecture.

The beauty of PlanBEE is that it's been designed by employers, for employers. Together these companies worked with Gateshead College to develop a learning programme that's tailored to, and directly addresses, their specific skills needs. This approach ensures that companies recruit people who have the right knowledge and aptitudes for the job in hand.



Mark Clasper (front, right) with Chris Toon (front left) of Gateshead College and PlanBEE students

Often companies require a range of different skillsets to complete a project, such as design and digital expertise, knowledge of the latest building techniques, surveying skills and good project management. Traditionally, you wouldn't find all of these skills in one person. PlanBEE aims to change this by allowing students to work across several disciplines and gain valuable insights into different subject areas.

Ultimately, there needs to be a greater convergence of the skills traditionally sat within the disciplines of architecture, urban planning, engineering, surveying and landscaping. To achieve this, we must change the way training is delivered – and that's why working with Gateshead College for the last two years has been so beneficial. They have an excellent understanding of our industries and the skills we need both now and in the future. They also provide students with great facilities at their Skills Academy for Construction, which has the

latest cutting-edge equipment and replicates an authentic working environment.

It's vital that other training providers, including colleges and universities, show a similar willingness to adapt their learning programmes to suit the needs of industry. For too long, qualifications and degree courses have been unfit for purpose, which has been of little benefit to employers or students. With PlanBEE, companies have access to the skills they need and students, too, get a good deal: a starting salary of £11,383 a year, a professional qualification, a guaranteed job opportunity on graduation and the chance to study for a degree.

Quite simply, there's no other scheme like it in the UK. PlanBEE is truly revolutionary and could eventually be used as a template for other regions. Importantly, employers and students value it and it's helping to tackle crippling skills shortages that have held back the industry for too long.

For more information about the programme, or to get involved, visit www.gateshead.ac.uk/planbee/ or contact Helen Whitfield at Ryder on 0191 269 5454.

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21 AGAIN!

By Michael Grahamslaw

Terry Laybourne's 21 Hospitality Group has long been a benchmark of excellence within Newcastle. Now totalling six venues, the group offers quality and diversity for discerning diners across the city.

Whilst very familiar with 'proper' gastropub, The Broad Chare and buzzy Italian, Caffè Vivo it had been a little while since I'd visited the brand's flagship site, 21.

21 – formerly Café 21 – of course refers to 21 Queen Street, Terry's former Michelin-starred eatery which offered us our first window into fine dining just a few blocks away.

Since then, the venue has relaxed its offering, moving to its new Trinity Gardens site in the mid-noughties and serving fresh, imaginative dishes in the modern bistro style.

Being the 26th anniversary of Lisa's 21st Birthday (no doubt she'll edit this out) we decided that a return visit was in order.

Whilst within easy walking distance of Newcastle's Quayside, Trinity Gardens is a trendy enclave of restaurants removed from the usual hustle and bustle. As a result, the venue retains an air of style and exclusivity which really evokes that special occasion feeling on arrival.

Inside, the reception is warm and welcoming. The venue has a friendly front of house team led by Nick Shottel – Ops Director and classy operator – who has been a part of the 21 family for nearly three decades.

Having arrived early, we were first invited to drink in the atmosphere in the restaurant's bar area. This turned out to be great news as

the bar boasts an incredible wine list with 15 wines available by the glass alone, alongside a selection of beers, cocktails and spirits.

Nicely settled in, we adjourned to the dining area. Cream leather chairs and white linen table tops create a simple décor which is punctuated by bright splashes of pater and colour. It's striking and sophisticated, yet not overly opulent – it's the food which assumes centre stage.

Similarly, dishes at 21 eschew fussiness and instead champion big, bold flavours with respect for ingredients both fresh and seasonal.

The restaurant offers a tempting early evening menu, served 5:30pm – 7pm and priced very reasonably at £23.50 for three courses.

Being Mrs G's Birthday, we went à la carte and were soon staring at a sumptuous selection of starters. My daughter Holly – a French student – chose the traditional café green salad, done well here with chicory, pears, walnut and Roquefort in a luxuriant walnut oil dressing.

Lisa chose the wispy, smoked salmon with homemade soda bread – a real Terry Laybourne staple – whilst my son Jack opted for the roast sea scallops paired inventively with prawns, samphire and blood orange essence.

Yours truly chose the Lindisfarne oysters with spicy sausages, only a few drops of Tabasco

away from being an exquisite starter. Now talk about awakening the palette!

We followed up with real aplomb, tucking into the Northumbrian venison with salt-baked beetroot and fresh asparagus, braised shoulder of beef with two celeries and the rack of lamb, lightly dusted with herbs and served with potato gratin and Jerusalem artichokes.

2017 saw the opening of the Fenwick food hall-based steakhouse, Porterhouse, which has seen acclaim for its Himalayan salt aged beef. Dry aged for up to 45 days (beyond conventional ageing) for superior taste and tenderness, this was something of a revelation for me and I was glad to find it on the menu again here.

The 227g fillet really hit the mark, especially when served with French beans and a plump, roasted tomato.

This had been a truly superb meal but we couldn't leave without sampling our favourite desserts – just small portions this time though. You see, 21 offer a Café Gourmand – a novel, French-inspired mini-dessert served alongside a coffee of choice. Sometimes it pays to have a little bit of what you fancy.

It's not often I get something right but I really excelled myself here! 21 proved the perfect choice for Lisa's birthday and we all left with smiles on our faces. Terry Laybourne remains the king and 21 is the jewel in the crown.

Terry Laybourne has organised a series of Great Northern Supper Club events with nationally renowned guest chefs at Saltwater Fish Co, along with four Great Northern Producer events at Porterhouse Butcher and Grill, running in Fenwick Food Hall during the Great Exhibition of the North summer festival. See websites for details.

BMC STRENGTHENS OFFER WITH SENIOR HIRE

As part of ambitious growth plans, BMC Recruitment Group recently announced the launch of a new division which will provide clients with risk and compliance solutions.

The launch of the new service follows an increasing number of enquiries from current and potential clients to support them with their risk and compliance recruitment requirements.

BMC's approach to its new market offer will bring together the experience, expertise and skill of consultants, to deliver a premium risk and compliance recruitment service to clients and candidates alike.

With substantial experience in the risk and compliance sector, the team is led by BMC's Commercial Director, Phil Harvey, a chartered accountant who brings over a decade of financial experience to BMC's risk and compliance function.

Phil Harvey met BMC Recruitment Group's Managing Director, David Blair, at KPMG, where they both began their careers as chartered accountants. Phil has since held a wide range of finance positions within industry.

Most recently, Phil held the position of Financial Controller at O'Brien Waste Recycling Solutions, overseeing the financial affairs of the business.

As Commercial Director for BMC Recruitment Group, Phil will lead the business through its next phase of growth, capitalising on BMC's strong market share to further enhance the positive reputation, profile and service offer at BMC Recruitment Group.



BMC's Managing Director, David Blair and Commercial Director, Phil Harvey.

From his time at KPMG, and subsequently, in other prominent positions, Phil developed a strong network of key contacts to assist BMC's clients with compliance requirements.

Commercial Director for BMC Recruitment Group, Phil Harvey, said: "I admire the work that David and the team have done so far, growing BMC's regional presence and becoming a competitive leader in professional recruitment services. David has developed an excellent team here at BMC, and recognition of our services is growing – attracting high profile clients and candidates from across the UK."

Phil added: "I'm excited to see how our risk and compliance division will unfold and develop here at BMC, I look forward to building relationships with clients, whilst steering growth plans to drive BMC forward."

Managing Director, David Blair, said: "We're very confident in our market position and in the strength of our team. We have four very experienced Finance Consultants, each enjoying the best periods of their career, and in addition, I, and our Commercial Director, Phil Harvey, are both chartered accountants who have held a variety of roles across practice and industry. As a collective team, our networks are extensive and we offer significant added value for candidates and clients alike through the depth of our experiences."

"This has been a transformative year at BMC, in which we have continued to invest in both our senior leadership team, and the wider team. Our latest offering demonstrates that we're listening to clients, by providing solutions to address their recruitment challenges."

For more information about BMC Risk and Compliance, contact BMC's Commercial Director, Philip Harvey. Call 0191 543 6881 or email philip.harvey@bmcrecruitmentgroup.com

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RECRUITMENT WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

Graham Courtney meets Fred Howie and David Taylor of Howie White Resourcing.

"The use of technology has been the biggest change in the recruitment industry for over a decade. It has brought huge benefits, but those benefits have not been without a cost to the way we do business."

So said Fred Howie from Teesside based recruitment consultancy, Howie White Resourcing. However, when you've been working in the world of recruitment for over thirty years, you're well placed to give serious judgement.

"Technology allows you to do a lot of things very quickly, but it is very tempting to allow quality to fall. We are a results-driven business and, when it comes to recruitment, it's quality not quantity that will always count. You have to recruit the right way."

And that's why Howie White, led by MD Fred Howie and Assistant Director David Taylor, insist on the personal touch. They've notched-up over a thousand assignments for local, national and international clients, so they know what they're doing.

If you're looking to recruit for a specific role within your business, there are two options. The first is to go to a recruitment agency and place an advert or ask them to find someone relevant. With this, there is a very strong possibility that you'll be inundated with replies or, even more likely, the agency will deliver a huge pile of CV's onto the corner of your desk from people who they believe are an ideal fit. Brilliant! All you then have to do, is spend hours ploughing



through the heap of hopefuls and deciding what to do next.

The alternative, is to speak to Howie White. The first steps are the same; you acknowledge that you need to recruit, and you know the qualifications, experience and traits required of your ideal candidate.

This is where the two avenues differ, having been in touch with Howie White, Fred or David will have met or spoken with you covering both the role and responsibilities as well as your desired qualities. Through networking and research, Fred or David would personally interview and shortlist suitable candidates.

Only once Fred or David are satisfied they have found the best candidates for your role, they will arrange for you to meet/ interview as many as you wish.

And THAT is the big difference between dealing with a small, specialised, highly experienced company such as Howie White compared to a faceless agency who operate a scattergun policy where, to be honest, you are just a number.

Howie White rely upon the human element.

"You can't beat meeting candidates personally to find out exactly what they're like", added David. "Anyone with experience of dealing with candidates knows that they frequently look wonderful on paper and have a fantastic CV but once you meet them, you know within a nanosecond that they're not suitable.

Here at Howie White we get to know you, and your business, giving us an excellent idea as to what type of person would be ideal, and let's face it, unless you actually meet a candidate, personally, there is a good chance that you are not going to find a square peg for a square hole."

Give Fred Howie or David Taylor a call on 01642 535 000 or send an email to fred@howiewhite.co.uk or david@howiewhite.co.uk and let them find the right person for you. Personally.



HELPING ORGANISATIONS MAXIMISE THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY.

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HELPING ORGANISATIONS MAXIMISE THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

Strategic Apprenticeship Levy Consultant Kate Temple-Brown is an expert in her field. Now she's teamed up with Gradvert on an exciting new collaboration.

Can you tell us a bit about your career?

I worked in early careers recruitment and development for Goldman Sachs for seven years, followed by other roles predominantly in the investment banking sector. I then went on to work for Bank of England, where I set up their early careers proposition. When the Apprenticeship Levy was launched, I was really excited so I decided to set up my own strategic Apprenticeship Levy consultancy - Aequalis - to focus on helping organisations understand the opportunity.

How did your relationship with Gradvert come about?

I met Gradvert managing director Michaela Reaney at a conference and we quickly realised that we wanted to work together so we teamed up on this new collaboration.

I passionately believe in talent, developing people

and getting the best out of them and I know that Michaela and the Gradvert team feel the same way so it was a perfect partnership.

We're offering outstanding, bespoke training intervention in customer service and leadership and management but the difference is that companies can use their levy pot to fund our opportunities.

It sounds like a great chance for companies to maximise their Apprenticeship Levy spend. How will it work?

We start with a strategic conversation about the client's broader talent needs. We look at any talent challenges and then how they can use the apprenticeship reforms to maximise the opportunity and bring in transparent and rigorous development pathways that are cost-effectively funded.

We then develop top-quality, bespoke training,

which is paid for from a client's levy to address those talent challenges.

What we're trying to say is when you develop your talent with our training interventions, it can make a huge difference to your business, and we can show you a cost-effective way to do it.

What has the reaction been so far?

This is something totally unique, it's been mind-blowing and the client list already speaks for itself.

We have worked with companies like Multiplex, BT, Diageo, investment bank ICBC and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Companies absolutely love it because instead of having to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds to set up a leadership and management programme, they can get it free of charge because it's money that's already in a pot. They're absolutely delighted they can leverage their learning and development budget in this way.

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Simon Williams



Crest photography was set up in 1995 by award winning photographer Simon Williams.

With over 30 years in the business Simon has gained a reputation for Corporate PR, Commercial and Press photography. Highlights include private sittings with Prince Charles and the Prime Minister, along with shooting most of the Royal Family and VIPs who head to the North East.

The ongoing coverage for clients speaks for itself, and Simon is proud to be still working with the original three clients he started with in 1995. Gaining his associateship in the British Institute of Professional Photography at the age of 27 inspired him to start his own business, and soon after Crest Photography was born.

Simon Williams, 2 Church Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 5EL.
07889 532 545 simon@crestphotography.co.uk

YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

MICHAELA REANEY

Managing Director, Gradvert

Gradvert aims to improve business performance by improving people. The company simplifies graduate recruitment, delivers tailored leadership and management training and enables businesses to build life-long learning capability so they succeed.

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

I grew up in Teesside living in various locations throughout Tees Valley before relocating back following a stint working in London and overseas.

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

I think North East business people tend to be very supportive of other companies. There is a natural willingness to help and that's because we see the benefit of doing it. I find that people are very open to putting aside competition by referring and recommending commercial opportunities outside their own companies.

Collaboration can be a really powerful way to build a business. At Gradvert, it makes us much more focused on our strategy because we actively look for opportunities to collaborate to achieve our stated business development goals.

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

Being close to my family and friends. When you spend much of your working life outside of the region travelling, it is a pleasure to come home and be so close to those who make you happy.

Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?

For a casual business meeting I enjoy the Cycle Hub close to our Hoults Yard office. Informal, friendly and a great view of the Tyne.

Where do you like to eat out in the region?

Muse in Yarm is always a firm favourite.

Where do you like to unwind within the North East?

Hiking in the hills near my home in Teesside - you can't beat the view from Roseberry Topping to help you relax after a busy week. Otherwise, I would say the spa at Seaham Hall.

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

I love the view of Teesside's chemical works from Roseberry Topping - I'm such a smoggy and it makes me feel at home.

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

I think we need much better infrastructure for the North East to take advantage of working closely with other Northern cities and regions. Trains are increasingly unreliable and the cost of travelling can be quite prohibitive. Here at Gradvert we're very supportive of the North East LEP's work and its strategic economic plan which has a programme focused on improving transport and digital connectivity.

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

I've worked in London, Birmingham and some interesting stints in India, Azerbaijan, St Lucia and Thailand. I think it is important to have an external focus and to think more broadly than our own environment and network. It's why having a diverse team is important - different perspectives matter.

What's lovely about Gradvert is that we have our headquarters in Newcastle, but we also operate out of the West Midlands and London for clients right across the UK so we have great insight into the regions. All of them have different industry strengths so we have developed cross-sector expertise and just tailor our offer to each organisation accordingly.

For more information please visit www.gradvert.com.





BUSINESS CLUB

...Inspiring conversation over a fine lunch...



The audience were nervous with anticipation ahead of our June lunch event, who and what was a "Rainmaker"? Well for those that were not in the know there was a sigh of relief to learn that our speaker, Jonas Caino was going to impart his knowledge on how to sell successfully and making rain is all about making money! Our thanks to Jonas for a great presentation and lots of motivation.

Booking now for Monday 2th September 2018

Speaker - Ammar Mirza - Asian Business Connexions

Serial Entrepreneur, Key Note Speaker, Angel Investor, President of Federation of Asian Business. Ammar Mirza CBE is a sought after leadership & business management consultant through his company AmmarM (UK) Limited. Ammar is a serial entrepreneur with interests and investments across a number of sectors. Over a 15 year period he has helped establish several hundred new businesses within the North East. As chairman and founder of Asian Business Connexions

Venue - Jesmond Dene House

Date - Monday 24th September, 12 noon **Price** - £50pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee



Find out more - book a place - email Linda@exclusivebusiness.net

Diary Dates: Monday 29th October - Stefan Lepkowski, Karol Marketing Group, Jesmond Dene House
Monday 26th November - Jon Chadwick, Durham Distillery, Jesmond Dene House

Tees Valley Lunch Club – first event Monday 1st October at Wynyard Hall – all details to follow

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**Monday 24th September:
Speaker - Ammar Mirza, The Asian Business Network**



"The Power of 3 is an approach that I have adopted which has helped me realise my ambitions and support those around me to help achieve theirs. Whether it is Communicate, Collaborate and Celebrate for my professional endeavours or Patience, Perseverance and Persistence as my personal mantra, the key component to success is positivity. I look forward to sharing my personal and professional story at this Exclusive Lunch."

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2018

Monday 29th October with Stefan Lepkowski, Karol Marketing.

COMING SOON

Exclusive Northern Insight Business Lunch Club Tees Valley - Wynyard Hall, Monday 1st October, 2018

For more details visit: www.exclusivebusiness.net or to book a place - email Linda@exclusivebusiness.net



SUMMER SOIREE IS A HIT WITH NORTH EAST PROPERTY PROFESSIONALS

Over 260 property professionals attended the annual RICS Matrics North East Summer Soiree, raising over £2,500 for two charities - Smile for Life and Pledge150.

It was an evening of networking, delicious food, celebrating achievements and superb entertainment.

Chair of RICS Matrics North East, Puneet Vedhara, Associate at Knight Frank said:

"This year's Summer Soiree is my last as Chairman so I'm delighted that it attracted such a strong turnout yet again. This event is a favourite as it raises a lot of money for great causes and brings the North East's property professionals together for a great finale to our social calendar."



ONLINE ACCESSORIES RETAILER GETS SAVVY ADVICE FROM YOUNG BUSINESS STRATEGISTS



(L to R) Northumbria University business student Beth Knight with Michael Farnsworth, MD at BAM Worldwide, alongside Business Clinic project partners, Jack Callaghan, Liam Goble, Josef Cassar and William Johnson, MD at BAM Worldwide.

insights they bring has been a transformative process for us.

"We are a small team and when you work at the coalface it can be difficult to step out and see the bigger picture to create new opportunities. We created TORRO to cater for style conscious men, who want good quality products at affordable prices.

"We wanted to know if our strategy to create a new and exclusive range of gents' leather accessories would enable us to sell at a higher price point. Our project brief focused on two key elements. Firstly, how can we boost our online presence in the USA and Europe, and secondly, to look at how we can take TORRO from the internet to the high street in a manner which fits our brand values.

"The report and recommendations the team produced are excellent, realistic and implementable. I think the Business Clinic model is a great idea that everybody benefits from. It has been fantastic for us to tap into emerging business talent, and to know that we are helping Beth, Jack, Josef and Liam to further their studies."

The Business Clinic, which is part of Northumbria University's award-winning Business School, was 'Highly Commended' by the British Academy of Management Education Practice Awards Panel in 2017 for its role in bringing students and businesses together to identify and deliver genuine solutions for real businesses.

BAM Worldwide Ltd, the North East-based company behind the successful men's online lifestyle accessory brand TORRO, recently teamed up with business students at Northumbria University to explore diversification and new routes to market.

Business partners William Johnson and Michael Farnsworth launched the company, which specialises in the design, manufacture and delivery of premium quality leather cases and covers for mobile devices, in 2014. In just five years, the TORRO brand has secured a loyal customer base with sales worldwide and a turnover in excess of £2 million per year.

Aware they have only touched the surface of the e-commerce market and keen to keep innovating, William and Michael approached the Business Clinic at Northumbria University for advice.

They tasked a team of four final year business students to research growth potential and conduct a feasibility study into the company's plans to evolve the brand by adding complementary products to its range.

William Johnson, BAM Worldwide managing director, explains: "Working with the Business Clinic has been a great experience for us. Enlisting the support of bright young minds along with the knowledge and

To find out more about BAM Worldwide and TORRO go to: www.torrocases.co.uk. For more information on the Business Clinic, go to: www.northumbria.ac.uk/business-services/the-business-clinic/

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NEW SENIOR APPOINTMENT AT BUSINESS ENERGY CLAIMS



North East-based Business Energy Claims, the first organisation in the UK aiming to tackle energy broker mis-selling, has appointed a new director to drive the business forward.

Tim Hipperson, who has over 15 years' experience in the non-domestic energy industry, has been tasked with engaging with the regulator OFGEM, as well as consumer groups such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, to ensure transparency in the business energy market.

Tim will play a key role in communicating the firm's message to business consumers, informing them of potential mis-selling and their right to make a claim against their business energy brokers.

Tim said: "Having spent the last five years being vocal against mis-selling practices, I am delighted to join the team at Business Energy Claims. The company has the potential to change the energy brokering market for good and I am really excited about being part of that change."



INSPIRE NETWORK INTERNATIONAL LTD APPOINTS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Inspire Network, a North East women's networking group with over 10,000 members, is set to go global with a new structure and its first ever chief executive.

The new Inspire Network International Ltd has been launched after eight years running as a not-for-profit company supporting women in business at every stage.

The new company has the goal of becoming a national and international organisation with Inspire groups all over the globe supporting and inspiring women of all ages to reach their dreams of entrepreneurship.

The firm has appointed Mandy Charlton as its first ever Chief Executive. With over 12 years of business experience behind her, Mandy has faced many challenges due to bipolar disorder and agoraphobia but has gone on to establish herself as a business leader with a successful photography business and as a well-known blogger.

ARCINOVA STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP TEAM WITH NEW APPOINTMENT

Multi-service Contract Research and Development Organisation Arcinova has appointed a new Head of Regulatory, Technical and Administration Systems to oversee its business operations.

Rob Dungworth brings more than 25 years' experience to Alnwick-based Arcinova, which provides both integrated end to end solutions and standalone services to pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

Prior to joining Arcinova, Rob held Head of Quality Assurance roles with Sandoz in Leeds and Novartis in Horsham. In his new role, Rob will be responsible for managing Arcinova's information technology system and ensuring the company's compliance with its legal obligations of cGxP. He will also play a key role in setting and shaping internal strategies.

Rob said: "I'm delighted to have been appointed at Arcinova. The company has experienced major growth over the last two years and it's an exciting time to be joining the team."



MANAGING DIRECTOR APPOINTED TO NORTH EAST LEP BOARD



The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has appointed Kate Wickham, Managing Director of Gateshead-based Gate 7, as a board member.

Kate, who was recently recognised with an MBE for services to export and outward investment, joins current board members from the private, public and education sectors.

She said: "Joining the North East LEP board felt like a really good opportunity to do something for the North East. I'm looking forward to working together with the existing board members to use our mix of backgrounds and experience to benefit the region."

Since being appointed as Managing Director of Gate 7 in 2011, Kate has invested heavily in equipment, expansion and a new purpose-built factory in the USA. The company specialises in the supply of decals and printed components to the construction equipment, agricultural and industrial markets and has global contracts with JCB and Volvo.



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Time:	11:30am - 3pm

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Itinerary for event

11:30am	Open networking
12:00noon	Buffet lunch
12:30pm-2:30pm	Seminar
2:30pm-3:00pm	Q&A and networking



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CASCADE CREATES NEW ROLE TO ELEVATE CUSTOMER AND PARTNER SERVICE



Abby Turnbull

Cascade Cash Management (Cascade) has created a new role to elevate the service and relationship management for clients and partners of the company.

Abby Turnbull, who joined the company in 2016, has taken on the mantle of Partner Support Manager.

From Carlisle, Abby has over six years experience in the financial sector and through her close liaison with the management and support team since joining Cascade she has the internal knowledge and skills to excel at the role.

Cascade has enjoyed six years in business already achieving an important milestone last year when the company launched a new and unique online portal. The new portal has increased revenue through the addition of new customer relationships in the form of savers and third-party advisory firms. It is these third-party advisory partners that Abby will be working closely with, enhancing their experience and supporting the performance of the Cascade portal.

Abby said: "I'm very excited about the challenges of this new role and building out the responsibilities with Emma, our MD. I have always been very enthusiastic about finding and building relationships with new partners in my time at Cascade and this role cements that contribution.

I am looking forward to maintaining our valued relationships, spending time with our existing partners, as well as welcoming new ones."

In her new role Abby will be creating illustrations and rate bulletins, keeping partners aware of rates and steering them to best performance. She will work closely on all marketing activity that involves partner communications, set up new portal accounts, liaise with client support, maintain partner support and feedback and manage all queries from partners.

The Cascade team can manage funds on behalf of clients or depositors can use the portal to manage their own savings. Partners including IFA's, solicitors, attorneys, accountants and many more can also self-brand the product for presentation to their own clients. With that in mind, Dr. Emma Black (managing director of Cascade) said: "As well as working closely with savers who use the portal directly, Cascade works in partnership with a good number of organisations across the financial and legal sector, providing services for the outsourcing of the administration of cash management. It is important to us that we have a strong and open

relationship with all our partners so this role has been designed to establish clear responsibilities and channels to fulfil this promise and cement our relationships further. Abby's experience and enthusiasm made her a perfect choice and I look forward to working with her in developing our service and support on offer."

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

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

The Cascade team can manage funds on behalf of clients or depositors can use the portal to manage their own savings. Partners including IFA's, solicitors, attorneys, accountants and many more can also self-brand the product for presentation to their own clients.

More information is available at www.cascade.co.uk

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TOM CEMENTS ACCOUNTANCY WITH OFFICE MOVE



Tom Baker has launched his new business in Teesside with confidence, securing himself a swanky new office at Commerce House.

Commerce House is a Grade II listed building in the heart of TS1 that has just had life breathed back into it following a £1.2m investment and renovation. The building is proving to be a big draw for businesses that want to stay on Teesside but require Five Star office space within an enviable business community.

Tom's business, now named Certax Accountancy, is part of Tom's growth strategy. Having had his own accountancy business for a number of years, Tom has invested in the Certax franchise for Teesside to expand his offering to current clients and to attract new ones. And the new office is

perfectly fitting with the brand and with Tom's client base.

Tom, who has had his own businesses in a range of industries for over eight years now, said: "I like being my own boss and with Certax I get the best of all worlds. I get the added support of their chartered accountants whilst I pass my own ACCA exams. It means I am also part of a respected brand, whilst also having autonomy to make my own decisions.

"An office in Commerce House was of those decisions and I am delighted with it. Christine, the facilities manager, couldn't do enough to facilitate my decision. I started off as a virtual

tenant for three months whilst I sorted out the business details and then moved into my office this month, with her help."

Tom, who holds a hosts of qualifications including AAT Level 4, delivers accountancy services across all industry's focusing on the SME market. He concluded: "Since moving into Commerce House, I have been growing on a daily basis, landing new clients and also expanding my service to existing clients."

Office space is going quickly but is still available at Commerce House. To see the size of offices, which can take from two desks up to, 14 desks please visit www.commerce-house.co.uk

More information on Tom and his business is available at www.certaxteesside.co.uk

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RMT ACCOUNTANTS SIGN UP TO SPONSOR UP- AND-COMING KARTER JOSEPH

A promising young North East kart driver who has his eyes on taking Lewis Hamilton's Formula One crown has picked up Gosforth-based RMT Accountants & Business Advisors as his latest sponsor.

Joseph Taylor competes in the Little Green Man Series, which sees the UK's best junior kart drivers competing against each other in events right around the country.

After taking the runner-up spot in his class in each of the last two years, 13 year-old Joseph is now leading this year's Junior X30 category with just four events left to go.

He also won the Kartmasters cadet class in 2015, giving him the chance to visit the Mercedes factory and meet the reigning Formula One world champion as part of his prize.

Joseph, who lives in Ryton, started driving karts at the age of six after trying one out on holiday and began racing competitively two years later.

Last year, he became the first recruit to the Official Driver Programme run by professional motorsport team Manor, which aims to offer talented young drivers structured support and guidance towards realising their potential and giving them assistance on how to manage the challenges and opportunities they will find along the way.

Long time motorsport enthusiast Laurance Laybourne, who secures and manages his sponsorship agreements, says: "The season has gone well for us so far and we're hopeful that Joseph will be able to maintain his championship lead right through to the end of the season.

"It's well known that Lewis Hamilton and many Formula One drivers got their start in kart racing, and Joseph is very much focused on following in



their tyre tracks as he progresses through the sport. "Bringing sponsors like RMT on board not only helps meet the immediate costs of what is very much a money-driven sport, but also gives extra credibility to what Joseph and the team are achieving as a whole, and it's great to have signed them up as our

latest North East-based backer." Stephen Slater, director of commercial services at RMT, adds: "Joseph is a hugely talented and focused young sportsman and we hope our support provides some extra momentum towards him achieving his goals for this season and beyond."



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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

Michael Gramslaw meets

MATT SHARPE, DAWN WALTON, GREG HARE, SIMON NEWSHAM & STEPHEN POOLE

The quintet of North East Tax Directors at national practice Baldwins.



For information on how Baldwins can help your business visit the website www.baldwinsaccountants.co.uk

As I arrived in Birtley to meet with Baldwins which was conveniently just off the A1 motorway, two of the tax directors arrived from the firms other ten offices in the region. The regionality and localism of Baldwins is a theme that really came across during our conversation.

I asked them what they think sets Baldwins apart from other accountancy firms.

Matt, Head of Tax for the North East, sees Baldwins "not just an accountancy firm but rather a technology based advisory and process outsourcing business operating in a truly localised marketplace with a national footprint".

"Small firm values are unique and core to Baldwins" adds Dawn, who heads the firm's Seaton Burn office, "whilst being able to provide added value specialist services that match those of the larger firms. Our offices are located, purposefully outside of big city centres enabling them to service the needs of the SME/OMB market and maintain that local feel thereby enhancing our close relationships with our clients".

Greg's view, as Head of the Wynyard office, is that, "Baldwins now has the critical mass and depth of professional expertise across the full range of business services to provide an individual in Stokesley, a business in Ponteland, or a Partnership in Alnwick with the advice it needs, when it is needed and on their doorstep".

Stephen and Simon meanwhile have a simple but effective formula for what makes Baldwins such an attractive proposition for local clients.

"My approach is focussed on building long term trusted relationships with our clients", outlines Stephen, "looking at all of their activities holistically in order to provide as a collaborative team advice which is integrated, proportionate and flexible".

Simon mirrors Stephen's comments. "At Baldwins we all take a collaborative approach and like to work alongside our clients through their business and personal lifecycle. We don't see ourselves as accountants, but long term business advisers".

Most organisations build their business based on core values, and Baldwins is no different.

Supporting owner managed small and medium sized businesses in their local communities is clearly at the heart of Baldwins, and this extends to their local involvement in corporate and social responsibilities.

"Investing in our people is an

enabler to this and our inclusive collaborative culture transcends all of our people bringing motivation, career progression opportunities, and personal development to everything we do" Stephen adds.

Dawn instils these values locally by "having the right people with the right outlook so that clients are number one and it's how we build lasting trusted relationships".

Baldwins is embracing change and the last year has seen the formation of a formidable interconnected tax team in the North East, each with their own unique expertise that jointly can advise across all taxations aspects relevant to entrepreneurial and owner managed businesses.

The focus on teaming and investing in people prompted Greg to add: "Additions to the north-east tax team at all levels have dovetailed our expertise which can provide a compelling alternative to the Big 4 and mid-tier in the marketplace."

Matt's overview of the regional team is that "our dedicated hard working team works flexibly across our offices delivering both tax compliance and advisory projects wherever there is demand. We have a clear market facing external focus and a culture that matches".

Simon, who is also a qualified lawyer, suggests that "the expertise of the National team means we are able to compete with Big 4 in terms of the depth of advisory specialisms. That said, we ensure we remain true to our core value of a small firm big on expertise".

2018 has already had a number of highlights, from the achievement of the Great British winter Olympic team, the antics of Donald Trump, and the Beast from the East. But what's made 2018 so far for Baldwins.

Dawn, who was part of the Rowlands acquisition by Baldwins, thinks it is undoubtedly the uniting of the tax team.

"Since their appointments over the last year, Matt, Simon and Stephen have joined Greg and I, forming tight knit working relationships that sees us sharing knowledge and ideas regionally and nationally on a daily basis. This has led to the appointment of Matt as North-East Head of Tax, after a short time with the firm."

A highlight for both Simon and Stephen is being involved in working with Durham Cathedral on their foundation 2020 campaign to provide a sustainable future for the world heritage site. They also add "we have also formed some fantastic working relationships with some local business and are planning and sponsoring some significant events in the coming months".

For Matt there have been three highlights "firstly being appointed North East Head of Tax; secondly exposure to my first full immersion into January tax delivery; and thirdly achieving my first 10k in less than an hour!"

Baldwins is also embracing technology and being active in the marketplace with the integration of cloud based accounting, record keeping, and forecasting solutions into their business outsourcing model.

Matt sees cloud based applications and software integration "changing and improving the way all businesses work in terms of access to real time data and more accurate forecasting, but also in a reactive way as making tax digital forces how we will be interacting with HMRC in the future".

Business disruption and uncertainty is consistently in the press and media with the business anxiously speculating what a post Brexit world might look like.

Over the past eighteen months Greg has seen a marked increase in uncertainty for businesses putting the brakes on new investment and risk taking. "We have seen this in varying degrees across our client base, but for our region which is heavily reliant on agriculture as well as exports means that we are perhaps exposed above the national average as we move towards a world post Brexit."

Stephen and Dawn act for a large number of agricultural clients and Brexit has certainly placed some uncertainty on them, particularly surrounding the Basic Payment Scheme.

As a well-balanced senior tax team, the issues which Baldwins encounter day to day is varied.

For example, Dawn and Stephen specialise in Inheritance Tax and nearly every day involves Trust taxation issues, for their clients to manage their intergenerational wealth and asset protection which is always high on client agendas, particularly as increasing generations are becoming stakeholders.

For Matt each day brings something new and the variety of working in tax and as a regional head means nothing is ever dull meaning it's important to retain a good sense of humour!

For Matt the most important aspect of his role is how he adapts and interacts with people, whether they are clients, internal personnel, or other professional advisors. Asking the right questions but truly listening to the responses is the fundamental building block of a trusted business advisor.

Underpinning this is "ensuring a valued added service is provided to clients is paramount to what we do" Simon adds.

In terms of where Baldwins will be in five years' time, the quintet were in agreement that the firm would be an established 10 business advisory firm leveraging technology to deliver a market leading business, outsourcing, offering and Making Tax Digital solutions, perhaps with an overseas angle.



“
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”

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF ONE BUYER IS THE RIGHT BUYER FOR YOUR BUSINESS?



Tait Walker partner, Steve Plaskitt, shares his advice on business deals following the news that Asda and Sainsbury's will be merging.

Last month it was announced that Asda Walmart was to buy Sainsbury's after the two chief executives reportedly hatched a plan to merge together in an off market deal.

Sainsbury's were not for sale but through the approach and careful negotiations behind the scenes, the two supermarket giants were able to announce a deal together and surprise the market. Even the Sainsbury's CEO was pleased enough to sing "we're in the money" and become a social media meme!

For most SME business owners, an off market approach from a buyer is not this simple.

Handling an unexpected approach from a buyer

Firstly, whilst it is always flattering to be approached, you need to understand whether it is focused and genuine. Is it merely a letter or email from someone to see if you (and perhaps dozens of other company owners) would consider a sale? Or is it a genuine approach, where the buyer has looked at the market and decided upon you as their best way to grow?

The best and most genuine approach is where the potential buyer has known you for some time, whether through trading relationships or through previous dealings. This was reportedly the case for Sainsbury's and Asda, as the two CEOs had worked together previously.

Do you know why have they approached you?

Once established that the approach is genuine, you need to know why they have approached you. Is it, for example, for your people, technology, products, capabilities, niche market position, or geography? Or is it that they have growth targets that can not be obtained without an acquisition? Are they looking for

new market ideas and want to speak to competitors? Sometimes these interested parties may appear to be genuine but are not, and are only interested in buying on their very low valuation terms.

For all cases, be careful what information you reveal to them and keep items confidential, particularly if the interest is from a competitor. Instead of "Caveat Emptor", i.e. let the buyer beware, it is the seller that should be wary in these situations.

Establishing your valuation expectations

Using your corporate finance adviser should help you to establish what your valuation expectations should be and whether their offer is too low, at a fair price or at a great one. The adviser will be able to help throughout the process to benchmark their offer, identify other areas of value and ultimately improve the offer.

Be open to other options and ideas. If one company has shown interest in you, do not believe that they are the only one. Other options, such as looking at a management buy out, carrying on as you were or actively seeking other buyers, are always available. If initial negotiations aren't going as well as you think, you will be able to use the information pack prepared to send to other buyers and reach out to them again under the terms of a confidentiality agreement.

What to do after finding a buyer

If you have met with the potential buyer and believe that you can work with them going forward, then you should ask them to make an indicative non-binding offer.

The offer is of course negotiable. You will need a few weeks and greater sharing of forecast information

in order for the offer to be increased and developed into a set of heads of terms which explains the key aspects of the deal. Only at this point should you be prepared to work exclusively with the one buyer for a few months to allow the deal to complete.

How to identify if the deal will work

Two ways to identify whether the deal will work is to identify specific synergies between buyer and seller, and to co-develop a business plan for your company under their ownership. This has to be a two way process and cannot be done in a confrontational fashion. Spend time on this joint plan and consider the integration of the companies, the savings and the new opportunities e.g. for sales growth and technology sharing.

The process can be co-developed with the corporate finance adviser and the buyer so that it is appropriate and not disruptive for your time and for the business. Sharing information through an electronic dataroom in a careful, co-ordinated way demonstrates that you can control a process. It also builds confidence in your systems and information control.

Personalities and egos can be an important factor to see if the deal can work. Do you believe you can work with and report to the buyer? We have seen many deals fall over as the vendor realises he cannot work with the buyer after months of negotiations.

In these circumstances, pick yourself up and reflect what you have learned from the process and from their approach to business.

It is only with lots of hard work going into the deal process, and with a co-developed co-ordinated approach, that eventually you too may be singing "we're in the money."



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UNW Client Focus – Camerons Brewery

JOHN FOOTS – FINANCE DIRECTOR

Founded way back in 1865 by John William Cameron in Hartlepool, County Durham, Camerons Brewery is the largest independent brewer in the North East and recently acquired The Leeds Brewery and Head of Steam brands as it evolves its business strategy. We recently chatted to Finance Director John Foots about his career and Camerons plans for The Head of Steam brand.

As a qualified chartered accountant, could you please expand a little on your move from professional services into senior finance roles within the pub industry?

I spent 8 years in insolvency practice at PwC after graduating from Manchester University with a Maths degree, before joining International Maritime Group in 1998.

My first experience in a senior finance position in the pub industry came in the early part of 2000 via long-time associate Ron Turnbull, who was then the Finance Director at Pubmaster. The company was well established, and I had a great experience helping that business grow substantially before it was sold to Punch at the back end of 2003.

I joined Camerons Brewery as Financial Controller in February 2007 after spending a few years at Wessex Taverns. If you care to use the old football saying, I've always viewed Camerons as somewhat of a 'sleeping giant', and it's been an incredibly successful venture where I am a member of the main Board as Group Finance Director.

Camerons operates within a mature industry, how challenging has it been to ensure you can adapt in a rapidly changing marketplace?

That's a very interesting question. Camerons does operate within a mature industry, but a changing and evolving one too. Real ale has had a bit of a chequered past, and Camerons itself went through a host of owners in the 1980's and 1990's.

We've changed as the industry has changed. When I arrived at Camerons, we were a big brewer with a few tenanted pubs and a free trade business. However, a combination of the economic downturn and smoking ban meant they were no longer as viable, so our strategy had to change to become more about managing our own brands. This is something that I think is coming to fruition now for us.

Camerons Brewery acquired the Head of Steam brand in 2013. In what ways has it helped you shift perceptions of the real ale industry and appeal to a new demographic?

Drinking habits have certainly changed, and there be a certain fussiness that there wasn't previously, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Younger men and women perhaps don't drink as much as they used to, preferring to be taken on a journey of the wide range of flavoured, international brands we can offer.

But it's challenging and why we changed approach. We used to focus on the male dominated village pubs out in the countryside and in remote locations, but it's not like that anymore. Our primary focus is now on the big city centres that are student dominated, but also an opportunity to attract a more affluent market, too. The Head of Steam brand has been a major factor in attracting this demographic.

Despite the difficulties that continue to surround the industry, Head of Steam continues to go from strength to strength. What plans do you have for the rest of 2018?

We're looking to develop it on a national scale. Chris (Soley, CEO) and myself are focussing on acquisition, property and operational teams as we aim to open between 8-10 Head of Steam outlets per year, which is no mean feat!

This year has seen Head of Steam outlets open in Didsbury, Nottingham, Leicester and Birmingham, with two others in the pipeline for Derby and Cardiff, and potentially Manchester and York. A great deal of effort and research has been undertaken into these locations to ensure that the brand can fit in and work there.

Around 4 years ago, with the help of UNW Partner David Ward, we purchased another pub group, The Leeds Brewery. While Head of Steam is our primary focus, we can't lose sight of that or the tenanted pubs we still have, as they are also doing extremely well.

Despite this success, could you share the biggest challenge faced by Camerons Brewery during your time?

We have a very supportive bank in HSBC who buy into our vision, but loaning from a bank does mean there can be certain constraints put upon us. We've been well supported as we look to re-structure into a vertical, integrated business model and focus on creating and managing our own brands, but there have also been times where we've had to be rather prudent, but we like it that way.

As the business changes, there may come a time when we look at different business models, but our current strategy is working very well for us.

You previously referred to your working history with UNW Tax Partner David Ward, could you describe the working relationship that Camerons shares with UNW?

Yes, the main link is David, who I've known for many years. He's very technical and knows the pub industry well. The work David and his team do for us ticks all the boxes. We've worked with them for around three years, and there will be more work with UNW coming up as we look to re-structure the business and potentially have separate property, brewing and brand companies going forward.

I like the set-up at UNW, and it's filled with professionals with 'big4' experience. I think the journey UNW has been on is pretty similar to ourselves in terms of trajectory, which aids the relationship as we matter to them. The working relationship is far more personal and supportive than we have experienced in the past.

Finally, could you describe a relevant piece of advice that has stuck with you throughout your career?

Personally, I learnt in my career to never presume the person you're talking to knows more about the subject than you. Always back yourself. You're also never too old to learn!

EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCHEMES AN 'ESSENTIAL DIFFERENTIATOR' FOR UK BUSINESSES



David Hicks

Initiatives to support employee wellbeing are no longer seen as a 'nice to have' but as an essential differentiator. Here David Hicks, a director at Deloitte in the North East, talks about the importance of employee mental health and wellbeing schemes.

As many as 88 per cent of business and HR leaders in the UK are working towards improving employee wellbeing, such as by offering wellness and work-life balance programmes in the workplace, compared with a global average of 82 per cent. The findings come from the 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, which tracks the top trends shaping the agenda for organisations.

UK organisations are more likely to offer employees mental health support than their global counterparts. 36 per cent of businesses in the UK currently have mental health counselling programmes in place, against a global average of 21 per cent.

This follows Deloitte analysis for the Stevenson-Farmer independent review which found that poor mental health costs the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion a year, with workplace interventions showing a return to business of between £1.50 and £9 for every £1 invested.

I think it is positive to see that many UK businesses are taking steps to champion mental health in the workplace, but it's clear that more still needs to be done. Offering mental health support to employees not only helps British workers to thrive but also makes good business sense and supports the wider economy.

At Deloitte we are committed to offering an environment which supports both the mental and physical wellbeing of our people. On World Mental Health Day 2017 we set ourselves the target of training 1 in 4 of our partners and directors to become Mental Health First Aid Accredited Leaders. Mental Health First Aid England have trained over 580 of our partners and directors and I am one of those who has recently undertaken the training.

Just five per cent of organisations have 'extensive' wellbeing programmes

While many are now prioritising wellbeing in the workplace, the UK may still have some way to go before even the most basic initiatives are truly embedded across all organisations. Three in five (59 per cent) UK organisations report having limited or basic wellbeing programmes, typically focused on traditional interventions such as adjusted working patterns and additional exceptional leave. Just 5 per cent of organisations in the UK claim to offer 'extensive' wellbeing programmes, which are actively tracked to measure the impact on workplace productivity and efficiency.

Three in five UK organisations offer flexible working

Flexible working is currently the most well established programme helping employees with

their work-life balance. While 59 per cent of UK organisations offer flexible working, 92 per cent of those rate it as having a valuable impact. Meanwhile, half (50 per cent) of UK organisations have an employee assistance programme, offering employees support with personal or work related problems, up from a global average of 30 per cent.

I'm proud that Deloitte is committed to developing its own working practices through a combination of formal and informal arrangements, that support agility in terms of where, when and how we work. Our WorkAgility framework at Deloitte provides a platform for our people to consider a blend of day to day actions and formal options, which help them to manage the balance between demanding personal and professional priorities.

I'm pleased that organisations in the UK are increasingly recognising the importance of investing in employee wellbeing. However, many are still questioning where to start. Bridging the gap between awareness and action requires businesses to make wellbeing a priority at the most senior management levels. After this, an adequate review of organisational needs, understanding what is best practice and targeting interventions to the needs of those in the organisation will be key drivers of success.

www.deloitte.co.uk/northeast

NORTH EAST LANDLORDS GROUP LAUNCHED TO HELP MORE LANDLORDS

A consortium of businesses have come together to launch the first regional landlord association to improve the education of landlords in the North East.

The North East Landlords Group is the brainchild of Martin Wardle property tax director, and landlord himself, at Robson Laidler Accountants, Paul Hampton of Approved Mortgage Solutions, Janet Fay of Coversure Insurance and Surbhi Vedhara property partner at Sweeney Miller Solicitors who have recruited former National Landlords Association North East representatives Bruce Haagensen and Steve Johnson to work with them.

Together, the group aim to hold a number of property events North and South of the Tyne each year to educate, inform and influence landlords in the North East.

The group will work closely with all 13 of the North East regional councils on behalf of Local Landlords to help inform policy support their engagement with the private rented sector and improve the housing offering.

Bruce Haagensen said: "The private-rented sector accounts for about 16% of households in the North East region and as such we feel the launch of the North East Landlords Group is a



North East Landlords Group (left to right) Martin Wardle, Surbhi Vedhara, Paul Hampton, Janet Fay and Bruce Haagensen.

critical development for this increasingly complex audience and its stakeholders.

"It is important for the private rented sector to have a voice with the aim of balancing safeguards for tenants' interests and setting the right conditions to enable the sector to contribute fully to the provision of good quality, well managed housing.

"We have pulled together the cream of the crop of housing professionals from around the region who together will provide landlords with a truly member-centric service and ensure a professional

but most importantly a local personal service, which is what landlords have indicated they value most.

"We will be offering numerous services to our landlord and property investor members including specific advice, policy support and information."

The North East Landlords Group will also have a national presence as it will be affiliated to the Residential Landlords Association (RLA).

Talking of the new North East Landlords Group, Andrew Goodacre of the RLA said: "We are delighted to hear about local businesses joining forces to represent the private rented sector at a local level. Whilst we focus on national campaigns, there is also a role for local groups to make a difference in their area. The RLA has a track record of supporting local landlord groups and hope to do so in the North East going forward."

Robson Laidler's tax director Martin Wardle said: "As a landlord myself, landlords come to me for advice and guidance because they know they can trust the support I offer. Likewise, we hope that stakeholders such as industry bodies and government departments will place a strong emphasis on the valued relationship we hope to develop through dealing with our new group."

The North East Landlords Group is hosting an event for landlords and property investors on 3 July and it will be South of the Tyne. For more information contact Martin Wardle: mwardle@robson-laidler.co.uk or ring: 0191 281 8191.

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FURTHER GROWTH FOR CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Matt Lister joins the team at Corporate and Commercial Business Solutions Group.
Michael Gramslaw catches up with him shortly after his move.

Can you briefly outline your journey through business?

I started out in one of the high street banks, firstly working in their card acquiring division as a corporate account manager, before moving into commercial banking. That move was the first step into funding/lending, working on a portfolio of trading business customers in a range of sectors and requirements. From there I moved into Invoice Finance with one of the independent providers and this came with a steep learning curve in a pretty full on environment. It was a rewarding experience in a challenging market, it was here that I developed good relationships with those that are now great contacts and friends. I moved to Anglo Scottish Asset Finance to develop their commercial finance side of the business. The learning curve was again steep, but it is genuinely amazing the breadth of options available for a client's funding needs.

What attracted you to CCBSG?

It is a natural step to take following on from what I have been doing to this point. The funding market is constantly evolving, but there are wider opportunities to provide additional support to the business community, outside of simply the provision of funding. I will be working directly with existing and new clients, spotting potential opportunities to help. CCBSG is a young dynamic business and I look forward to taking the business on to the next level.



What services do they provide?

We're a customer focused commercial finance brokerage and business consultancy, specialising in working capital solutions and growth. With a range of experience and access to extensive options we have the ability to support business at all stages. This month we have already completed on a working capital facility for a timber supplier, a business acquisition for a dental laboratory, purchase of subsea surveying equipment and invoice finance for a group of logistic companies. All businesses in completely different sectors and all based in the North East.

What will you bring to the role?

I strive to find solutions for customers that are appropriate and fit for purpose. I have built great relationships with loan and working capital funders who sit firmly in

the alternative market, which is no longer emerging but maturing. My role will entail working with clients directly and through our network to find funding that works for them. That could be working capital, funding for growth, asset finance, and working closely with funders through to deal completion.

What's your fondest career memory?

There isn't one memory in particular, but the best moments are the 'thank you', the 'well done' or 'that was a great shout' from the people you deal with.

What motivates you?

Put simply doing a good job and being respected for the job I do.

Where do you see yourself in a year's time?

I see CCBSG growing strongly, it always taken 6-12 months to get into a new role from experience. The market dictates this to some extent and factors such as Brexit bring untold (as yet) opportunities and challenges for the NE business community. We are here to assist in whichever way we can.

How do you like to unwind?

Outside of work it's all the clichés, friend's family are key, as is the season ticket at Newcastle. I'm a failed tennis player in so far as I don't play anywhere near enough as I should do.

MAVEN LEADS £2.7 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ORCHIDSOFT



(L-R): Alex Buchan of Northstar Ventures, Alex Marsh of Maven, Ajay Sood and Sukh Ryatt of Orchid, Sarah Slaven of Business Durham, Neville Bearpark of Orchid (seated) and Michael Vassallo of Maven.

Funding will enable Orchidsoft to strengthen sales and marketing, expand the roll-out of its innovative cloud-based intranet software solution, Oak, and double staff to more than 100.

Maven Capital Partners, one of the UK’s most active private equity houses, has led the £2.7 million investment in intranet software specialists Orchidsoft. A total of £2.2 million has been provided by Maven funds, which includes a £700,000 investment from the Finance Durham Fund, established by Durham County Council, in addition to a £500,000 follow-on investment from existing backers Northstar Ventures, from the North East Innovation Fund supported by the European Regional Development Fund.

The funding will enable the business to expand its sales and marketing efforts across the UK and US and to grow its team of 45 employees to over 100 by 2022.

Orchid has been a pioneer in developing and selling intranet solutions for over 20 years. As the market has shifted towards cloud-based solutions, the business invested heavily in developing its own globally scalable cloud-based platform called Oak. The flexibility of its ‘out of the box’ intranet platform, which has no set-up or configuration costs, makes it suitable for businesses of all sizes and the software is now being used by hundreds of

thousands of people every day across a multitude of sectors.

Since its launch in 2016, Oak has been adopted by a range of high profile, blue-chip customers, who join an impressive list of house-hold brands the company already works with such as Aldi, Comic Relief, Halfords, Pizza Express, ITV, Virgin Money and Newcastle Building Society.

Orchid has designed Oak with user experience, engagement and simplicity at its core. The software’s ease-of-use enhances communication and collaboration, enables knowledge sharing and streamlines administration tasks for any size of organisation. The solution is extremely intuitive and Oak can be implemented, populated and maintained without the need for any consultancy, technical or design resources.

Maven has significant experience of backing other ambitious software companies, including the mobile app developer hedgehog lab, compensation management software solution provider Curo, and led the £6 million MBO of the CRM specialist ProspectSoft. The investment is the seventh deal from the £20 million Finance Durham Fund, which is managed by Maven.

Michael Vassallo, Investment Director at Maven, said: “Orchid is a hugely exciting business, which addresses a large and growing market, and we are delighted to support the roll-out of its innovative cloud-based intranet software across the UK and overseas. We have been highly impressed by the management team and our technical diligence has shown the Orchid product suite to be best in class. The co-investment deal between Maven’s Investor Partners network, Northstar Ventures and Finance Durham is a fantastic example of Maven’s client funds working alongside regional funds in the North East to provide a local business with a substantial funding package to enable it to grow globally.”

Sukh Ryatt, CEO at Orchid added: “Our amazing team have created something really special with Oak and it’s been an incredible year for us, with record sales and growth and now with this transformative investment, which will allow us to scale our business globally. We’re thankful for the great funding partners we have in Maven, Northstar Ventures and Finance Durham and look forward to working together with them to make a noise from the North East that’s heard around the globe!”

Maven’s North East team is actively seeking exciting businesses, based in the region, looking for funding to help achieve their growth plans. Please contact Maven’s local team to discuss your business and its plans, or visit www.mavencp.com to find out more.

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If your business is in need of finance to help unlock its growth potential, we may be able to help. For more information please contact:

Salvus House, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS. T: 0191 731 8595

Earl Grey House, 75/85 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6EF. T: 0191 731 8590

JUST KEEP IT SIMPLE

The Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) has published its review on how savings and investment income is taxed. The interesting statistic is that 95 per cent of us pay no tax at all on our savings income.

However it is clear from the report that for the 5 per cent who do pay tax the rules are an amalgamated mess.

The fact that the vast majority of people pay no tax on their savings income from interest, dividends, pensions and investment bonds and funds is commended by the OTS. Having no tax to pay is a simplification many taxpayers will be happy to retain! The problem is that it isn't clear whether the general public really understand why they have no tax to pay and therefore may well be making investment decisions without being armed with the full facts.

Many will be familiar with the concepts of ISAs but the OTS notes that other reliefs and allowances such as the £1,000 personal savings allowance are not well understood. That could lead to people making poor investment decisions. For example, investing savings into ISAs, when a bond or bank account might give a better return and still produce the desired tax-free return.

Similarly, the OTS review outlines that many people still do not understand the implications of cashing in on their pensions - a particular concern given pension withdrawal numbers are now at record levels following the relaxation of pension rules introduced a few years ago. Taxpayers should have every right to cash in their pension pots if they wish, but they should only do so in the full knowledge of the tax implications of doing so. It is no good being wise after the event when a tax charge has already been triggered.

The complexity of the savings tax system is compounded by the fact that apparently the financial literacy in the UK is low compared to the average across the 34 OECD countries. The OTS is already working with HMRC to improve its approach to its guidance but clearer guidance is still likely to be difficult to follow given the current state of the overly complex rules. Even HMRC's Self-Assessment software sometimes struggles to



Stuart McKinnon

calculate the correct amount of tax and these are the people who actually designed the rules in the first place!

In light of these findings, the OTS makes a number of suggestions on how matters could be improved, including:

- specifying the order in which to apply reliefs/ allowances;
- simplifying the calculation of reliefs, eg make the dividend allowance an actual allowance rather than a 0% tax rate;
- exempting interest entirely for basic rate taxpayers or those with income below a certain level.

A number of other options are also considered by the OTS, such as simplifying ISA rules further and looking to change the early withdrawal penalties for Lifetime ISAs which have put many people off them. The possibility of a Digital Identity for taxpayers is also mooted, which might make it

easier for people to compare the appropriateness of various financial products and feed into HMRC's wider digital agenda.

Many of the current rules and allowances have their own individual merits, leading to the positive conclusion for many that no tax is due on their savings income. The issue is that these rules have been introduced piecemeal by various governments resulting in a hotchpotch system that few understand. Any reform, as the OTS suggests, therefore needs to be thought through and introduced over time as part of a longer-term plan and not some sticking plaster to deal with this year's perceived anomaly.



For more information on the taxation of savings and investment income, please contact Stuart McKinnon Head of Private Client at RSM North East on 0191 255 7000, stuart.mckinnon@rsmuk.com.

DIVIDEND INSURANCE: PART TWO

Readers will recall that last month, John and Jack were running their shoe manufacturers, "Such Cobblers," after the death of George who was Production Director and a one third shareholder. Mildred, George's rather blousy wife, had wanted to take his seat on the Board but Jack, in particular, had objected. John and Jack also had to change their remuneration policy from low salary and high dividends to high salary. This was to avoid paying Mildred because she did not contribute to running of the business.

What follows is best read in the style of Sir Terry Wogan and the "Janet and John" stories from his radio programme.

Jack and John are in the Boardroom discussing the business. Things are not going well.

John lisped, "The sales figuress are wather disappointing."

Jack barked, "Its worse than that. Production has gone to hell in a handcart. We are getting so many returns for poor quality it is ruining our reputation. We should never have made the old foreman, Pimple, Production Manager but we had no-one else and couldn't afford to recruit."

"Didn't The Chap from Rutherford Hughes suggest something about lock person insurance?" said John.

"KEY MAN, you imbecile" shouted Jack.

"Yes, he did, and it would have given us money to recruit and train George's replacement and provided us with a buffer to protect our profits whilst we were doing this," he continued.

"So why didn't we take it out?" queried John.

"Because we thought it wouldn't happen to us" responded Jack. "We were naïve as it wasn't expensive."

Just then George's widow, Mildred, bursts in followed by a sweating Mr. Pimple who holds his handkerchief to his brow. "Sorry, your honours, but I couldn't stop her. She just flashed past me."

"I didn't show him anything," Mildred protested.

She swung her fulsome figure to face John and Jack square on. "Now boys, we need to sort this out. I want my dividends back. My puppies are wasting away."



Peter Rutherford

John looked confused.

"The day before he died, George bought me two Lhasa Apso."

"Isn't that a type of tea?" queried John.

There was a moment's silence.

Jack then spoke, "No, Mildred, you cannot have the dividend. You add nothing to the running of the business and its success."

"Okay," smiled Mildred, "then you can have a choice. Either you reinstate the dividend policy or.....(Drum roll)....you buy my shares at full market value. Your choice, boys."

"You can't give us an ultimatum like that," growled Jack.

"Oh, but I can," she purred, but with hidden menace. "If you care to read Section 994 of The Companies Act 2006 it covers unfair prejudice against shareholders and states that I can apply to the Court for an order to force you."

"So, it's up to you. Do you want to play nice or do

you want to play hard?"

John and Jack swallowed hard. Trading was tough, reserves were being used up and the bank had been putting pressure on them to reduce their borrowings since George had died. The Chap from Rutherford Hughes had suggested loan insurance but, again, they had done nothing.

That evening John returned home to Janet who, as usual, had a household implement in her hand which could be used as a weapon. This time a frying pan.

"A good day?" asked Janet.

"Not weally," said John. "Mildred came in and flashed Mr. Pimple and said her puppies were getting smaller. They looked fine to me. She said we wanted to play and would be happy if it was nice or hard and she wants to be paid."

THWACK!!

See John wish he had taken more notice of The Chap from Rutherford Hughes.

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

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R&D TAX CREDITS AND GRANT FUNDING

Small business owners need to look at all the alternative sources of funding for their business. Some of the most effective methods of raising capital is through grants from government agencies to promote growth and stimulate job creation.

If you know where to look, then there are ample opportunities to explore in this area. But one thing we have found is that gaining a grant at the start of the process can have an impact on another source of funding at the end of the process. And that is the valuable R&D tax credit system. For those that don't know, R&D tax credits is a tax relief set up by the UK government to promote investment by SME's in their own business. It is something that the most forward-thinking businesses have tapped into to significant effect.

In many cases, small businesses need access to funding to get off the ground. Banks aren't as easy to secure lending from as they were in the past. This means the average small business owner needs to think differently to gain the cash that turns a fantastic idea into a fantastic business. Time and money are the factors that don't seem easy to generate. We can't create more time, but the money side of things has a number of solutions out there.

There is a common misconception that grants and R&D tax credits are mutually exclusive – that you can't have one if you have already accessed the other. This simply isn't the case. If you understand the processes involved, then there is opportunity to gain vital funding at the start of a project through a grant and still have an eligible R&D tax claim at the end of the tax year. The way to make this

happen is to know the rules and regulations of the government tax relief to ensure that you are making a valid claim. Reading HMRC website might not sound like the most interesting use of your time but it can be a lucrative way to support your business – and can also ensure you don't waste your time putting in a claim for R&D tax that is rejected by the tax man.

What does it all mean?

Essentially, there are rules relating to unfair competition while we are still members of the EU. If grant funding is seen as state aid, then it precludes you from accessing the SME R&D tax credits, you can still claim under the RDEC method. This can be a fine line, but don't worry if you don't understand this fully. We are on hand to walk you through the process as an experienced guide.

And if you can make it work then it is the perfect combination to drive your SME forward. So, it works like this –

- Come up with the idea
- Receive grant funding for the project
- Go through the research and development phase
- Complete the project
- Apply for R&D tax credits
- Receive tax credits
- Repeat

The most innovative companies will make R&D tax credits as much a part of their business as research and development itself. This means they receive regular cash injections to the company to continually move forward. In the business world we operate in, standing still means you are being overtaken and potentially left behind. None of us want this to happen.

R&D tax credits should be an integral part of your SME – we speak to hundreds of business owners just like you every year and the vast majority have a claim sat in the business ready to be submitted to HMRC. And the process can happen really quickly once we make a start. The money could be returned by HMRC in as little as 6 to 8 weeks. Imagine what you can do with this cash – it could make a significant difference to your operation.

If you need a trusted adviser to talk you through the process, then don't hesitate to get in touch. We help people to understand what grants and R&D tax credits can do to their business, rather than simply submitting a claim on your behalf. We can work with your existing accountant to gather all the details needed. Small business needs all the financial help it can get. The fact that this is a government incentive that is available to many companies and is currently underclaimed makes this the ideal opportunity to secure vital funding at the perfect time.

A handshake. A cup of coffee. Time...

They're not much in isolation, but combined with our expertise, capabilities and growing product portfolio, these small things demonstrate how we work: our personal and pragmatic approach relies entirely on us understanding you and your business.

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Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

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Although the same set of mortgage regulations apply to all UK lenders, each will interpret the rules in their own way and assess risks differently, examples of areas which can have a major effect on borrowing amounts are: -

- Monthly pension contributions can cause severe restrictions - some lenders do not factor in these outgoings at all, some do include.
- Assessment of overtime, commission and bonuses can give extreme variances.
- Credit cards – if you use these for day to day expenses, your

mortgage availability can be restricted with some lenders even if you repay the card in full each month.

- Self-employed income and contractors – an old favourite of ours – different lenders have many varied ways of assessing income and its sustainability.
- Credit file - again a regular theme – a poor score doesn't necessarily mean that you can't get a mortgage, whereas an excellent score doesn't guarantee that all lenders will help!
- School fees - seen by many as an optional payment, some lenders treat these as a fixed and permanent expense.




So whether you are looking to move house, re-mortgage or review your insurances, why not take local, face to face, independent mortgage and loan advice to smooth the whole process. We would be delighted to help.

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

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

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MILESTONE FOR NEWCASTLE STEPHENSON QUARTER

A new milestone has been reached in the construction of Newcastle's first University Technical College (UTC) being established on the rapidly emerging Stephenson Quarter.

A 'topping out' ceremony has been held to mark the pouring of the last concrete into the main structure that will become the innovative North East Futures UTC, opening this September.

The development is a key part in the next phase of work at Stephenson Quarter, an ambitious mixed-use development that is integrating education, tech businesses, hospitality and the arts.

The UTC will offer innovative ways of learning for 14-18-year-olds, centred around the specialist subjects of IT and health sciences. It will be sponsored by the University of Sunderland and supported by companies such as Ubisoft, Sage, Accenture and the NHS.

Ultimately, some 600 pupils will attend the school, providing jobs for around 40 teachers along with 20 other ancillary staff.



NAYLORS STRENGTHENS TEAM FOLLOWING STRONG YEAR-END FIGURES



Commercial property specialist Naylors has made two new professional appointments as the firm works towards its £2million turnover target.

The Newcastle-based firm has recently appointed Facilities Manager Christian Hill and Building Surveyor Connor Hewitson, taking the Naylors headcount to a total of 27 staff.

A strong financial year for Naylors in 2017/18 has prompted the latest round of recruitment, with the firm reporting increasing levels of demand

for commercial property from both occupiers and investors.

Christian joins the firm following facilities management roles at Owen Pugh and Capita. At Naylors, Christian is taking on the management of services for over 110 commercial and residential sites, as well as responsibility for budgeting, utilities, refurbishment and building pathology.

Meanwhile, Connor has joined Naylors' building consultancy team, which now comprises of six building surveyors.

CONVERTED OFFICE SPACE NOW AVAILABLE AFTER £240,000 INVESTMENT

A North East Grade II listed building, providing stunning contemporary office space, was recently brought to the market.

The unique office, within Fenham Hall Studios, is located on the historic site of Fenham Hall, built in 1745 by Mayor of Newcastle John Ord. It has undergone a major £240,000 refurbishment and is now ready for new tenants.

The new 1250 sq ft Studio I has been created to offer a beautiful open plan office. The space was once part of the refectory

and dormitory that was built in 1943 for St Mary's Teacher Training College.

Now, the bright modern space includes original exposed beams which have been uncovered by opening up the old dormitory accommodation, adding an original feature to the modern office space.

The office, located on the first floor, offers new toilets and shower facilities as well as a small kitchen area. The secure gated development also benefits from six staff parking spaces and two visitor parking spaces in the beautiful historic grounds.



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"A true local family owned business"



Western Way Darras Hall, Ponteland

A spacious, detached family home situated on a mature garden site of circa two thirds of an acre. It offers versatile accommodation with five bedrooms to the first floor and an additional study/sixth bedroom. The gardens are fabulous and stretch back into the woodland with mature trees and planting.

Price Guide: £1.5 Million

5 2 5 C



rare! From Sanderson Young

Ashleigh Sundin
ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk
rare! Office: 0191 223 3500
www.sandersonyoung.co.uk





Middle Leazes Leazes Lane, Hexham

Middle Leazes is an impressive detached country home, dating back to the early 1600s, in circa 0.5 acres. It has a great deal of style and character and there have been a number of refurbishment works carried out in the last 18 months creating a high quality interior presentation throughout.

Price Guide: £895,000

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82 RUNNYMEDE ROAD, DARRAS HALL, PONTELAND



PRICE GUIDE: £1.495 MILLION

82 Runnymede Road is a newly constructed property providing an outstanding and individual luxury home in a prime location. Occupying a site of circa 0.45 acres, this fabulous, detached house boasts approximately 4,500 ft² of accommodation, including six double bedroom suites, and has been built to an extremely high standard. The house has been superbly designed by HUB Architects with a great deal of attention to its individual character and style, with many very special, unique and contemporary features including fantastic large windows providing an abundance of natural light, a fabulous 'floating' staircase, a feature double apex ceiling to the drawing room and distressed copper panelling to the kitchen. Runnymede Road has always been regarded as one of the most prestigious addresses in Darras Hall and this is certainly one of the most impressive and unique homes to be newly built.



Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 2233500 ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk www.sandersonyoung.co.uk



FAST TRACK CONVERSIONS

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House

Have you ever looked at a barn or building in the countryside and thought that would make an amazing home, then thought about the hoops you would have to jump through to actually secure permission to convert it? Well think again, in some instances you don't need planning permission to convert a building to residential use.

Under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) England, GPDO for short, there are a multitude of uses (retail, launderette, betting shop, offices, amusement arcade, casino, storage or distribution centres, premises in light industry, agricultural buildings, etc) which can be converted to residential as 'Permitted Development' without planning permission.

Naturally there is a range of exclusions and limitations which apply to these permitted development rights, and each use proposed to be changed has a different set of conditions which must be adhered to.

The 'green light' given to convert specific uses to residential has seen an increase in growth of conversions, particularly agricultural buildings in the countryside. However, with the Government encouraging the creation of more housing, permitted development rights have recently been increased.

Permitted development rights now allows a maximum of 5 new houses to be created from existing agricultural buildings on a farm. Previously this was restricted to 3 properties.

The amendments which came into force in April 2018 permit the development of:

- up to three larger homes within a maximum of 465 square metres; or
- up to five smaller homes each no larger than 100 square metres; or
- a mix of both, within a total of no more than five homes, of which no more than three may be larger homes.

Notwithstanding if you believe your agricultural conversion may be permitted development you will still need to contact your local planning authority and embark on a prior approval process. Prior approval means that a developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed – in effect a 'light-touch' planning application.

Also, be aware that development carried out using permitted development rights can still be liable to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), if there is a community levy in place and if the development does not qualify for an exemption.

As well as the potential to create you dream home in the countryside (or maximise land and development value), there are many ways to circumvent the need for planning permission for extensions, alterations, change of use, temporary buildings and uses etc. However, interpreting the regulations which set out what can and can't be done via permitted development rights can be daunting so if in doubt ask an expert.

PLANNING HOUSE can be contacted on 07944844882, info@planninghouse.co.uk or by visiting www.planninghouse.co.uk

HOW TO MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE A TALENT MAGNET



Patrick Matheson, Partner at Knight Frank Newcastle, shares his thoughts on how business leaders can attract and retain talent by getting their workplace right.

Right now in the North East office market, there is a firm trend towards a 'flight to quality'. Businesses looking to occupy offices are increasingly seeking the better buildings which offer space with added value features.

The 'war for talent' is one of greatest disruptive forces facing modern business. As well as being the biggest operating cost, staffing is consistently recognised as the number one challenge facing business. With record employment in the UK and an acute national skills shortage, firms are required to nurture and utilise every competitive advantage they have in order to win this war. Real estate is recognised as one of these sources of competitive advantage.

It is the clever, well-located, well-thought-out contemporary buildings that allow businesses to retain and attract employees. Employees are no longer as accepting of mediocre, bland, traditional offices spaces – especially in the tech and creative sectors, and other sectors are following suit.

When you consider that the cost of replacing a staff member is an average of 150% of that person's salary – then scrimping on 50p or a pound a square foot on your offices might be a false economy if the space taken increases your staff churn rates.

The savvy business owners are realising this and landlords are seeing the need to provide amenity rich, highly serviced spaces which, together with a quality fit-out, serve to secure occupiers.

So, how is the market adapting and shaping buildings to meet this 'flight to quality' trend?

Four key themes that businesses and landlords need to consider in creating the right space:

1. Amenity rich - Locations need to have easy access to location perks like dining, entertainment, and public transportation but the office buildings themselves also need to have facilities that give them an edge, like common break out/informal meeting space, inspiring décor, showers and lockers, indoor cycle stores, for example.

Some recent research by Knight Frank explored what the present generation of students expect of their future workplace and concluded that attracting and keeping graduate talent will require flexible, progressive and inspiring workplaces. The students said they want stimulating spaces, beyond functional necessities, to make work feel purposeful and, above all, features that facilitate teamwork (also virtually).

2. A sense of place and community

– Talented workers want to feel part of something bigger than just their business. Successful buildings promote a strong brand identity through active estate management and the creation of on-site communities. Quorum Business Park does this very well with things like on site sports courts, hundreds of events a year and a discounts scheme for employees, for example, but it shouldn't just be the domain of large business parks – it can be successfully implemented in smaller office developments too.

3. Connectivity – IT connectivity is key.

WireScore is becoming the industry benchmark for assessing an office building's IT capabilities. At the moment, only one building in Newcastle has a Wired Certificate, which is The Pearl. I'm sure there will be more very soon as more landlords see the need to provide the right IT infrastructure to tenants.

4. Supporting health and well-being –

Modern employees give greater emphasis to health and fitness. The Well Certificate is now the clear benchmark to advance health and wellbeing in buildings through design. Things like making the stairs more obvious and accessible than the lifts to promote healthy choices and promoting clean air and minimizing the source of indoor air pollution are examples of how buildings can be better designed to interact with humans and align with the health and wellbeing agenda.

There are certainly examples of this coming through the North East office market. Barclays House on Grey Street, the Pearl, and Quorum are examples of landlords who are investing heavily in amenity such as break out space, meeting rooms, tenant lounges, retail and sport.

Looking further forward these themes are also being adopted in the new workplaces being developed in our region such as at Milburngate in Durham City Centre and Vaux in Sunderland City Centre.

Paddy Matheson can be contacted at patrick.matheson@knightfrank.com 0191 594 5003.

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SENIOR APPOINTMENT FOR MORTGAGE FIRM FOLLOWING SECOND YEAR MILESTONE



Samantha Smith, Lewis Chambers and Phil Whiteside

The region's leading property firm has announced the appointment of its newest senior member of staff amid significant growth.

BH Mortgages, which was launched two years ago as part of the BH Group of companies, has now merged under its parent company Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents. The newly formed Bradley Hall mortgage department, which offers mortgage advice, protection and insurance, has employed a senior member of staff to support operations.

Phil Whiteside now joins the firm as mortgage and protection manager and will also provide management support at Bradley Hall's Gosforth residential office. He joins the current mortgage team of client manager Samantha Smith and director Lewis Chambers.

Director of mortgages and finance for Bradley Hall,

Lewis Chambers, said: "The success over the past two years of BH Mortgages has been more than I could have hoped for. The team has grown and we have been able to supply hundreds of people with mortgages on a national scale. It made sense for us to integrate with Bradley Hall from a business perspective and we know this will only strengthen our operation.

"Demand for our services has grown significantly, especially within the North East. The house buying market, including first time buyers and those moving up the career ladder, is buoyant, and this prosperity looks set to continue.

"Phil's dual role is ideal for clients as they can benefit from having the same point of contact

throughout their journey of purchasing a home and acquiring a mortgage. He has a wealth of experience in the industry and has hit the ground running already."

Phil said: "I am delighted to be joining one of the region's most established property firms at a significant time of growth.

"The Gosforth office is as popular as ever and we've welcomed a range of fantastic instructions. The location on Gosforth High Street is second to none and I look forward to supporting the local community with the high level of service which has come to be expected of Bradley Hall."

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BRADLEY HALL ON TRACK TO BRING £100M NEW HOMES TO MARKET



The region’s leading property firm, Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents, has reached the impressive milestone of welcoming £91.5m of new build properties to the market during 2018.

The success of the first half of the year is set to continue, and the firm predicts that it will comfortably surpass £100m by the close of the year.

Bradley Hall’s new homes division has been working in partnership with the firm’s recently launched land and development department to bring a ‘field to finish’ approach to housebuilding and sales.

Matt Hoy, director of Estate Agency, said: “This is a fantastic achievement for not only Bradley Hall, but also for the region as a whole. With new build developments comes new opportunities for a range of skilled jobs, a boost in the local economy and much needed opportunities for those looking for their first or next home.

“High demand for housing has been topical for some time, and we are now reaching a point where we can breathe easily knowing that we are on the path to resolving the ‘housing crisis’ within our region.

“We have been working on a range of different developments across the North East, from affordable housing to modern and contemporary

mansions. We are a property agency which can offer a bespoke and high-quality service for everyone.

“The integration of the land and development department, alongside other specialist property departments within Bradley Hall, has provided us a full service, field to finish approach. We are able to take a new build project from the initial land acquisition process to completing sales of all units, providing housebuilders the most efficient service possible.”

The new build properties add to an already impressive portfolio of traditional stock which the firm is also marketing from its network of five residential offices in Alnwick, Morpeth, Gosforth, Sunderland and Durham.

New build schemes with Bradley Hall currently include premium style homes at The Fairways in Morpeth by national housebuilder Linden Homes and Barley Croft in Bedlington by local housebuilder Gatsby Homes. Modern mansions within Ramside Park, Durham are being marketed with the firm from £1.6m, each property coming with a complimentary membership to Ramside

Golf and Spa, with other luxurious homes available within The Walled Garden, Gosforth built by All Saints Living priced from £795,000 to £835,000.

Affordable homes include Valley View and Woodhouse Mews in Gateshead, and homes and bungalows in Barnes View Sunderland.

Head of land and development for Bradley Hall, Jonathan Rudge, said: “The development sector, and specifically the residential development sector, has never had greater focus in the Government’s policy agenda. In the Housing White Paper Theresa May talked of the need to ‘fix our broken housing market’, addressing the decline in home ownership and committing to a long-term target of delivering 300,000 new homes across the UK.

“As a firm we are committed to providing a full-service approach to housebuilding in order to support this target and are delighted to have reached such a significant milestone just half way through the year. We have fantastic relationships with some of the leading national and local housebuilders and look forward to continuing to grow our client base and our reputation as the ‘go-to’ firm for new build homes.”

For information from Bradley Hall’s specialist land development and new homes department, please call 0191 2328080.



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HOUSING: A QUESTION OF BALANCE

Jon Tweddell, director of JT Planning, says planning is about balance as Northumberland County Council unveils its new plan.

The long-awaited Northumberland Local Plan has finally been published and is now subject to a public consultation, which will last until August. Casting a professional eye over its many pages, the document certainly makes for an interesting read.

The publication comes on the back of a withdrawn Core Strategy that had been promoted by the previous Labour administration. The Core Strategy was a bold, ambitious plan, which would have seen significant housing growth and the creation of many employment opportunities.

When the Conservative administration took overall power in 2017, they swiftly withdrew the strategy because they felt the housing numbers and general development strategy was too ambitious, and would have led to the development of whole swathes of Northumberland.

Now, the Tories have revealed their hand with a Draft Local Plan that certainly does carve back the

scale of development, slashing housing numbers by more than a quarter and removing the highly-controversial Dissington Garden Village completely. This scheme, near Ponteland, which gained outline planning permission under the previous Labour administration in 2017, would have led to the creation of 2,000 new homes.

Given that the current Government has ambitious targets to create 300,000 houses per year over the next few years, I find it surprising that the Draft Local Plan is aimed at reducing the housing numbers. Add to this our track record for house building in England, which has seen the creation of roughly 150,000 homes a year since the early 1990s, and it's hard to see how we will ever achieve the requisite housing targets if local councils do not make the bold moves to increase numbers.

I completely understand that local councils are in an extremely difficult position, caught between a rock and a hard place. They want to promote

new housing but must balance this against the wishes of their current residents (and electorate), many of whom do not want to see the large new developments we need. Northumberland is largely rural and many choose to live there for that reason.

There must be a balance, in my opinion. All planning decisions are about balance, weighing up the positives against the negatives, the need for development against protecting the local environment.

One thing I do know is that as a parent, I do worry whether my children will be able to afford their own home. House prices in certain areas are completely out of control, and this can be down to a lack of supply - high demand pushing prices ever upwards. I feel that we must build more to address this and stabilise prices. Building larger scale developments would also result in more affordable housing for those on low and middle incomes.

More at www.jontweddell.co.uk

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The property is situated in the highly sought after residential street of Brandling park, Jesmond, and is within walking distance of a number of desirable local amenities including the region's most well-regarded schools, local shops, restaurants and bars and Newcastle city centre.

Each of its seven bedrooms are well

sized and offer characterful features including iron fireplaces. Its many reception rooms and entertaining areas offer a desirable amount of space for the homeowners, their families and guests.

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KUONI



PIONEERING FOOD PREPARATION FOR PEOPLE WITH SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

Newcastle upon Tyne – 25th June 2018 – St Martins Care, one of the North East’s leading independent care providers, today shared the innovative work they’ve been incorporating into their homes to revolutionize food preparation for residents with swallowing difficulties.

St Martins Care have been working closely with Smoothfood Solutions set up by former Director of Service and Wellbeing for Helen McArdle Care, Sean McArdle. Sean’s award winning experience has helped St Martins Care improve the lives of those with swallowing difficulties through the delivery of training to the St Martins Care catering teams.

On the concept of Smoothfood Solutions Sean said "Experience of people who have eating and swallowing difficulties highlighted the lack of palatable alternatives currently available in the UK. In the worst cases, food was being blended together as one and served from a bowl with a spoon." Moving forward with the training and advice of Sean, St Martins Care will be introducing Smoothfood Solutions across all of its homes. This is in an effort to give confidence and dignity back to the residents with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties). Kevin Pattison, Chief Executive of SMC Group said "We always strive to offer the best possible care to our residents, giving their opinions the upmost respect and always trying to integrate



the suggestions into the running of St Martins."

St Martins Care is looking forward to offering the dignity and support that all residents deserve by continuing to offer innovative solutions including

Smoothfood and other pioneering concepts such as employment panels which offers residents the opportunity to make decisions on the staff they employ throughout the business.

www.smoothfood-solutions.co.uk

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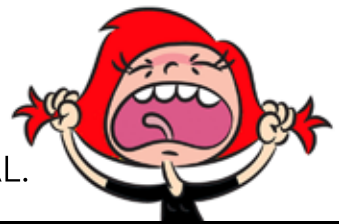
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LAURA ASHLEY
BATHROOM COLLECTION

NEW MAN IN THE DRIVING SEAT TO SPEAK OUT FOR CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Ken Parkin, the new man in the driving seat of the Northern Counties Builders Federation (NCBF), has plenty to say about the construction sector.

Having spent 38 years in the industry working for national and regional building contractors – six years at Turney Wylde and 15 years at Opion – he is well placed to comment on a sector of industry which continues to face challenging times whilst continuing to play a major role within the regional economy.

Ken took over the role of President of NCBF, from Jeff Alexander, a director of Surgo Construction – who led the organisation for the three years prior. As the new Chair, Ken is keen to build on the progress made in recent years to ensure this 120-year-old organisation keeps pace with the times and continues to play an active and relevant role within the construction sector.

In setting out his agenda for change, he particularly recognises the difficulties that regional companies face in competing against national contractors, primarily because most do not have access to the bid writing teams which play a fundamental business development role at Tier One contractor level. He says:

“The industry in the region has undoubtedly suffered due to the continued pressure from national contractors and huge reductions in local government spending. Increasingly our role is to help facilitate the development and maintenance of a sustainable North Eastern construction industry.

“We do some excellent work with local colleges to promote the industry, we provide financial support to Constructing Excellence North East (CENE) and G4C and we try to provide a more unified voice for regional companies through Construction Alliance Northeast (CAN).

“This was an organisation we established two years ago with support from three other trade bodies – the National Federation of Builders, the Federation of Master Builders and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association - with the primary aim of raising awareness about the need to create more of a level playing field for SMEs when tendering for public sector work. We are now turning our attention to other significant issues including training and development.

“CAN is beginning to gain some encouraging traction with more than half of the northern region MPs and a number of employer representative bodies signing up to its Construction Charter, which sets out a plan for procuring construction work more intelligently. The need to buy local, whenever possible, is something I feel strongly about.”

Drawing on his many years in the industry, Ken was recently asked to advise NEPO, (the North East Procurement Organisation) about the wording on its documentation when it went out to tender for its Building Construction Works frameworks and by suggesting certain changes, is

taking some of the credit for twenty regional construction companies winning a place on it this time. He continues:

“When construction contracts are placed with firms based outside the region, this badly affects the health of the regional supply chain, the confidence of local firms to invest in new talent and new equipment and ultimately, this leads to a skills shortage.”

To that end, one of the tasks Ken is looking forward to is implementing NCBF's recently launched apprentice initiative. The NCBF does a great deal of work with local colleges in promoting the industry but there is a pressing need to ensure that fresh, new talent is brought in. Accordingly, NCBF has launched an apprentice initiative which it will substantially fund – almost like a bursary – to make it easier for SMEs to take on apprentices. Initially places will be limited to two per year and member companies must submit a formal application for review by the NCBF committee.

Ken concludes: “I'm really keen to see the sector thrive in the future. That starts with schemes like our apprenticeship initiative and our ongoing support of CAN, CENE and G4C. I am certain that I can make a difference and look forward to collaborating with the many talented construction firms that are based in the area.”





L-R: Louise Fielding-Smith, Emma Hagar, Samantha Davidson (MD), Veronica Veselinova and Sarah McCourt.

HORIZONWORKS LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH NEW STAFF AND NEW BRAND

North East-based business to business marketing company Horizonworks has bolstered its team – and launched a vibrant new brand - as it builds on a period of sustained growth.

The company, which is headquartered in Newcastle, has recruited across client delivery and business development to support new and current clients regionally, nationally and internationally, and to expand its presence in key markets.

Horizonworks, which was founded in 2010, supports innovators in complex industries with B2B marketing, and specialises in sectors including manufacturing and engineering, healthcare and life sciences, technology, law and finance. It also works with trade bodies, industry membership organisations, education and training providers and local authorities.

The company was recently commissioned to conduct several marketing campaigns for Fera Science Ltd, a national and international centre of excellence for interdisciplinary investigation and problem solving across plant and bee health, crop protection, sustainable agriculture, food and feed quality and chemical safety in the environment.

Other recent client wins include Ameriwater, a US-based provider of water treatment equipment for dialysis, hospital and industrial applications, the Newcastle office of Murgitroyd, a global firm

of European patent attorneys and trade mark attorneys, and Parker Bioscience’s Food and Beverage division, which has sites in California and Birtley.

In the last year, companies including contract research and development organisation Arcinova, business communications and systems specialist Cellular Solutions and bespoke biometric insole manufacturer Podfo have also joined Horizonworks’ client portfolio.

Horizonworks’ new team members include Louise Fielding-Smith, who has joined the Horizonworks team as PR and communications specialist, and Veronica Veselinova and Sarah McCourt, who have been appointed as marketing and PR executives. Louise, Veronica and Sarah will be helping to deliver client accounts using a range of tactics including media relations, digital marketing, content marketing and social media.

In addition, Emma Hagar has been recruited as a marketing coordinator to support Horizonworks’ marketing and business development plan.

This month, the company also launched a new brand and website, which form key components in its growth strategy.

Samantha Davidson, managing director of Horizonworks, said: "I’m delighted that Louise, Sarah, Veronica and Emma have joined Horizonworks as we open up a new chapter in our business journey. They bring a great deal of specialist expertise to our team – as well as a passion for marketing and a dedication to supporting us in moving the business forward.

"Coupled with our new brand and website – which truly reflect where Horizonworks is positioned and how we can support innovators across our region and beyond – this recruitment drive marks an exciting phase in our development.

"Our strategic approach and ability to turn complex technical information into powerful messages and campaigns has resonated with businesses at the forefront of their industries, both in the North East and overseas, and we’re looking forward to helping more companies to grow through the rest of 2018 and beyond."

Horizonworks, which has offices in Newcastle and Middlesbrough, provides a single source for clients to access marketing, strategy, PR, digital and creative services.



HARVEY & HUGO GETS A TASTE FOR SUMMER

A North East-headquartered PR Agency is celebrating a number of new client wins in the food and drink sector.

Harvey & Hugo Ltd has been appointed by London-based supper club Nesan Creations, Hartlepool-based Open Jar restaurant and newly launched County Durham fish and chip shop Freddie's.

The Company will provide ongoing social media, PR and marketing support to share each of the businesses' stories and build their brands.

The PR agency, whose team is affectionately known as 'The Pack', has taken on five new members of staff in the past seven months to meet demand for its brand-building services and has recently expanded its offering to include video and animation.

Managing Director Charlotte Nichols said: "As foodies, we're thrilled to welcome these new clients on board and to be able to offer our expertise in the food and drink industry to help put our clients on the culinary map. We can't wait to sink our teeth into these projects and give people a taste of what they're all about."

Harvey & Hugo Ltd was established in 2009 and specialises in the food and drink, built environment, professional services and education sectors.



COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS HAVE A BLAST OF A BIRTHDAY

Otley-based communications specialists Words&Pictures recently received a superb 25th birthday present by winning four major awards at a key industry event.

The company, established in 1993, won Agency Team of the Year at the prestigious Institute of Internal Communications awards held at the National Space Centre, Leicester.

The agency also won awards of Best Print Magazine for Bradford-based Anchor, as well as two awards for Mercedes-Benz UK Ltd's digital magazine Spotlight.

Judges described the entries from Words&Pictures as "stunning" and the company's team as "passionate and dedicated", as well as stating that the agency has developed new models in internal communications.

NARRATIVE APPOINT THREE NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Creative marketing agency Narrative has appointed three new members of staff as part of its ambitious growth plans.

The client partnership team has welcomed Rachel Roberts whilst Claire Turnbull and Briony Cragg have joined the creative delivery team.

Rachel has joined the team with over 15 years' experience successfully marketing prestige brands in the automotive industry, including BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz.

Meanwhile, Claire has joined as media buyer. Prior to joining Narrative, Claire spent the last 24 years working in North East agencies, planning and buying media for various clients.

Specialising in PR, online content and social media management, Briony has joined the Narrative team as PR and communications executive.

KAROL MARKETING APPOINTED BY GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

Great Exhibition of the North has appointed Newcastle-based PR consultancy Karol Marketing to provide communications support for all aspects of the Exhibition's media and PR.

Taking place until 9 September across Newcastle and Gateshead, the free Exhibition celebrates great art in the North. Full of amazing exhibits and live performances, it will tell the inspiring

story of the North and how its innovators are inspiring our future.

Visitors will begin their journey at either the Great North Museum, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art or Sage Gateshead, before joining three trails through 30 world-class venues and public spaces on either side of the River Tyne.





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HOW OUTSOURCED PR CAN HELP YOUR BRAND FLOURISH

When it comes to outsourcing specialist services, companies get it. They understand that in order to manage finances, they need an accountancy practice, and to oversee legal matters, they need a law firm...

However, when it comes to Public Relations, some companies may not recognise the need for a PR agency and how it can be of substantial benefit, crucial in some cases. It tends to be the last professional arm that companies look to embrace, yet it should be an integral part of the company; part of strategic planning at board level and incorporated into the company structure to communicate the company's 'voice' to both existing and potential customers.

A public relations partner can be a tremendous asset for companies of all sizes, from start-ups searching for a route to get on the map, to international corporations seeking a solution to the latest crisis. Regardless of if a company is actively searching for a PR solution, it is vital to understand exactly what PR is and the different ways in which it can help amplify your business:

COMMUNICATES YOUR STORY

Through using different public relations strategies, companies appointing PR professionals have the ability to share unique facts and important details about the past, present and future of the business.

Unlike with advertising, Public Relations has the ability to earn your audience's trust through third party validation. Having a track record of trust between you and your audience is imperative to your overall brand's reputation which is earned through transparency, quality, accountability and integrity.

MAKES YOUR VOICE HEARD

"If you don't tell your story, your competitors will tell theirs." The opportunity for brands to increase their awareness is out there, across the media



landscape and especially on social media. Assume your competitors have a well-thought-out strategy to communicate their message. If you stand out from your competition, but you aren't telling anyone about it, your competitors are still brand leaders in the marketplace to audiences who are listening.

POSITIONS YOU AS EXPERTS

Thought leadership is an integral part of your company's content PR and marketing strategy. This can take many different forms, including interviews, Q&As and company insights. The purpose of thought leadership is to give owners or executives within the company the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise, as well as to lend their voice to industry conversations. A PR agency can source the right platforms to amplify your voice, ahead of your competitors, as well as ensuring that company executives are trained and informed on key messages.

PR and social media also gives executives a fantastic platform to offer their opinions and speak directly with customers. It offers unparalleled insight into the views and trends of a business' consumers. What they say and share about your company via social media can have a substantial impact on your brand and your reputation. An aware and socially active executive can address consumer concerns as and when they happen, helping the company stay on the path to success.

RETAIN & ATTRACT EMPLOYEES

PR is a valuable method for recruiting and retaining top industry talent. Every company wants to attract the very best staff from their respective industry, and what drives potential employees' interest is a progressive company that stands out from the crowd. Using PR to communicate how proactive and savvy a company is, along with a coordinated social media strategy, help attract the right candidates. Retaining employees is always an issue, because if an employee feels like the company isn't proactive or at the cutting edge of the industry, they will no doubt want to jump ship to a competitor. Featuring regularly in both trade and regional/national publications provides a sense of camaraderie and pride in employees, and helps retain and attract the cream of the crop.

BE PROACTIVE IN A CRISIS

No company is ever immune to a crisis. There are preventive measures that companies can take before a crisis occurs, and discussing this with your chosen PR agency is crucial. The first includes taking a long, hard look at your business and identifying where potential threats and crises could arise from. Have a detailed strategy in place should a crisis occur. Don't wait for the crisis to occur to devise a plan, as time is of the essence in handling the crisis to communicate with your customers with integrity and transparency. PR is about being proactive as well as reactive.

For more information or to get in touch, please visit digiipromedia.co.uk or call 0191 6030091.

DIGITAL AGENCY BRINGS BITE OF THE BIG APPLE BACK TO NORTH EAST

Chester-le-Street-based social media advertising agency, Epic Social, is bringing social media insights fresh from the Big Apple to the North East's digital market.

Epic's senior management team recently attended the prestigious Social Media Week New York where they attended seminars hosted by some of the world's biggest brands and influential industry leaders including Google, BuzzFeed, VaynerMedia, Martha Stewart and Nev Schulman of 'Catfish' TV fame.

Social Media Week New York is one of the world's largest dedicated social media conferences. Now in its 10th consecutive year, each event focuses in on one key theme of global significance, this year, the theme was 'Closer' and aimed to explore how the rapid pace at which technology is advancing is causing us to question our humanity and how this is affecting business, cultures and societies around the world. "Artificial intelligence and big data were probably the most talked about topics throughout the entire week," said Ben Maughan, managing director at Epic Social.

"The rise in smart technologies are undoubtedly having an impact on the way that we live and do business, the trick is to find a balance and work out how to harness this evolution for good.

"Attending Social Media Week has definitely opened our eyes to what is new and disruptive in the digital and technology markets. Our intention now is to harness this information and feed it back to our clients to help them achieve their goals via social media."

"We are always keeping our eyes open for the next big thing in digital, monitoring trends and writing bi-weekly blogs of our findings for our website so attending the conference was a great way to get ahead of the game," added Aidan Sunter, director at Epic Social.

Founded in late 2017, Epic Social specialises in providing results-driven, premium quality content creation and targeted advertising solutions to help businesses operating across the automotive, retail, hospitality and professional service sectors to reach and engage with their target audiences.



(L to R): Aidan Sunter and Ben Maughan of Epic Social in New York.

For more information, visit www.epicsocial.co.uk or follow @wearepicsocial on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat

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DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Fresh out of university and realising the working world really was as scary as everyone says; Jam Marketing's new Marketing & PR assistant, Sophie Hannah told us a little bit about how she landed herself in Jammy Towers...

Having studied International Fashion Promotion in Manchester for the last three years, I realised I couldn't wait to enter to world of work and start building my career; little did I know how hard that was going to be.

Job searching is not easy, I spent a long 12 months and countless hours, filling out applications, attending interviews and ultimately being rejected because there was always somebody else with more experience. Regretting my decision of going to university, I reached the point where I wondered how could I have spent so many years studying so hard - and racking up so much debt - to ultimately be told that my qualifications were nothing without the experience? Then along came JAM, a company with a different attitude, who decided to take a chance on a graduate with absolutely no experience in the working world of marketing, but rather an excited young alumna who had a real passion for all things digital.

Fast forward nine weeks and here I am having my work published in one of the region's best magazines (check me out). But it doesn't stop there, I've put my digital flair into helping promote our fantastic clients' brands through various forms of digital media. I'm busy day-to-day controlling social media platforms for some of the North East's best companies, taking part in some exciting marketing campaigns and most importantly, loving every minute of my job. Oh, and if you'd asked me a year ago what my future career goals were, I'd have said exactly this.

I guess the moral of my story is that a degree isn't everything and a CV full to the brim can't compete with the right attitude and personality - maybe that's why they say "don't judge a book by its cover".

www.jam-marketing.co.uk



Sophie Hannah

YOU'VE "HIGHLIGHTED" OUR BUSINESS - LEADING LINK

Highlights PR is a successful PR agency run by Keith Newman. Uniquely, their office is a boat based on the River Tyne. Here we look at how Highlights PR have helped one of their clients.

Leading Link is a charity based in South East Northumberland whose main aim is to provide real life opportunities, including business and enterprise, through a diverse range of activities, helping to maximise the potential of young people across North East England.

Lyn Horton is CEO and here she tells us why the charity uses Highlights PR.

"I first approached Highlights PR as I felt that Leading Link were not being recognised publicly for all the work they were successfully completing. I chose Highlights PR as they were recommended to me as being a business that really gets to know their clients and were therefore particularly strong at identifying opportunities for a story, keeping our Charity in the public domain. This has been proved by our wall of fame which is currently 6 meters in length!

"Highlights PR has continually strived to meet this expectation and has often gone above and beyond. One thing I particularly like about Keith is how he has become a trusted part of our team. His creativity and uniqueness at not only spotting



stories but also how to broadcast them across all types of media has made him indispensable to our team.

"Our team and trustees have been so impressed with his positivity, his loyalty and his passion for the Charity that we have absolutely no hesitation

in recommending Highlights PR to any company or person who just needs that helping hand to ensure that people out there know the great work you are all doing."

Leading Link can be contacted on 01670 820088 or email info@leadinglink.co.uk

For a no obligation chat about your PR and a coffee on-board Highlights – the floating office, call Keith on 07814 397951 or email Keith@highlightspr.co.uk



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MEDIAWORKS AWAITS THE LAUNCH OF ITS LATEST APP FOR MANCHESTER PUBLIC ART EVENT



Newcastle-based digital marketing agency, Mediaworks, is making even greater waves in the web and app development sector by collaborating with creative producers Wild in Art and Manchester City Council on one of the city’s most incredible public art displays ever. Find out more about the company’s latest app development success, Bee in the City, here:

Mediaworks is eagerly awaiting the launch of its latest app, which is set to go live across Manchester on 23 July. Created in partnership with public art specialists Wild in Art in collaboration with Manchester City Council, Mediaworks have designed and developed this app to help visitors explore the trail and support The Lord Mayor of Manchester’s We Love MCR Charity, which aims to improve the lives of local people. And now, we are pleased to say that the date users can download and use the app is set.

So, what’s the app all about? The Bee in the City app allows users to pull up a map to locate and interact with over 230 bee sculptures around some of Manchester’s most popular landmarks and hidden spots. Each bee has been creatively designed by regional and national artists to reflect something special about the city — and no two bees look the same.

Once the user tracks down the bee, they can input the code that’s printed on each sculpture’s plaque

to enjoy a full colour image, interesting facts about the bee’s design, and the chance to post their own photo with the bee. Users can collect ‘rewards’ provided by Bee in the City sponsors each time they collect a new bee code. The app also features a pedometer so users can track their steps and the distance they have travelled on the trail along with a donate function for The Lord Mayor of Manchester’s We Love MCR Charity.

Creative director at Mediaworks, Andrew Blenkinsop, has overseen the project from the start and is excited to see his company’s hard work go live. He said: “Designing and developing this app has tested and advanced our skills and expertise, but more importantly, it’s been an excellent project to help The Lord Mayor of Manchester’s We Love MCR Charity. Expanding our app and development experience and harnessing new technologies to offer superior products are essential to ensure we’re constantly growing as a digital agency.”

Ruth McAllister, Marketing Director of Wild in Art,

added: “The app we’ve developed with Mediaworks will bring even more enjoyment to Bee in the City, which will transform Manchester into a fun, free, family-friendly art gallery this summer. Our partnership with Mediaworks marks a significant milestone in Wild in Art’s history of connecting communities, businesses, and artists through creativity, and we’re delighted to be working with them.”

You can download the Bee in the City app from the App Store and Google Play from 23 July. For more information about Mediaworks, visit www.mediaworks.co.uk

Find out more about Bee in the City at www.beeinthecitymcr.co.uk

Mediaworks has also developed apps for Wild in Art’s other summer 2018 events including: GoGoHares in Norwich; Maggie’s Penguin Parade in Dundee; Hoodwinked in Nottingham; and Worcester Stands Tall. Find out more about Wild in Art at www.wildinart.co.uk

See how Mediaworks can support your next app development project. For more information or to speak to a member of the team, contact us on +44 (0) 330 108 4263, email info@mediaworks.co.uk

BRAND AND BLOGGER

What you need to know for a legal and ethical relationship.

Working with influencers can bring huge benefits to your brand and business, but with the influencer industry still relatively in its infancy, how do you ensure your influencer engagement programme is not only legal but ethical too?

Once your PR team has carefully selected appropriate content creators, what should they be asking bloggers for in terms of disclosing payment and links, while following the rules of different social media channels for disclosing paid-for content, to help protect and enhance your brand's reputation? And more importantly, what should you be asking your PR team about their approach to influencer relations, so that you can be safe in the knowledge they are acting both legally and ethically on behalf of your brand too?

The ASA

The ASA has announced a review into how paid-for influencer and native advertising is signposted online, saying that misleading posts damage consumer trust in advertising and that filters back to the brands participating in this bad practice.

According to the ASA, an advert in terms of influencer relations campaigns include payment and editorial control. Any paid-for content should also be clearly marked as an advert, when paid for, or when receiving product or experiences in kind and there has been some kind of editorial control by a brand. Editorial control goes as far as even just asking for a post, inclusion of a specific link or campaign hashtag to be included in the influencer's content.

Disclosing the relationship

Full disclosure is critical to the blogger and the brand – you and your PR team need to let your audience clearly know the nature of your relationship with a particular influencer. This should be clearly declared at the start of a post, not hidden away at the end, or before someone clicks a link on social media to a particular article. Each channel has their own way of marking paid for content, and yes it would help if there was consistency, but safe to say you and your PR team should be insisting on full disclosure and on all channels at all times.



Anne-Marie Lacey

A carefully chosen content creator with an engaged following is likely to have an audience that trusts and is influenced by what they say, regardless of whether they have been paid to highlight a product in their own way. This authenticity is why brands want to work with them. So why jeopardise your brand's reputation and theirs by hiding disclosure? If your brand is appropriate to the audience, then whether the influencer has been paid or not shouldn't make any difference.

Linking back to your website

And what about the link included? Yes, high quality backlinks are beneficial to SEO, but are against Google regulations if they are paid for. Google ranking should be earned not bought; requesting and buying paid-for links can bring about a Google penalty and by its very nature can damage awareness of your brand and its reputation, as you won't be as visible online.

So, any paid for advertising with a content creator should come with a request for a no-follow link a standard. It's also worth remembering that a content creator willing to sell backlinks is also likely

to have a website with lots of low quality links – is that a website you want your brand associated with?

Ultimately, it's important for you and your PR team to know the legal requirements if you're thinking about embarking on an influencer relations engagement programme, in what is a relatively new and emerging field of brand communications. When it comes to protecting your brand and business, it's important to get it right and by following these guidelines, you've got a great starter-for-ten.

Anne-Marie Lacey is Managing Director of Filament PR. She is collaborating with Debbie Sharratt, an award-winning PR & Marketing professional who is also now a successful blogger, to deliver a number of courses to help businesses, brands and communicators work more effectively and ethically with bloggers and other social influencers. For more information, visit www.nesma.co.uk.

A version of this article first appeared on influenceonline.co.uk co-authored by Anne-Marie Lacey and Debbie Sharratt.

PLACING PURPOSE BEFORE PROFIT

By Sarah Hall, managing director of Sarah Hall Consulting Limited

At times of prolonged austerity and political, societal and technological change, relationships between organisations and the public change.

When cash is tight consumers scrutinise where they invest their hard-earned cash more than ever. They seek out brands aligned with their values, that understand what life is like and play their part in easing daily challenges.

There is increased pressure on businesses not just to talk about their values but to visibly and tangibly live them, or risk being called out publicly, with the reputational damage and negative impact to the bottom line that results.

It's an issue that is quickly rising up the corporate agenda. Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, fired a warning shot in January in his organisation's anniversary CEO letter to business leaders when he called companies to account on their societal impact.

To prosper over time, every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also benefit all their stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers and the communities in which they operate, he said.

Leave things better than you find them

It is why the title and theme of 'Accountable Leadership and Social Purpose' from this year's CIPR National Conference is so important.

As CIPR President, I'm keen that we as public relations professionals understand how to stand up and be counted as leaders and recognise our wider responsibilities, but even more critically consider how we can influence the organisations we work with to do the same.

The conference will take place on Thursday 29 November 2018 at the British Library in London. It will explore accountable leadership, ethical frameworks and how social purpose can link to organisational objectives for the greater good.

Speakers include Josh Hardie, deputy director-general of the CBI, which is campaigning for business in Brexit negotiations; Elizabeth Filippouli of the Global Thinkers Forum, which champions strategic

philanthropy for global change; and John O'Brien, co-author of *The Power of Purpose: Inspire Teams, Engage Customers, Transform Business*.

Leading the fight against plastic pollution

Richard Walker, managing director of the Iceland Foods Group, will be present to talk about why Iceland took the decision to become the first major retailer to commit to eliminating plastic packaging from all own brand products within five years.

Professor Anne Gregory, Chair in Corporation Communication at the University of Huddersfield, is chairing the event.

"No organisation is an island. We live in a complex, interconnected world where what you do and what your values are as an organisation are coming under increasing scrutiny. To maintain public support it's not good enough to focus just on customers and make a profit, you have to be seen to be a net contributor to society too," said Anne.

"The role of communicators in this is to help our organisations understand the legitimate expectations of all stakeholders and to help senior managers make informed decisions which demonstrate they have a social as well as a business purpose."

Tom Levitt wrote *The Company Citizen: Good for Business, Planet, Nation and Community* and will be another of the contributors on the day. He said: "Companies used to think there was a choice between doing good and making a profit, but there's plenty of evidence that this is a false dichotomy.

"Indeed, over the longer term it's now clear that the company that TRIES succeeds - where TRIES means Transparent, Responsible, Inclusive, Ethical and Sustainable."

As Global Thinkers Forum CEO Elizabeth Filippouli explained: "The world needs a new governance model, which takes universal values as well as ethics seriously into account.

One of the major challenges in multi-stakeholder collaboration is lack of trust. To overcome this 'trust crisis' we need to create opportunities for understanding, joined up thinking, collaboration and new partnerships. Our world needs competent society leaders who can create a future of prosperity and development.

"It is a fascinating time to be discussing and encouraging the idea of finding common ground in people's thinking and bringing them together under a common set of universal values."



Sarah Hall

For more information or to book tickets, please visit www.cipr.co.uk/nationalconference

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FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND THE CIPR NORTHERN CONFERENCE

By Sarah Hall, CIPR President

A collaboration between CIPR North East, North West and Yorkshire and Lincolnshire has seen the Northern Conference relaunched in the PR calendar. I'm celebrating its return to Newcastle on Friday 13 July and not just because for the first time this year I won't have to travel. Here are my top five reasons to grab a ticket while the last few are still available.

#1 You'll learn what to do when an international-scale crisis hits.

In a coup for the CIPR, Laurie Bell, director of communities and communication for Wiltshire Council has agreed to keynote. When former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter were poisoned with a nerve agent in Salisbury, Laurie was first in line to manage the crisis. I was fortunate enough to hear Laurie speak a few weeks back. Her narration of what life is like when the world's media descends and you have to rewrite the comms plan is utterly compelling and full of lessons for practitioners at all levels. She also has clear advice on maintaining personal resilience when a work-life balance is unachievable for the foreseeable.

#2 Think you know youth marketing? Think again.

Ever wondered how you can create compelling content that teenagers will engage with? Time to

hear social welfare professional Paul Irwin speak. Paul launched online drama TryLife to help teach young people the potential consequences of their actions. Viewers get to choose what happens to the main character in every episode and with topics ranging from grooming, drugs, violence and sex to health and careers, can see what could happen to them based on the decisions made. TryLife's success on social media shows exactly how much of a hit it is – reaching 188,000,000 per week with 500,000,000 social media impressions per month.

#3 Has AI disrupted your daily work yet? It will.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is sneaking up on the PR world and now is the time to take stock. Former CIPR president Stephen Waddington has led a panel for the Institute looking at how AI is impacting daily practice and how you can embed this in your own work. Learn about the tools and the processes that will allow you to work smarter and deliver benefits

and efficiencies to your organisation.

#4 Avoid the tick box trap.

Got a consultation exercise to do? Jen Robson from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership is on hand to guide you through the process to ensure that it's meaningful, transparent and accessible. She'll also ensure you know how to ask the right questions, especially where the answers are what the management team needs, if not wants, to hear.

#5 Neuroscience and internal comms go hand in hand.

Public relations is a demanding business and creating an engaged workforce requires significant thought and effort. Redefining Communications' Jenni Field will look at neuroscience, the scientific study of the nervous system, to show how company communication and message cut through can be enhanced and how regular engagement can help people to think and perform at their best.

The CIPR Northern Conference takes place from 10am on Friday 13 July at the Crowne Plaza in Newcastle. Full day and half day tickets are available from www.ciprnorthernconference.co.uk

Christian Cerisola



NOW IS THE TIME FOR PR TO SHOW HOW ATTENTION CAN REALLY PAY IN ADLAND

Earlier this summer, and easily lost amidst royal wedding hysteria, Facebook's dealings with UK Parliament over the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed the social media giant would soon allow us to see details of 'all of the ads every advertiser is running on Facebook at the same time.'

Yes, in their bid to be more transparent about who's doing what on their platforms we'll be able to view who's spending what, who they're targeting and how many people saw the ads. Interesting.

At a similar time, P&G announced they'd be reducing their digital spend by something between 20 and 50 percent. When a global giant like that makes that type of statement, you know that wasteful attempts at hitting the masses are over. Smart targeting is going to be crucial. It may make some interesting benchmarking between companies like P&G and Unilever to see who's getting biggest bang for their buck through their Facebook activity.

This is a big threat to traditional media agencies. More freely available effectiveness data will surely lead to more brands following P&G's lead. And whilst much of the savings made will be reinvested in-house in data and analytics capabilities, there will nevertheless be an increasing appetite to explore more innovative and creative ways of engaging more targeted audiences.

This presents an equal and opposite opportunity for those with an earned mindset - those who have learnt to combine the power of PR with the power of social. More and more, we're relying on a very identifiable 'PESO' - Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned - model for PR campaigns that deliver impact.

Anyone can have a big brand idea and activate with a huge media spend. Of course, we don't all have



enormous budgets. A PR-based creative or a strategist who's been schooled in the often-excruciating 'story pitch' to a cynical news editor must prove why a campaign has value to their readers or viewers. And they often only get 10 seconds max to do it. That experience ensures we apply extreme rigour to audience insight to land a story with genuine news value and appeal. In short, we need to be able to answer the classic journalist question: 'Why would anyone give a damn about this?'

Equally, advances in digital technology means that almost anyone can create a piece of beautifully-made content for social and fire it into the ether for potential engagement - but if you combine this craftsmanship through that PR filter and a mindset that is about opening up dialogue online rather

than shutting it down, you have very powerful combination.

PR agencies are increasingly starting to encroach on adland's patch in this manner. W itself recently created award-winning cinema ads for Lynx with Antony Joshua. PR agencies' collective propensity to turn out advertising-grade work at a lower cost means we are making inroads, and the opportunity is huge.

Another small example. We recently released a digital ad for PG Tips new range of Tasty Decaf tea. Our response to standard PR brief was to actually create an ad. We knew there was the potential to bring a story idea to life - Craig Revel-Horwood as the PG Tips 'Head of Taste' - through a film that didn't require months of planning meetings, location scouts or a cool director. Instead it was shot in a day and activated through an earned media plan as well as social. It was comparatively low cost and is proving high impact.

In an environment where media budgets are being slashed and marketing investments are being scrutinised for any signs of return, such an approach can be revelatory. If earned players can better demonstrate efficiencies and ROI to marketing directors - something we're still not good enough at - the traditional ad model is under real threat.

Our industry has rightfully and effortfully earned its place at marketing's top table, something in the air tells me that now is the time for us to make it pay.

Christian Cerisola is head of W North, part of W Communications www.wnorth.co.uk @WCommNorth

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ARE 'QUICK WINS' MORE EFFECTIVE THAN A LONGER PLANNED CAMPAIGN WHEN MARKETING?

”

With ever increasing pressure on marketing managers and agencies to deliver rapid results with restricted budgets, there is a huge temptation to invest in 'quick wins' or marketing techniques that deliver rapid results irrelevant of other factors.

The results, however, may not always be in the long-term interests of the company and are often more costly than a longer-term 'slow burn' campaign. In truth, there is no right or wrong answer to this – each set of techniques has their own merits and faults. As a good example, one of the first such quick wins is probably the Sale – once a retail highlight of the year, the discounted prices, especially immediately after Christmas, brought in additional income (but at a reduced margin) and were frequently used to move old stock. However, as a wise person once put it, "Any fool can discount" so that retailers are wary of having too many such discount events in case they become expected, with consumers eventually reluctant to pay the full price whilst the strongest brands, such as Apple, Ferrari, Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Dior etc rarely, if ever, discount.

In modern marketing, quick wins are usually associated with digital techniques. PPC or pay per click, for example, will get your website to the top of the SERP (Search Engine Results Page), but can be very expensive depending on the key word used. 'Mattress' in Google Adwords, for example, is, at time of writing, commanding a hefty £7.22 per click, 'Insurance' at £55.00 per click and 'Casino' an eye-watering £58.57 per click, which will quickly eat up even the largest budget. However, the fact that organisations use PPC demonstrates that it works very well while the alternative long term strategy of organic SEO could not possibly deliver such a high ranking so quickly.

There is, however, increasing evidence that consumers are actually turning away from advertised sites on search results pages in favour of those which are climbing up through superior content, links,



Jen Macdonald, Account Manager at Silver Bullet Marketing Ltd

traffic and all the other factors that affect ranking. In 2016, Jupiter Research reported that organic results are 8.5x more likely to be clicked on than paid search results but PPC holds a slight edge in conversion rates, as paid search results are 1.5x more likely to convert into sales or email sign-ups, for example, than organic search. The average click-through rate for a Google ad is 3.16%.

A long-term alternative to PPC would be organic SEO primarily through Social Media management and content. This can't deliver such quick results, but it will produce a more relevant website and be considerably cheaper and more cost-effective.

Consumer advertising is also generally seen as a quick fix with digital, print, outdoor and broadcast media all capable of reaching vast audiences with brand messages, but again, such exposure doesn't come cheap. Mass advertising can supply awareness of products and services with FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) manufacturers happily advertising to take market share off competitors, but it's generally longer term campaigns involving PR that can create the initial demand, especially for new products or services.

PR is generally seen as a long-term technique that creates a positive impression of a company and their

service or products. Yet, Crisis Management can also be regarded as a 'Quick Fix' to turn around a situation which could potentially damage an organisation's reputation into one which actually enhances the reputation and perception of the organisation. Look at how brilliantly KFC handled their disastrous supply failure and then compare this to Thomas Cook and their appalling handling of the death of Wakefield twins, Christi and Bobby Shepherd from carbon monoxide poisoning in a Greek holiday apartment. One created sympathy and enhanced brand loyalty whilst the latter, relying on supposedly expert legal advice, nearly destroyed the company.

The choice between quick fix or planned slower campaigns often comes down to available budget with quick fixes simply out of the range for many, especially start-up, companies. This, however, isn't necessarily a bad thing as a reliance on quick fixes is rarely conducive to sustainability and brand building in the longer term. Building the brand and the consumer trust that comes with that is generally the goal of most organisations and comes through long-term investment in PR, social media management and other 'slow burn' strategies. If, however, your goal is simply increased sales despite the margin achieved and ignoring the Cost per Click, then 'quick fix' is the way to go!

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.

GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

Ed Sheeran wasn't the only main event at St. James' Park last month - I also had the privilege of being invited to speak at the People Power Event held on Wednesday 6 June. And if the name hasn't even registered with you, let's start at the beginning. You missed a regional training and skills event dedicated to developing your most important asset, your people.

Running a marketing consultancy and training business, my passion is for learning, and I love sharing my knowledge with others, so exhibiting and speaking at this conference was an obvious choice. Speaking (at the right events) and networking is an integral part of our business marketing strategy. I talked about "Effective Marketing Skills" and covered everything from 'have we got the right people to manage it' to 'ensuring that every customer is treated as your only customer'. And most importantly it was an opportunity to continue my campaign to ensure marketing is valued as a "critical" business function.

20 free seminars ran throughout the day, covering everything from how to manage conflict in the workplace to where to find funding for your business. There was a lot to gain from listening to the other speakers, and a highlight for me was Tamara Taylor's talk.

Tamara is inspirational. She shared her

experiences of her journey from wanting to play rugby as a little girl to becoming 2015 Women's Rugby Premiership Player of the Year, Captain of the winning England team in 2015, Rugby Players' Association Player of the Year 2017, and England's second most capped rugby player - ever. She is also one of only a relative few people in the world to have played rugby for her country over 100 times (the centurions).

A rugby career is not the natural choice for many women, but Tamara is on a mission to ensure that all women have the right to follow their dream and that all employers embrace the talents that people have to offer irrespective of their gender, race or physical ability. She illustrated that a winning team must combine many different competencies to make it the best.

I also had the chance to introduce one of our alumni to a potential new career opportunity. I'll admit if I see a career progression post on LinkedIn by former and existing students, I take pride in the fact that nesma might just have played a small part in that!

Don't worry though, if you did miss this event, you can follow People Power on Twitter and be kept up to date with when the next events will take place @P_Pevents. If you would like me or indeed Tamara to speak at your next event - please get in touch.



Veronica Swindale
Director, Chartered Marketer, FCIM and
CIM Ambassador of the North 2017

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OCUCON MAKES NEW APPOINTMENT

The world's first Video Surveillance as a Service system, Ocucon, has strengthened its senior team with the appointment of Brand L. Elverston as a consultant to the business.

Breaking new ground in surveillance technology, Ocucon delivers a powerful, cloud-based storage and retrieval platform, combining intelligent data analytics with the facility to store, analyse and retrieve unlimited amounts of HD video surveillance footage from within the Ocucon portal.

Former Director of Asset Protection Strategic Initiatives at Walmart, Brand brings a wealth of experience in retail technologies focused in the loss prevention and asset protection industry. In his new role, Brand will be responsible for Ocucon's business development and growth, offering strategic advice and assisting in the development and delivery of Ocucon's new services.

Brand said: "As a market leader in surveillance technology, I've been following Ocucon's journey since its launch last year. It has grown from strength to strength and I am very much looking forward to coming on board."



TECHNOLOGY SERVICE GROUP MOVES TO QUORUM

Leading IT organisation Technology Service Group is moving its headquarters to Quorum Business Park, Newcastle, in a move that will bring over 50 of its 350 staff to the ground floor of building Q11.

TSG was founded in Newcastle in 2003 and has since grown steadily with multiple acquisitions. As one of the UK's leading business software companies, TSG delivers IT support to organisations throughout the UK.

David Stonehouse, Chief Executive at TSG, said: "We are delighted with our new headquarters at Quorum. Times are changing and we're making sure we adapt to that."

Nearly half of our workforce nationally is now home-based so we've moved to a space that is more suitable for our needs. Our head office-based staff now have a much more pleasant and staff friendly environment with access to the facilities at Quorum, whilst there's flexible space for other staff and customers visiting the head office."

The move sees the tech company taking the largest of the Q11 suites. With five of the six offices now let, Quorum will now embark on the next phase of suites which will create an additional range of units to suit occupiers requiring between five and 100 desks.

STOCKTON FIRM REVEALS LATEST DIGITAL PRODUCT

A technology company based in Stockton's Fusion Hive building is poised to launch a new digital product that will revolutionise the fleet management market for SMEs.

DRIVER, the team behind the successful National Safety Passport business, is building a low-cost platform for businesses to manage their grey fleet duty of care. It is the latest technology company to grow from Fusion Hive, the Northshore-based innovation hub managed by Teesside University.

Managing Director Marc Atkinson explained: "It's tricky for companies

to understand and manage the risks faced by both employer and employee while driving for work. Our concept is a simple, low-cost cloud application that assesses these risks. DRIVER uses a unique algorithm to define the type of journey and vehicles used, automatically validating driving licence and vehicle data from the DVLA."

The software also creates compliance to-do lists for staff, which might include driver training and accepting driving for work policies and procedures to check drivers' vehicles are safe to use for work.



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As IT becomes increasingly complex, and cyber-attacks and ransomware situations continue to make the headlines, organisations from SMEs to large corporates are choosing to offload the burden of managing their IT infrastructure to a trusted partner who can deliver IT as a service.

The managed IT services model has proved to be highly effective in managing costs, strengthening security and maintaining a secure, flexible IT environment that supports the business, rather than becoming a weight to be carried.

National construction and property consultants Summers Inman is a typical example of an organisation focussed on smarter ways of working.

Our partnership with the 90 year old business goes back to 2000. With over 100 staff in eight offices serving an international client base, high speed connectivity and availability of systems and data is high on its agenda.

In 2015 Summers Inman switched from onsite IT to a data centre based model, which saw a 30-strong server estate consolidated into just two servers plus a storage area network, all housed at our £4m high security data centre and workspace recovery facility in County Durham.

This resulted in increased security and performance, thanks to a high performance three-way communications link between the Summers Inman offices and two of ITPS's ISO27001-certified data centres, underpinning a virtuous circle of 'always available' IT systems and data for staff, wherever their location. This was supported by a 20-strong team of dedicated network operations engineers onsite at the County Durham data centre, who monitor the Summers IT infrastructure 24/7, anticipating and dealing with any issues before they can cause a problem.

Three years later, when Summers Inman's servers were approaching end of life, the board faced a decision about the next step and how to achieve yet more value from its IT spend, particularly in the face of an increasing number of critical but data-heavy industry applications which were gobbling up resources.

The shortlist of choices eventually hinged on whether to continue down the capital expenditure route and replace like for like, or look at what are essentially rental models such as public, private and hybrid cloud options.

Summers Inman were aware of our early adoption of Microsoft's Azure Stack, which is the software giant's public cloud offering, tailored, delivered and supported via the data centre of a trusted partner.

Azure Stack was installed in our data centre by a team made up of US-based Microsoft engineers who flew over, and our own virtualisation and networking experts. After a series of Q&A sessions and some of their own research, the Summers Inman board opted to go forward with an Azure Stack solution supported by an enhanced managed services contract, which fitted into its plans to centralise round a Microsoft product set. It also gave the business the enhanced disaster recovery capabilities that many of its public sector companies demand.

"Many years ago we took the view that managing IT is a job for experts," explains Mark Dutton, regional managing director at Summers Inman.

"A managed services model gives us peace of mind,

and from a commercial viewpoint, the move to Azure Stack added up nicely. We have already seen savings on power and cooling costs, along with significant performance increases in some areas. Any issues can be addressed from the data centre without involving a call out to an office that could previously have been in Edinburgh or London.

"The migration stage to Azure Stack took just 12 days, and went very smoothly, even though it coincided with an office move which saw ITPS move the patch panels and test the system for us as well as providing us with new switches."

The flexibility of service is one of the big attractions for Summers Inman.

"It gives us choices," says Mark. "For instance if we decide to diversify and add additional specialisms to our services, we can increase the pressure on our IT infrastructure with no risk and no extra kit needed. We can spin up live, safe test environments in a few minutes as and when we need them, for instance for development testing of new applications.

"Managed services is a cost effective way of bringing in an expert partner with a high level of expertise, a broad span of experience, and who can bring new ideas to the table.

"Our model is tailored around our requirements, and is the perfect way to keep up to date with advances in technology and make sure our IT always supports our changing needs.

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Dave O'Connell offers post GDPR help from Advantex

POST GDPR STRUGGLES? HELP IS AT HAND

As the dust begins to settle on a post GDPR landscape, Dave O'Connell, managing director at Advantex, offers some advice for those still struggling to come to terms with the changes.

Despite undertaking measures to improve data security and privacy, 38% of global organisations responding to a recent survey by Harvey Nash and KPMG believed that they are not compliant with the new general data protection regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Indeed, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) raised concerns that many of the UK's 5.7 million SMEs were unlikely to be fully GDPR-ready. This in turn has led to worries among business leaders and entrepreneurs, who want to know when, and how, they are likely to feel the consequences of non-compliance.

So, if you are one of those who didn't hit the May deadline, or are perhaps worried that you might not have done enough to keep the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) off your back, there are a number of simple but effective measures that can be taken to provide some reassurances.

The two key areas to consider are proactive consent and the security of information and data. The former means that you have acquired full consent to use or store a person's data, which can

lead to their identity. You must disclose exactly what information you are collecting and how you intend to use this for future purposes.

While consent can be relatively easy - updating your privacy policy on your website and including a consent pop up might be all that's required - the security of information and data is considered the hardest. With government figures suggesting that almost 46% of all UK businesses have been a subject of a cyber-attack, you could easily be a target for the hackers.

Where do you begin with data security? An initial step is to start with a discovery scanner. This will examine your external networks, identifying what is connected to your network and what needs to be considered for your data security plan.

Once you've taken steps to understanding what your external network consists of, running a penetration test (pen test) would be the next good move. This involves an ethical hacker, who will attempt to compromise your external network and see how far they can reach inside your network. They will then provide you with a comprehensive

report of the security weaknesses. Your IT team (or partner) should then be able to spend their time plugging these gaps, bolstering your business and ensuring it's more resilient to threats.

Quarterly vulnerability scans can then follow as part of a series of best practice initiatives in an effort to find any entrances through your external network. A vulnerability scanner is not as thorough as a pen test, but it will alert you to any changes in your network which might pose a threat. It should be noted that most hackers employ their own vulnerability scanner to identify 'weak businesses' before launching their attack.

Following these steps - along with new investment in staff training to equip them with the requisite skills, and ensuring that your technology is properly configured and office data is always secure - can significantly reduce the chances of a cyber breach. You will be able to rest easy knowing you have the proof that you've taken the appropriate steps to secure your customers' and employees' data, which is of prime importance to the ICO.

Advantex, with its experience, resources and highly skilled team, is working with organisations across the UK to ensure they are fully GDPR compliant. If you feel you could benefit from the experts, visit www.advantex.uk.com

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A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH?

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster at Durham School



Leicester City Football Club winning the Premier League. Usain Bolt winning his third Olympic gold medal in the 100m. Andy Murray winning Wimbledon. England winning the rugby World Cup in 2003. Virginia Wade winning Wimbledon. England winning the football World Cup in 1966...

Depending on your age and inclination, I am sure you can remember where you were, and how you watched, when one or more of these sporting events happened. Or, closer to home, there are other sporting events which are memorable, such as Jonathan Edwards' Olympic gold medal in 2000 or Newcastle United winning the FA Cup in 1955. Whatever the event, for most of us there is a memory of a sporting event which means a lot to us. But why?

On one level, sport seems entirely pointless. Most games revolve around an arbitrary, and in some cases, arcane set of rules which seem designed to ask competitors to perform ridiculous tasks. Why try to hit a little ball into a hole hundred of yards away with nothing more than a metal stick? Why do grown men and women run up and down a field trying to put a bag of air at one end or the other? It's all patently ludicrous. Aside from health benefits, which can be gained in other ways, why do we bother putting all this effort into pointless activities? And, why do so many people spend so much of their time and money watching sportsmen and women conduct their meaningless tasks?

There are two reasons why sport is so compelling. The first is the sheer exhilaration in raising the capability of the human body to the maximum of its potential. We evolved to perform certain feats

on order to survive, but there is a huge pleasure in testing the body to its limit. We want to know what the limits of those powers are. What is the fastest we can run 100 metres; how high could we jump, and how much can a person lift?

The second reason is the theatre and emotion of top level sports. For the athletes, this is as much about mental strength as it is physical capability, and ability to deal with the stresses and strains of match point or the penalty kick can be what marks out the truly great athlete. For the spectators, the vicarious thrill of victory, or the despair of defeat, provide us with an emotional rollercoaster which makes us feel so much more alive. Our everyday lives can pass in a mundane stroll; empathising with those who put themselves in the cauldron of a football field or athletics stadium allow us to access the highs and lows of competition.

What makes games a game though is that nothing ultimately rests on the outcome. Fundamentally, who wins doesn't matter; or at least not for spectators. Whether your team wins or loses, you will get up the next day, carrying on with your life the same way, irrespective of yesterday's result. Nobody died, as they say.

At least that's how it should be. Recently, I settled down to watch the Champions League final between Real Madrid and Liverpool. The evening made for

grim viewing for a number of reasons, including the performance of Liverpool's goalkeeper, Loris Karius, who was at fault for two of three goals scored by Real Madrid. It was probably the most unfortunate evening on record for any goalie in an event of that magnitude. The man himself was clearly in huge distress after the final whistle.

What was quite shocking however was the reaction afterwards, inevitably on social media, by a number of supposed sports fans. They made death threats against Karius and wished illnesses and other fatalities on members of his family. Whilst these were in the minority, the flames were fanned by other media outlets in such a way that there were fears for the goalkeeper's mental health and he has deactivated his Twitter account.

This is clearly wrong. No one should be made to suffer for mistakes which, under the eyes of watching millions, any of us could make. That isn't what sport is about. There is a famous saying from a former Liverpool manager, Bill Shankly, that "Football isn't a matter of life and death; it's more important than that." But even Shankly made that statement knowingly. Sport is not a life and death matter, though it may sometimes feel it. It's fine and indeed right to take it seriously, but it is the taking part not the winning which is what sport really is about.

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 386 4783, email admissions@durhamschool.co.uk or visit www.durhamschool.co.uk

SINGING THE PRAISES OF SCHOOL MUSIC FOR BOYS

By David Tickner, Headmaster at Newcastle School for Boys.

Each summer term at Newcastle School for Boys, we host the Headmaster's annual invitation concert. The occasion celebrates the musical journeys of our boys through the School's full age range. It begins with the delightful debuts of boys as young as five and concludes with the accomplished performances of sixth formers nearing the end of their time with us.

There were some truly remarkable performances at this year's concert. The following morning, my inbox filled with appreciative messages from parents, staff and governors. Beyond the obvious quality and breadth of performance and styles delivered from our relatively small school, I noticed more besides.

Smiles on the faces of performers. Smiles on the faces of their fellow performers as older boys congratulated younger boys. And certainly, smiles on the faces in the audience.

Boys displaying courage submitting themselves to the challenge, risk and thrill of a live performance – some of them for the very first time. Developing confidence. Being prepared to make a mistake – not that there were many that I noticed - and carry on, smiling.

Perhaps the key here was overheard in the words of our Senior School subject leader for music, Mr



Hopkinson, just moments before the boys went into the auditorium. He told them: 'Enjoy it. Smile. If you make a mistake, carry on and keep smiling.' What a fantastic approach to promoting young people's enjoyment of music, their learning and development.

Sir Simon Rattle, music director of the London Symphony Orchestra, wrote in a letter to The Times recently: "It is every child's birthright to have access to music...it is essential to the wellbeing and success of our young people... The future may be uncertain and difficult for the next generation, but unless they have access to a vital cultural education they will be unprepared for what this new world may require. Our children need to have the artistic vitamins that will help to build a better society."

There may be a stereotyped view of single sex boys' schools as strong on testosterone-charged physical activity but weaker on performing arts, culture and sensitivity. Not at Newcastle School for Boys. The boys' only environment actually liberates the boys from self-consciousness and encourages them to perform in front of their peers and large public audiences from a very young age.

Music carries its own intrinsic value and worth. It is good for our wellbeing. It promotes creativity and also develops character. We shall continue to ensure that our boys receive a healthy intake of musical and artistic vitamins.

The School is currently taking applications for September 2019 and for its final few places available for September 2018.

To register your interest or for any queries, please contact 0191 255 9303 or admissions@newcastleschool.co.uk or for more information, please visit www.newcastleschool.co.uk

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The All-New Fiesta ST will be available to test drive at Jennings Ford branches.

ALL-NEW FORD FIESTA ST IS STUNNING STUFF

Staff at Jennings Ford branches across the region, are preparing for the imminent arrival of the All-New Fiesta ST model.

Ranked as the performance halo model for the range, and a showcase of Ford hot-hatch styling, technology and driving dynamics, the All-New Fiesta ST series is scheduled to arrive this month at Jennings Ford branches located at Stockton, Middlesbrough and Gateshead.

Ray Riaz, general manager at Jennings Ford's Stockton-based dealership, said; "We're very much looking forward to taking delivery of the latest Fiesta ST model, which is already generating interest with customers who are taking advantage of placing orders prior to the model arriving on site."

Unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show last year, customers can take advantage of three versions, including the ST-1, ST-2 and ST-3, with pricing starting from £18,995 for the entry level, and from £21,495 for the top spec model, which comes with 18" alloy wheels.

Available in three-door and five-door body styles, the entry level ST-1 specification model represents exceptional value for a hot hatchback. Standard features include Recaro seats and sports suspension. Other standard equipment includes electric, heated door mirrors, Ford's SYNC DAB radio with Apple CarPlay and Android capability, cruise control, in addition to an array of safety features, including Lane Keeping Alert and speed limiter.

For the top-of-the-range ST-3, customers will receive additional specification, including 18" ST 5-spoke Magnetic alloy wheels with machined finish, red brake callipers, rear view camera with rear parking aid, power-foldable door mirrors with puddle lights, driver and passenger front seat adjustable lumbar support, Traffic Sign Recognition, Auto High Beam Driver Alerts, Ford KeyFree System, rain sensing wipers and auto-dimming rear view mirror, leather Recaro sports front seats with Blue

detailing and trim, heated seats and steering wheel, and front and rear floor mats.

Powered by Ford's new three-cylinder, 1.5-litre EcoBoost petrol engine, which produces 200PS and 290Nm of torque, the all-new Ford Fiesta ST delivers an unprecedented combination of performance and fuel efficiency, thanks to clever cylinder deactivation technology, which shuts down one of the cylinders when the vehicle is in town traffic or cruising.

Three selectable drive modes including - Normal, Sport and Track - alter the engine, steering and stability control to optimise the driving experience. Customers who purchase a new car at Jennings Ford, can also take advantage of a range of aftersales facilities, including service, MOT, accident repair, and genuine parts and accessories.

Branches are located at Yarm Road, Stockton; Cargo Fleet Lane, Middlesbrough; and Eslington Park, Gateshead.

For more information contact Stockton on 01642 632200, Middlesbrough on 01642 240055, Gateshead on 0191 4607464, or visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) Ford Car range: Urban 14.1 (20.1) – 80.7 (3.5), Extra Urban 28.8 (9.8) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 20.8 (13.6) – 88.3 (3.2). Official CO₂ emissions 306-82g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

*£18,995 price point is for All-New Ford Fiesta ST-1. Subject to availability. Retail customers only. Car not necessarily as illustrated. Offer ends 31st July 2018. E&OE.

OH WHAT A NIGHT IN STORE AS JERSEY BOYS VISIT NEWCASTLE



The internationally acclaimed stage sensation Jersey Boys will visit Newcastle Theatre Royal for the first time next month and is set to dazzle North East audiences between 31 July and 11 August 2018.

Smash-hit musical Jersey Boys, which tells the rags-to-riches story of 1960s rock 'n roll group The Four Seasons has won 57 major awards worldwide, including the Olivier Award for Best New Musical.

The show tells the remarkable real life tale of four boys from the wrong side of the tracks and their rise to stardom - Frankie Valli, Tommy De Vito,

Bob Gaudio and Nick Massi. These four boys from 1960s New Jersey wrote their own songs, invented their own unique sound and became one of the most successful bands in pop history. They were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and sold 175 million records worldwide, all before they turned 30.

The show is packed with their hits, including Beggin', Sherry, Walk Like A Man, December, 1963 (Oh What a Night), Big Girls Don't Cry, My Eyes Adored You, Let's Hang On (To What We've Got), Bye Bye Baby, Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Working My Way Back to You, Fallen

Angel, Rag Doll and Who Loves You.

Winner of Broadway's Tony, London's Olivier and Australia's Helpmann Awards for Best New Musical as well as 54 other major awards worldwide, Jersey Boys has also been seen by over 25 million people. Jersey Boys first opened in London at the Prince Edward Theatre on 18 March 2008 and moved to the Piccadilly Theatre in March 2014. It closed on Sunday 26 March 2017 following nine amazing years in London. The first UK & Ireland Tour of Jersey Boys was a record-breaking success and ran for 18 months.

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR TRAIL BLAZES THE NORTH EAST ONTO THE MAP

A former special educational needs teacher from South Shields has worked her magic for a second time, writing her new book – 'Lily and the Island of Secrets – The Journey Continues'. Yvonne Carlin-Page is now set to publish her interactive book, which enables children, along with adventurous adults, to follow walks and cycle routes around the region.

The new book is a sequel to Yvonne's debut children's story, 'Lily, Windy and The Witch – The Journey Begins'. Children can now catch up with the first book's lovable, quirky characters and enjoy their new adventures. The theme running through both books

is about overcoming challenges. For example, Windy the fairy is dyslexic and, although this causes her some challenges, she always finds a way to sort things out, help others and triumph over her difficulties.

The books not only have a dedicated group of young fans as many adults are looking forward to the book launch too. One reason for this is that as well as being a great read, the book has innovative benefits for everyone. An interactive map allows fans to follow the route of the story while integration with Google Maps provides further information about the characters at each location including sections that have a voice over by the author.



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FAME THE MUSICAL TO RETURN IN 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Fame - The Musical is set to tour the UK in a stunning new 30th Anniversary tour opening at Manchester Palace on 20 July 2018, with a date at Sunderland Empire, 8-13 April 2019.

Based on the 1980 phenomenal pop culture film, Fame The Musical is the international smash hit sensation following the lives of students at New York's High School For The Performing Arts as they navigate their way through the highs and lows, the romances and the heartbreaks and the ultimate elation of life. This bittersweet but uplifting triumph of a show explores the issues that confront many young people today: prejudice, identity, pride, literacy, sexuality, substance abuse and perseverance.

With additional casting to be announced for venues in 2019, Keith Jack has been confirmed in the role of Nick.

Fame the Musical has seen seven West End runs since opening in Miami 1988 and continues to be one of the best loved musicals across the world.

Featuring the Oscar-winning title song and a cast of outstanding dancers, singers, musicians and rappers as they transform from star struck pupils to superstars. Fame The Musical will indeed live forever.

RECORD OF THE MONTH – THE ROLLING STONES, 'STUDIO ALBUMS VINYL COLLECTION 1971 – 2016'

Hot on the heels of their barnstorming UK tour, the Stones release this new compilation of studio albums. Cut at half-speed, this true collector's item is amongst the highest quality vinyl pressings that the classic albums will have ever received, creating an incredible sound quality for the listener. Starting with 1971's Sticky Fingers, the collection follows the band through the decadent excess of Exile On Main St, the Jamaican voodoo swamp of Goats Head Soup and the disco and punk-infused prowl of Some Girls. Winding up with 2016's Blue & Lonesome, the collection ends with a love letter to the band's first inspiration – the blues. 1971 - 2016 is a real must for any super fan.



WHAT'S ON THIS JULY?

The Play That Goes Wrong

July 2-7

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatroyal.co.uk

Quentin Crisp

July 10

Northern Stage T: (0191) 230 5151
www.northernstage.co.uk

Happy Hour

July 11

Gala Theatre Durham T: (03000) 266 600
www.galadurham.co.uk

Dusty the Musical

July 17-21

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatroyal.co.uk

Graeme Nash

July 20

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com

Chris Ramsey

July 20

Gala Theatre Durham T: (03000) 266 600
www.galadurham.co.uk

Lauren Pattison

July 21

Live Theatre Newcastle T: (0191) 232 1232
www.live.org.uk

Cats

July 24-28

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatroyal.co.uk

Paul Sinha

July 28

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234
www.customshouse.co.uk

Rhythm of the Dance

July 29

Whitley Bay Playhouse T: (0844) 248 1588
www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk

Iron Maiden

July 31

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ANTLER IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

An ambitious scheme at the gateway to Newcastle has opened its doors this month, following a £1m investment.

Antler, at the former Fat Buddha site at the city's 55 Degrees North, is the first restaurant/bar on Tyneside to offer an authentic slice of Alpine life, from its unique food offering to specialist drinks and cocktails.

The venue – which has an external garden which will be open year round – has drawn its inspiration from some of the world's top ski lodges, with stripped wood, fires and quirky additions including life size reindeers and seating in ski gondolas.

Antler is also planning an unusual and varied

entertainment programme, which will include live music and a variety of acts.

Gary Hutchinson, owner of Chrysalis Leisure which has developed the site, revealed that the venue was already attracting widespread interest.

"We've only been open a few days but the amount of people who have popped in or who have been in touch about private bookings have far exceeded our expectations," he said.

"I think the combination of our central location, the fact that we can also cater for private events

for ten up to 800 people and our exciting new concept is obviously proving very appealing."

A menu including a range of Alpine favourites has been created, while the heated Alpine garden also has an outdoor, wood fired pizza oven.

Fat Buddha fans will still be catered for, as the upper level of the restaurant will continue to serve oriental cuisine under the name, New Buddha.

"We're very excited about finally being able to show people what Antler has to offer," said Gary.



For more information visit www.antlernewcastle.co.uk or call 0191 261 1066 or email enquiries@antlernewcastle.co.uk. Bookings for the Fat Buddha can be made at www.fatbuddhancl.com or via info@fatbuddhancl.com. Telephone bookings can also be made via the same number as Antler.



Antler Launch Party

Guests gathered recently for the opening of Antler, a new food, drink and entertainment venue in the heart of Newcastle. Situated on the former Fat Buddha site, Antler is an alpine-inspired venue in the ski chalet style. Its menu offers a unique taste of the great outdoors with authentic dishes from regions of Switzerland, Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic alongside stone baked pizzas from its wood-fired oven. The site also doubles as an entertainment venue, offering a quirky, weekly line up of live music, karaoke and cocktail classes.





SOUTH TYNESIDE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

A popular South Tyneside restaurant recently marked its first anniversary. The Colman name is well established in South Shields and further afield, given that the family-run business began in 1926, and has been serving its famous fish and chips for over 100 years.

Richard Ord Jnr, owner of the Seafood Temple, said: "Celebrating our first big milestone is a fantastic achievement, for us as a family and for

all the staff who work at the Temple. "Our first year has been really successful and I am looking forward to celebrating many more years to come. Looking to the future, we have some really exciting plans. As a family, we're all very passionate about sustainability and are always looking for new ideas and ways to improve." For every lobster that's sold, 50p is donated back to Northumberland Seafood Centre and Hatchery to release a young lobster back into the wild.



BOB'S FATHER'S DAY GOLDEN TICKET

A Gateshead pensioner who has attended every Sunday for Sammy show received a very special Father's Day surprise when he bought the latest DVD of the show.

Bob Burdis (76) from Saltwell, Gateshead was delighted to discover a special golden ticket inside the DVD cover which has given him tickets for the next show in 2020 and a special autographed souvenir. Bob however almost missed out on his celebrity prize as firstly he nearly bought the 2016 DVD that he already owned by mistake and secondly, he was about to throw away the golden ticket thinking it was simply an advert.

Luckily, Bob's daughter Nicola Devlin from Stanley was on hand to look more closely at the ticket and realised just what her dad had won.

During the show, the cast autographed a logo board as a memento of the very first Sunday for Sammy show at Newcastle's Metro Radio Arena and Bob's DVD was the one out of the first run of three thousand copies that included the 'Golden Ticket.'

CONDIMENT BUSINESS DECLARES WAR ON THE MUNDANE



The daughter of the Northumberland based oil tycoon and former Hartlepool Utd Owner Ken Hodcroft has successfully launched her own alternative condiment business which is proving a massive hit throughout the UK.

Spearheaded by the Texas-born young entrepreneur Lizzy Hodcroft and based in Newcastle, The Sweet Beet earlier this month unveiled its new website and re-branded products as it looks to transform and disrupt the nation's food industry this summer.

Lizzy - a former chef who was awarded Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the North East Business Woman of the Year Awards in 2017 - has overseen massive demand for her company's unique take on household condiments since soft-launching earlier this year.

The Sweet Beet's products are now available in over 60 farm and deli stores nationwide as well as the nation's largest online supermarket, Ocado which signals a busy year ahead for the rising businesswoman.

JESMOND DENE HOUSE AWARDED TRIPADVISOR CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Jesmond Dene House recently announced that it has been recognised as a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame winner. The Certificate of Excellence award celebrates excellence in hospitality and is given only to establishments that consistently achieve great traveller reviews on TripAdvisor.

The 'Hall of Fame' was created to honour those businesses that have earned a Certificate of Excellence for five consecutive years. Winners

include accommodations, eateries and attractions located all over the world that have continually delivered a superior customer experience.

"Being awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence five years in a row and inducted into the 'Hall of Fame' is a true source of pride for the entire team at Jesmond Dene House and we'd like to thank all of our past guests who took the time to complete a review on TripAdvisor," said Scott Davidson, General Manager.



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TEAM WORK

Work continues on the new social hub, STACK with further tenants signing up to be part of the movement...

The first containers arrived at STACK Newcastle last month and now, as the development starts to take shape, we caught up with the local contractors who are working on the site.

Middlesbrough-based, Cleveland Containers, are the company behind the sourcing and fabricating of the shipping containers that are soon to be shops, restaurants, delicatessens and bars. Eddie Rees, Sales Manager for Cleveland Containers has been the project lead for STACK: "The project is something we're so proud to be involved in. We have worked tirelessly to ensure this is completed within the timescales set and I'm really happy with the work to date."

Sharing in their pride is Director Adrian Gray from Wilson Gray Consultancy who have been the mechanical and electrical designers for STACK: "Working on this particular project has been both amazing and frustrating all at the same time. It's a unique development which has seen a real buzz around the community but it's been a difficult task at times. Designing services for non-standard buildings, in particular the service routes have proved somewhat challenging, but nothing we haven't managed to overcome, thankfully."

Dunwoodie Architects, the creative brain behind the drawing of the structure, have been the lead design team for the entire development including the site itself and the openings of the containers; i.e. sliding doors, cut outs etc.

Peter Swift, Director at Dunwoodie says: "For the last few months we have been working with Danieli Holdings on the STACK shipping container retail,



food and leisure village to be located on the site of the former Odeon Cinema on Pilgrim Street in Newcastle city centre.

"From an architectural point of view, it would be very easy to assume that this is a very straightforward development, but all the same planning, structural and services issues that are part of any complex city centre construction development come into play. In many ways, it is a more technically complex project than a traditional one."

Newcastle headquartered Patrick Parsons have provided civil and structural engineering services on the scheme by way of the strengthening work on the containers and the bridge that will be built across the upper and lower levels of STACK.

Andy Turner, Structural Technician for the firm told us about his involvement: "STACK is like nothing I've ever worked on before and I can't wait to see

it completed. To me, it reminds me of playing with Lego bricks as a child, only now I'm playing with massive Lego bricks!

"We are thrilled to be involved in such a unique project locally, we get a real sense of pride as the build continues and we are very excited to see STACK launch soon."

Abbey Electricals are the last to be drafted in as their work can only be completed when all the containers are on site. They'll have two phases to complete which is the ground and upper floor, and with time ticking to get STACK ready for launch, there'll be 25 electricians on-site to ensure it is completed on time.

STACK will launch during the Great Exhibition of the North, housing a range of cafes, clothing outlets, bars, exercise studios and other shops across a two level development. With over 500 jobs set to be created from the build as well as using a host of local businesses, STACK can clearly be seen as a great idea to boost the local economy.

Neill Winch, director of the firm behind STACK, Danieli Holdings said: "With quarterly changes to our outside areas there'll be something for the whole family. We're really focused on promoting that STACK is a family-friendly, community hub and not just somewhere for people to attend for a drink on an evening. With a focus on small, local traders, we've really kept what we're about at the forefront of our minds when accepting, or declining, potential businesses."

www.stacknewcastle.com



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VIVE LA FRANCE

Restaurateur, Greg Bureau grew up in the Loire Valley before relocating to the UK and opening Hexham's Bouchon Bistrot. We chat to him about a career in the industry and his Gallic gem of a restaurant.

Did you always envisage a career in the Restaurant industry?

My parents own restaurants in the Loire Valley in France, therefore I was kind of born into the industry.

What is the favourite aspect of your job?

Giving pleasure to my guests, both on the plate and with the dining environment.

What was the inspiration behind launching Bouchon?

I always wanted to own a restaurant since I joined the industry, so I started in the kitchen, then moved to front of house, particularly on the wine side. I built my knowledge in France first, then in the UK. I had the name and style of eatery in place long before I opened in Hexham, all I needed was a site!

How has the industry evolved since you started your career?

When I started in France, the industry was booming

with plenty of staff knocking on the doors for a job which was the same in UK at the start. Now, we find it very difficult to find staff willing to commit to the hours, it is a lifestyle more than just a job. Our customer base have also evolved, their knowledge is so much better than before and the choice of restaurants has also progressed - they have a lot more choice than before.

Where do you see the restaurant in 5 years time?

We are in a process of a major refurbishment in Hexham, with a bigger dining room planned for downstairs, a modern "glass box" on our 1st floor dining area and a roof terrace at the back. We are also extending the kitchen for more work comfort and production. We don't do things in halves here! I wanted to have all of those changes ready for this year, but we decided to take our time to do it properly. I'm hoping work will start towards the end of the year, ready for spring time 2019. Watch this space!!

Who are your own culinary heroes?

I do like Raymond Blanc, his approach to food and how he has developed.

What is your favourite dish?

It's not really a favourite dish, but I'm more for the overall experience, the freshness of the product, the people you are with and the environment...

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

I have learned the tough way, on my own kind of. Still making mistakes, but learning along the way. I'm just more aware of how to organise myself.

How do you like to unwind?

Me and my wife Clare love eating out, so anything to do with good food and wine, and we are in our element!

Who would be your four ideal dinner guests?

No particular preferences, anyone enjoying good food and wines!

www.bouchonbistrot.co.uk



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MEET THE GM...

PETER DAWSON

Grand Hotel, Tynemouth

Peter Dawson is the recently-appointed General Manager of the Grand Hotel in Tynemouth, one of the region's best known and loved venues and host of family occasions for people across the North East and far beyond.

Did you always envision a career in the hotel industry?

Not at all. I had a brief foray into the motor trade and trained as a mechanic in a local garage. It wasn't for me. Then, whilst studying at 6th form college, I applied for a part time job at Close House Country Club (now Close House). I initially envisaged that the job would be a very short-term solution to help me earn some pocket money. After really enjoying my time there I decided to pursue any opportunities for progression in the business.

Tell us about your career path so far?

I've worked my way up through the Food and Beverage route. Having joined Close House as a part time Banqueting Waiter, I was periodically promoted to Junior Supervisor, Supervisor, Assistant Manager, Banqueting Manager and finally Food & Beverage Manager over the course of just seven years. I then decided to make my first big jump to a very different type of business. I was given the opportunity to join the team at the Quality Hotel in Boldon as their Food and Beverage Manager just in time for the reopening of the hotel. I then moved to Matfen Hall as Operations Manager where I was lucky enough to work for nearly five years. The time came when I felt ready to make the move to a General Managers position. When I was presented with the opportunity to join the Grand Hotel Tynemouth - it was very much 'right time, right place'. It's a beautiful Hotel.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Above all else, guest satisfaction. I find many aspects of my job very rewarding, but, for me, everything we do is about enhancing the offering to our guests.

What is the most difficult aspect?

Being 'all things' to the team and customers. Every day I have to address hugely varied situations and issues. A few examples being: delicate HR procedures, customer niggles, supplier negotiations and infrastructure improvements. It's sometimes challenging to quickly adopt the correct mindset for the task in hand.



How has the industry evolved in the past 10 years and what changes do you envisage going forward?

The change in technology is amazing to have seen. An awful lot of what we do now has been transformed by business information systems. I can remember running physical messages around for Managers in my first position. Guest expectations have also evolved; service and food quality are more keenly scrutinised, possibly due to the popularisation of fine dining and 'foodies' in the media.

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

'A complaint is a gift'. By dealing with complaints proactively and with integrity, you can turn guests who have complained into your most loyal customers.

What are you currently working on?

I'm working on an exciting project to significantly improve the already impressive service and guest

offering at the Grand Hotel with the overall aim of soon taking the business to 4 Star status.

Who are your heroes and mentors?

I've learned an awful lot from some very wise and experienced people throughout my career. Neal Crocker was probably one of the main influences in my management style. I was lucky enough to work for Neal at Close House, he was a true Gent and really empowered his team to achieve great things.

Describe yourself in three words?

Calm, Considered, Encouraging.

How do you like to unwind?

Working in such a busy environment, I really value my quiet time. It's lovely to unwind having a walk with my partner or enjoying a bottle of, usually red, wine. Failing that, I do enjoy relaxing with my cat! I'm also a new collector of classic vinyl records, years after my generation dismissed them as old-fashioned in favour for CDs and MP3s; I seem to have gone full-circle!

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THE PUB IN THE PARK

By Michael Grahamslaw

Like most other racegoers in the area, I make my way to the Border Minstrel pub in High Gosforth Park for a quick drink or to meet friends on racedays, when this popular venue is inevitably crowded and serving a limited menu as a consequence. It's fine for the excitement of racedays, but I wouldn't have considered going there at any other time.

At the suggestion of a business colleague who didn't share that view, we headed there for a spot of lunch primarily to expel any misgivings he thought I had about the place. I was so pleased I did as I discovered the crowded raceday bar had transformed into a contemporary gastropub, serving freshly cooked pub grub with a smile.

Named after the winner of the 1927 Northumberland Plate, this Grade II listed building is situated at the heart of High Gosforth Park, an area encompassing Newcastle Racecourse, two golf courses and many acres of surrounding woodland. As a result, the area is very popular on the dog-walking circuit with the pub more than happy to accommodate doggies – and their walkers!

When we visited, the pub was in the grip of World Cup fever and boasted a buoyant atmosphere. Obligatory World Cup flags adorned the walls, whilst a lucky few were skiving off to watch the afternoon's action.

Known locally as 'the pub in the park', diners at the Border Minstrel can enjoy a range of menus and drinks seven days a week. There's a secluded beer garden overlooking the racecourse, which we took full advantage of on a bright Summer's day. After soaking up some rays, we moved inside to find a

table and look over the menus.

With a selection of main plates, steaks, burgers and salads, its menu is hearty and eclectic, offering plenty of choice.

Coming under starters orders (sorry!), we kicked off with the Classic Prawn Cocktail in a Marie Rose Dressing and the Chicken Kebab Skewers served with Mixed Salad, Tzatziki Dip and Spicy Salsa.

Following up, I chose the Homemade Chilli Con Carne topped with Sour Cream and served with Chunky Chips – a suitably stodgy accompaniment. My colleague opted for the Minted Lamb Shank served with Champ Mash and Seasonal Vegetables. This traditional comfort food looked and smelt very enticing and had me wishing I'd ordered the dish too. Other eye-catching plates included the Chicken Breast stuffed with Sun-Blushed Tomato & Spinach and the Asian Rare Beef Salad in a Sesame & Chilli Dressing.

Demonstrably enjoying his meal, my guest then polished off the Blueberry Swirl Cheesecake with Vanilla Ice Cream. I settled for a very virtuous coffee as I'm still trying to lose a few pounds on a liquid-based diet!

Our meal had been memorable for all the right

reasons, and at an extremely cost-effective price. If you do not have the time for the "full monty", at lunchtime, there's also a light bites/sandwich menu along with a children's menu throughout the week for those with young family.

In addition to this, the Border Minstrel has a cracking selection of wines, not to mention some interesting craft beers, amongst the usual suspects.

The pub is also a popular Sunday lunch outpost, serving a weekly carvery from 12pm – 5pm. If the food is of the same high quality as our meal today, I shall be taking the family there shortly. With one course available for just £8.95, two courses at £12.95 and three for £16.95, it looks a bargain for such good food.

I seemed to be looking at the venue from a new perspective. Something else which caught my eye was the private function facilities, which included private hire of the beer garden for summer BBQ's. This would allow the host time to mingle and have a drink without ending up smelling like a fugitive from the local chippie – and you don't have to clean the BBQ afterwards.

With Sky Sports, weekly quiz nights and ample free parking, The Border Minstrel has much to offer whether a race day or not. Giddy up!

www.borderminstrel.co.uk



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A NEW LOOK IS COMING TO JESMOND DENE HOUSE

By Michael Grahamslaw

I have always admired venues who consistently tinker with their offering and one such venue is Jesmond Dene House which is shaking things up with a major refurbishment programme.

The independently-owned hotel has recently partnered with local interior designer, Karen Walker to commence a programme of upgrading the guest rooms, meeting spaces and Great Hall in stunning fashion. With this in mind, my wife Lisa and I booked in and were blown away by the hotel's fresh new look.

Nestled on the banks of the Dene, the hotel's location is quite unique in the respect that it has the feel of a traditional country house property yet is in such close proximity to Newcastle City Centre. The hotel boasts 40 bedrooms in total, each individually-decorated in true boutique style.

Following a cheery welcome, we found our room in the New House building which is adjacent to the main hotel. At a glance, the new makeover was evident within our Junior Suite complete with fabulous new furnishings and design.

With its own private entrance away from the main hotel, the New House appeals to both business and leisure dwellers seeking that extra bit of space and privacy. We revelled in being in our private bolthole which seemed the perfect spot to enjoy some quality time together. Some of the rooms have

private patios, perfect for a balmy Summer's eve, whilst many afford some great views across the Dene and surrounding woodland.

When you get hungry (or thirsty), guests can retreat back to the hotel for some fine food & drink. The 2AA rosette Restaurant with Garden Room remains a destination venue in its own right, serving fresh, innovative dishes of the modern British persuasion. There's also the Billiard Room, Cocktail Bar with every spirit imaginable, and a sun terrace where we enjoyed a swift, pre-dinner G&T.

Jesmond Dene has become a real haven for foodies and has the menu to merit. Dishes are driven primarily by the seasons and feature some unique flavour combinations.

To start, Lisa chose the Cured Serrano Ham with Celeriac and Garden Lovage whilst I opted for the Roast Veal Carpaccio with Rhubarb, Beetroot and Spicy Pecorino Cheese.

Our waiter was very knowledgeable about wine and was happy to recommend an appropriate chaperone to each course.

Following up, Lisa enjoyed the Roast Venison Saddle

with Celeriac, Garden Apple, Kale and Hazelnut – a bold marriage of flavour executed very well here. I chose the Chicken Supreme with Wild Leeks and Potato Gnocchi, packed with flavour and greatly enjoyed.

Totally replete, we body swerved desserts in favour of our favourite liqueurs before collapsing into bed for a rare, unbroken eight hours sleep.

The following morning, we breakfasted regally on a full English – cooked to order – and got ready to head for the hills.

Before doing so, we took the opportunity to check out the hotel's "Secret Garden" venue – new for 2018. The outdoor events space, which lies at the bottom of the hotel's grounds serves as an enchanted forest in the middle of the city. With its own private bar and BBQ area, it's perfect for a garden party networking event with live music, fire pit and festoon lighting in the trees.

Clearly this is not a venue content to rest on its laurels. Combining new look rooms, award-winning dining and warm service, Jesmond Dene House ticks all the boxes for both business and leisure travellers alike.

Jesmond Dene House, Jesmond Dene Road, Jesmond NE2 2EY. 0191 212 3000 www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk



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Jesmond Dene House, Jesmond Dene Road, Jesmond NE2 2EY. www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk

STREETS AHEAD WITH STREETAWAY TRANSFORMING NEWCASTLE'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



With a new lifestyle mobile app already taking hold in Newcastle and plans for an in-venue multi-platform system that looks set to transform the region's hospitality sector, the team at StreetAway® have lots to be excited about.

Since the launch of the e-commerce platform in BETA last year, strong demand for the trendy app 'StreetAway' has prompted the company to expand their vision far beyond that of the marketing app, already proving extremely popular with both users and advertisers.

Providing unique promotional offers across dining, health and beauty, entertainment, sports and activities, the Newcastle-based company helps users optimise their leisure time, whilst taking advantage of exclusive savings. From adventures at Escape Rooms to cookery classes at Blackfriars and relaxed dining at Dobson & Parnells, StreetAway provides something for everyone and every occasion with an up-to-the-minute snapshot of timely promotional offers all situated nearby.

Eric Guo, Founder and Managing Director, whose background is in business management, explains: "Newcastle is an exciting and vibrant city with a lot to offer. It's also one of the UK's most densely populated cities for leisure and hospitality outlets and as such it can be difficult to keep up with new openings, events, and special offers. Students, professionals, shoppers, tourists and residents can

all benefit from the convenience of a lifestyle app that provides inspiration, information and relevant deals in real-time. We also recognise that venues want to be able to market-test promotions with ease, attract new clients, transform downtime, and learn more about local customer tastes and preferences.

Recognising the need to better connect the city's venues with its customers, and to better meet their needs, we created StreetAway. It's a low-risk, low-cost, high-reward option that is easy to implement, gives businesses greater control over advertising, produces meaningful ROI data, and is a live channel to active buyers. With simple language, easy-to-understand and transparent offers, StreetAway provides users with a convenient app with great ideas for new experiences, and of course, money and time savings. It's a win-win situation."

In addition to the online service, clients also benefit from the support of the team, including Zoe Maylam, Head of Business Relations, who is driving community development. As Robert Simmons, Co-founder, whose background is in computer science, explains: "We are not some faceless, far-removed

organisation and this is important to us. We offer local technical support and develop business partnerships. This is fundamental to our offer and we will replicate this approach as we expand into other cities, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester and London.

We take a holistic view and our vision goes way beyond the app. As well as continual software evolution, we also plan to introduce hardware, including a smart EPOS system with inventory and staffing management that will link to our app, creating a multi-platform ecosystem and integrating processes in a way that's not possible at present.

Along with Jackie Li, our Co-Founder, whose background is in AI and machine learning, and our Tech team in Shanghai, we'll create a solution that employs the latest technology and transforms the way venues operate. We're confident it will provide a step-change for the local hospitality industry by integrating front-of-house, operational systems and end-users, and producing measurable benefits by automating processes, driving efficiencies and transforming communications."

info.streetaway.co.uk

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Strawberry 'Goat's-cheesecake' and Honeycomb

Dave Coulson, Chef Patron, Peace & Loaf Jesmond

Strawberry sorbet:

500ml stock syrup
500ml strawberry boiron
50g sorbet stabiliser

Strawberry jelly:

500ml stock syrup
500ml strawberry boiron
50g elastic (Sosa)

Goat's cheesecake:

500g double cream
500g goats cheese
125g sugar
5 leaves of gelatine

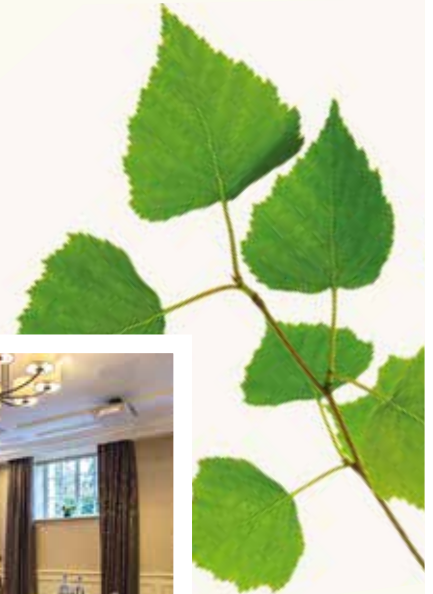
Garnish:

Fresh strawberries
Pistachios (unsalted)
Honeycomb
Edible flowers
Handful of apple marigold

Method:

1. To make the strawberry sorbet, mix together the stock syrup, strawberry boiron and sorbet stabiliser and churn in an ice cream maker until set.
2. For the jelly, bring the stock syrup and strawberry boiron to the boil in the same pan. Next, add in the 50g of elastic and bring back to the boil. Pour the mixture onto a flat tray and leave to set.
3. To make the cheesecake, beat the goat's cheese and sugar until smooth. Heat 100g of double cream until just boiling, bloom the gelatine in cold water and then add to the hot cream. Semi-whip the remaining 400g of double cream.
4. When the 100g of double cream and gelatine mixture has cooled to room temperature, add this to the goat's cheese and mix through. Fold in the remaining double cream and set in moulds.
5. Grab the pistachios and put in a blender – whizz until they are all crushed in to small pieces.
6. To assemble – be adventurous. Delicately place the goat's cheesecake on the bottom, layer with the strawberry jelly and strawberry sorbet in a stack on a plate as shown opposite. Garnish with sliced fresh strawberries, honeycomb pieces and blended pistachios as you see fit. Finally, add a touch of the edible flowers and apple marigold and serve.

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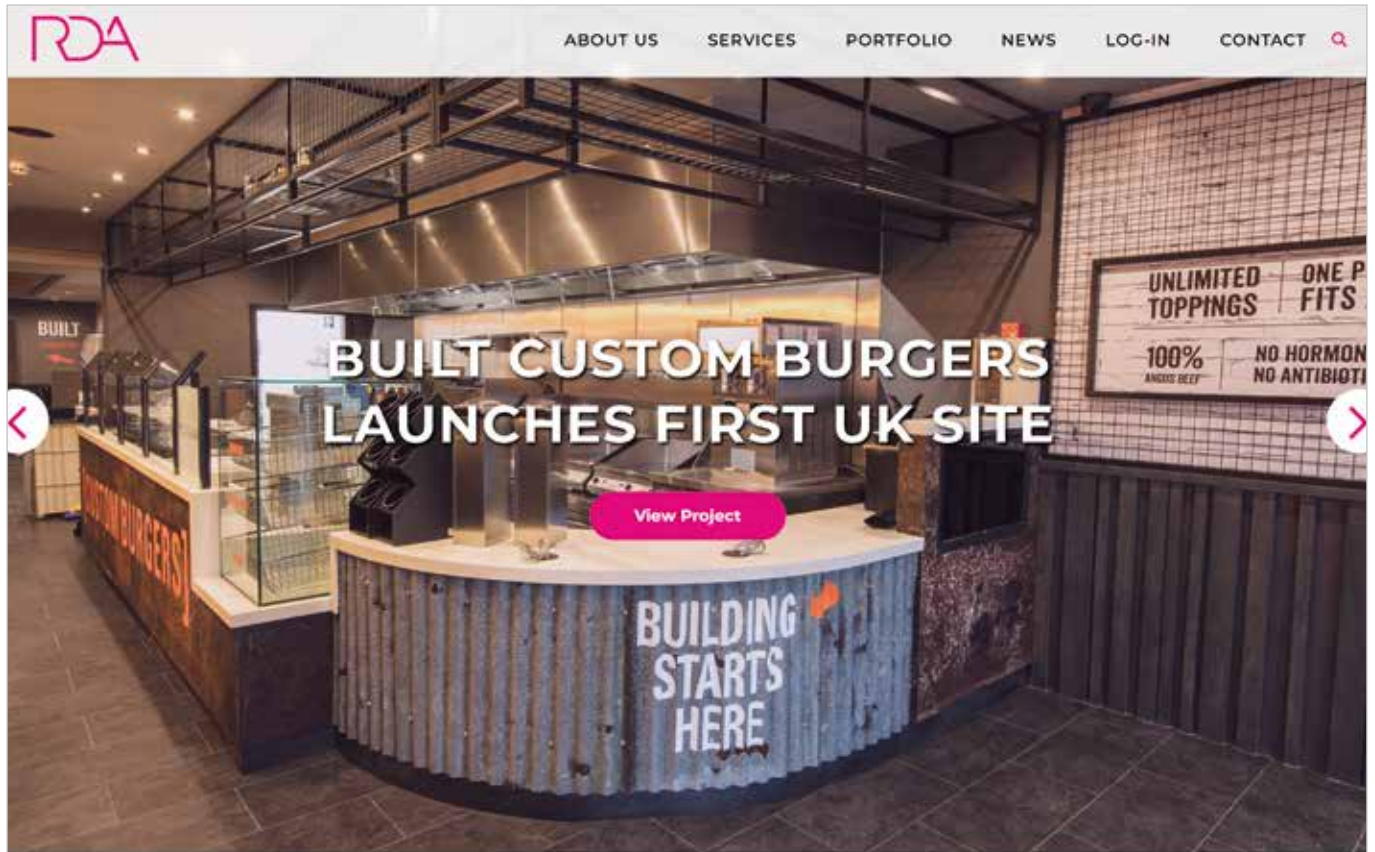
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RDA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

One of the UK's leading catering design and installation companies, RDA has launched a new website.

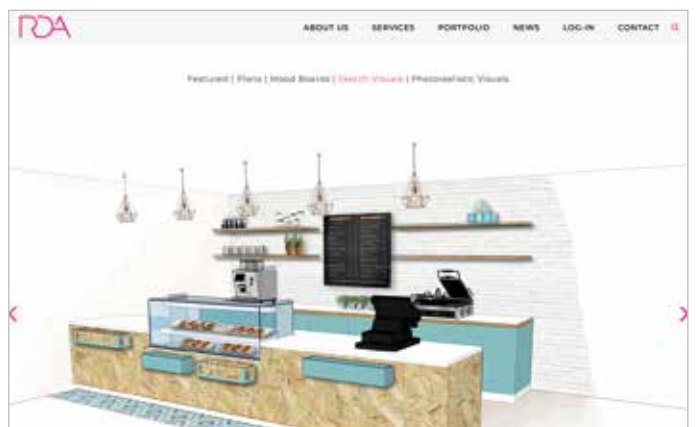
The new website has been designed to offer the ultimate user-friendly experience with improved navigation and functionality while allowing customers to see the full range of design, supply and installation services RDA offer.

Created with the user experience in mind, the site includes many new features to help users quickly and easily navigate the site. This includes a gallery of its design services showing the difference between plans, sketches, moodboards and photo realistic visuals to help visualise the design process from start to finish.

Customers can also access the Client Portal – industry leading software - which allows clients and contractors to access designs, visuals, costs etc. wherever they are in the world.

The new site has also enabled the company to showcase its diverse portfolio sectors which ranges from education and garden centres through to heritage and the high street.

Visitors can also stay informed with the latest RDA and industry news through the online blog and news section which contains top tips, latest design trends and company updates.



To find out how RDA could help with your next catering project visit www.rdalimited.co.uk or tel: 0844 873 4993.

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IT'S THE FIZZ BIZ

Ah, the sun's shining, the barbecue is ruining the sausages, time to chill.
Time to reach for the Prosecco.

Prosecco has rocketed in popularity for no other reason than it is sensibly priced bubbly and it tastes great. Champers is overpriced and Cava is a tad dry for a lot of people so, bingo, Prosecco is the ideal choice.

And there's something about Prosecco; it really does seem to generate a great atmosphere. There's a bit of an 'occasion' to drinking Prosecco and, well, I don't know about you, but it brings me out in a good mood.

Just like a lot of people, Paul McIntyre and his wife Louise, thoroughly enjoy a glass (okay, a bottle) of Prosecco, however, they've gone one step further. They've now got a van load of the stuff.....and they want to share it with you.

"I'd been working for Procter and Gamble for over twenty years when the unexpected happened, P&G sold the fragrance business and the new owners, Coty, announced that they were going to close the plant in Seaton Delaval. I was being made redundant", said Paul. "Like a lot of people who've been put in the same situation, I was left wondering what to do and how to continue supporting my wife and two daughters. It was at that point I decided to be radical and do something completely different."

Paul had seen some companies providing specialist coffee at various events. Something that really caught his eye was a firm who was using a small, converted van, to sell varieties of gin. It was one of those moments of inspiration when Paul realised that there was a great opportunity to develop one of his passions into a business.

Why not sell Prosecco from a van?

After many months of research, he realised that bubbly could be supplied to customers using a draught pump, much like you get beer and lager at the pub. He wanted the van to be different so he bought a brand new and very funky, Piaggio

Classic 3-wheeler van and had it imported from Italy. It was then a matter of having it converted.

Bearing in mind that he could now provide chilled bubbly via a draught tap, he called his business ProseccoFlow. Paul was up and running and could provide a fully licensed drinks service from his van...anywhere.

"We do everything from corporate events, wedding fairs, music festivals and private parties, to appearing in shops as a promotional 'vehicle' supplying refreshing Italian fizz to customers," added Paul. "We've recently completed a highly successful 12 days working in the middle of the House of Fraser in the Metro Centre. We've been at Feltonbury, which is the Felton village music festival, and we've got several bookings for private parties where we roll-up and either park the van in the garden, on the drive or, if the weather turns a bit dodgy, in the garage.

We provide absolutely everything, from the van, the staff, a fully tailored bar to glassware. We offer various types of Prosecco served from a bottle although it always works out cheaper if customers use our Italian sparkling fizz."

Oh, and don't assume that ProseccoFlow is only able to provide fizz. "The draught pumps are the same as you'd find in a pub. We can attach anything to the lines...beer, lager or even soft drinks. And at the rear of the vehicle we offer a tailored cocktail bar. In other words, if you want someone to come along and make your party or event into something really special, give us a call here at ProseccoFlow and we'll take care of everything."

So there you go. Fancy putting some fizz into your life? Make sure the ProseccoFlow Piaggio van is rolling up at your corporate event, private party, fair or festival and they'll provide you with something special that's sure to get people talking.

For more details contact Paul or Louise on 07368 241 297 or visit www.proseccoflow.com

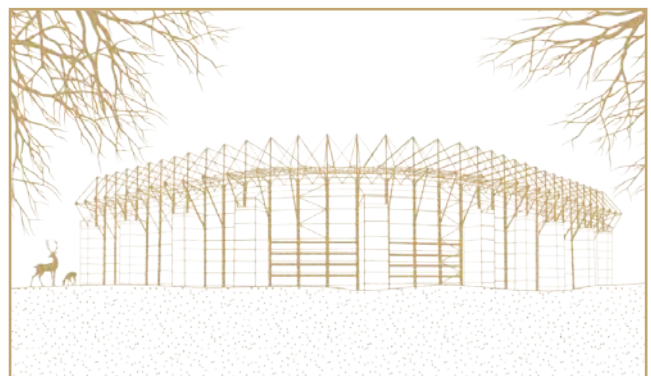
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EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Lets face facts, we can all find time to train, those who say otherwise, I believe are making excuses.

Its all about making time, prioritising what's important and having the will and consistency to achieve what you set out to do.

Many successful people make a decision and quietly get on without letting the whole world know. Not only do they achieve what they wanted to but usually keep that consistency going. We can all learn from that, you just need to be self disciplined and take pride in what you are doing.

Too busy to train?

You don't have to train for long to make a difference and gain benefits, its all in how you train. Here are just a few examples:

- 15 mins at home -a combination of squats and lunges is an excellent lower body workout.
- 15 min lunchtime walk then the plank for your core strength, make sure this is before you eat.
- 12 min workout on a mini trampoline at home – alternate 30secs quick knees, followed by 30secs jog.
- Find a hill or a set of steps, work hard to the top, then walk down – max 8 repetitions.
- 8 minute run from your house, then try to return in a quicker time.
- In your garden 20- seconds work, 20 rest -



using some or all the exercises below for a maximum of 15 mins

- Running on the spot, quick knees
- Press ups - easier options knees on the ground or press up against the wall
- Lunges
- Stomach crunches
- Star jumps
- Tricep dips on a bench

Its down to you how hard you train, as you progress you will learn to push yourself out of your comfort zone.

By the time you have made a cup of tea and checked your phone you could have completed your workout. The amount of time lost by endlessly surfing your phone is huge, why not use that time

to benefit your life?

Benefits of a short workout

- It keeps you on the right path and in healthy habits, therefore you are more likely to stick with it, improving your mind and body.
- 15 or 50 mins it's still worth it – gives your metabolism a boost.
- Reduces stress, improves your mood, gives you energy and clears your mind

Its too easy to let our day to day life take over, when in reality we all can find time to train and look after our bodies and mind. Research shows that you actually get more done and you are more effective in what you do when you have exercised.

David's summing up: From now on find time, not excuses.

www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk

'TELL TRICIA' LAUNCHES CHILDREN'S BOOK

Whitley bay based Patricia Mansfield, who had a fabulous career as a journalist and agony aunt, has reappeared in the public eye with the release of a brand new children's book.

Raggety is a fabulous tale about a young elephant, which Patricia has not only written, but has illustrated herself too.

A few years ago Patricia spent many years living in Spain, under the shadow of a mountain that looked just like an elephant. Her children and grand children loved it and together they would often climb the summit and then clamber down the mountain's twisty path, which led down the elephant's trunk. The stories about Raggety originated on these days out.

She spent those family days mixed with her high-flying career, which included appearing on TV, radio and many newspapers and magazines as Tell Tricia.

However, following a freak fall, Patricia's future was immediately changed as she needed many years of hospitalisation and recuperation. She spent her healing days writing novels and learning to paint.

Now those books, written for the enjoyment of her children and grandchildren, are being published. Patricia said: "Raggety is a fabulous tale and is already starting to sell well. It is getting good reviews and I am over the moon that people are enjoying a tale that was originally meant for my own children and grandchildren.

"Raggety is the first of many books I have been working on and I hope everyone gets as much pleasure from them as I have had in writing and painting for them."

Raggety is released for general sale and is available to buy on Amazon.

Two further books from Patricia are also now released, two novels (NOT for children) "Windmills at Dawn" and "Eclipse on the Moors". Patricia is also about to rerelease a reworked self help book on assertiveness and confidence, which will be published later in the year!

Another children's book, 'Pegasus Earns Her Wings', is due to be released in the next month.



More information is at www.patriciamansfield.com



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PATIENT CHOICE AND EXPERTISE AT THE HEART OF NORTH EAST HEALTHCARE



Hospital Directors, Lesley Lock and Matthew Lamb outside Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital.

When it comes to private healthcare, there are a lot of misconceptions that access to high quality care is only available to the wealthy or those fortunate enough to have private medical insurance.

Hospital Directors from Nuffield Health, Matthew Lamb and Lesley Lock, spoke exclusively to *Northern Insight* to help debunk some of the myths and explain how private healthcare is actually available to everyone.

Nuffield Health has been providing high-quality medical expertise to the people of the North East from its hospitals in Newcastle and Stockton-on-Tees for over 30 years.

With patient choice and accessibility to treatment firmly at the heart of its agenda, earlier this year, Nuffield Health Tees Hospital was rated 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Auditors complimented the hospital on its innovative range of services and the commitment to excellence shown by its staff. This level of expertise and enthusiasm is mirrored throughout the Nuffield Health group, with 94 per cent of the hospitals across the UK having either 'good' or 'outstanding' CQC ratings.

"We are incredibly patient-focused at Nuffield Health," said Lesley Lock, Hospital Director at Nuffield Health Tees Hospital.

"Because we're a not-for-profit organisation, everything we make is reinvested into our hospitals to ensure that we maintain our high standards of care. Operating in this way enables us to plan further ahead and to develop services that are important to our patients. We will always put their needs first."

Specialising in a range of medical practices, including orthopaedics, ear, nose and throat (ENT), general

surgery, gynaecology, urology, spinal surgery, ophthalmic care and cosmetic procedures, Nuffield Health Newcastle and Tees Hospitals work alongside consultants across the region to help provide patients with faster access to variety of treatments, whether self funding, privately insured or in some cases, on the NHS.

"Many people believe that private healthcare organisations are in competition with the NHS and that you can only access private medical treatment if you're covered by insurance, but in fact, around 25 per cent of our referrals are for NHS treatment," said Matthew Lamb, Hospital Director at Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital.

"Our services compliment the NHS to provide patients with more choice about when and where they receive their treatment, as and when they need it."

What helps Nuffield Health to really stand out among the other private healthcare providers is its integrated approach to health and wellbeing, which extends beyond medical expertise. Through its range of gyms and medical centres, Nuffield Health actively promotes both physical and mental wellness and better living.

"Our integrated approach to healthcare means that our focus is as much about keeping people out of hospital, as it is about being there for them when they need us most," Lesley explained.

"Improving access to health and wellbeing services is

part of our ethos however, having these facilities to hand also helps to supplement some of our medical treatments. For certain orthopaedic surgeries for example, we offer complimentary post-op gym memberships to help patients prepare for surgery and rehabilitate afterwards."

Looking to the future, Nuffield Health is keen to keep developing the range of services at its Newcastle and Tees Hospitals in order to stay at the cutting edge of medical technology.

"Technology is advancing the realms of what is realistic and possible in medicine all the time," Matthew added.

"The consultants and specialists that we work with across all of the different fields of medicine ensure that we stay up to date with the latest trends and treatment developments and we are continuously investing back into our hospitals in order to keep up with patient demand.

"Robotic surgery for orthopaedic patients is something we are very interested in looking into in the future, as well as developing our range of men's and women's health services."

Nuffield Health is one of the UK's leading not-for-profit healthcare providers. Operating a country-wide network of hospitals, health and wellbeing clubs and diagnostic units, Nuffield Health puts its patients at the heart of its business and is dedicated to providing the highest possible quality of care.

For more information, visit www.nuffieldhealth.com



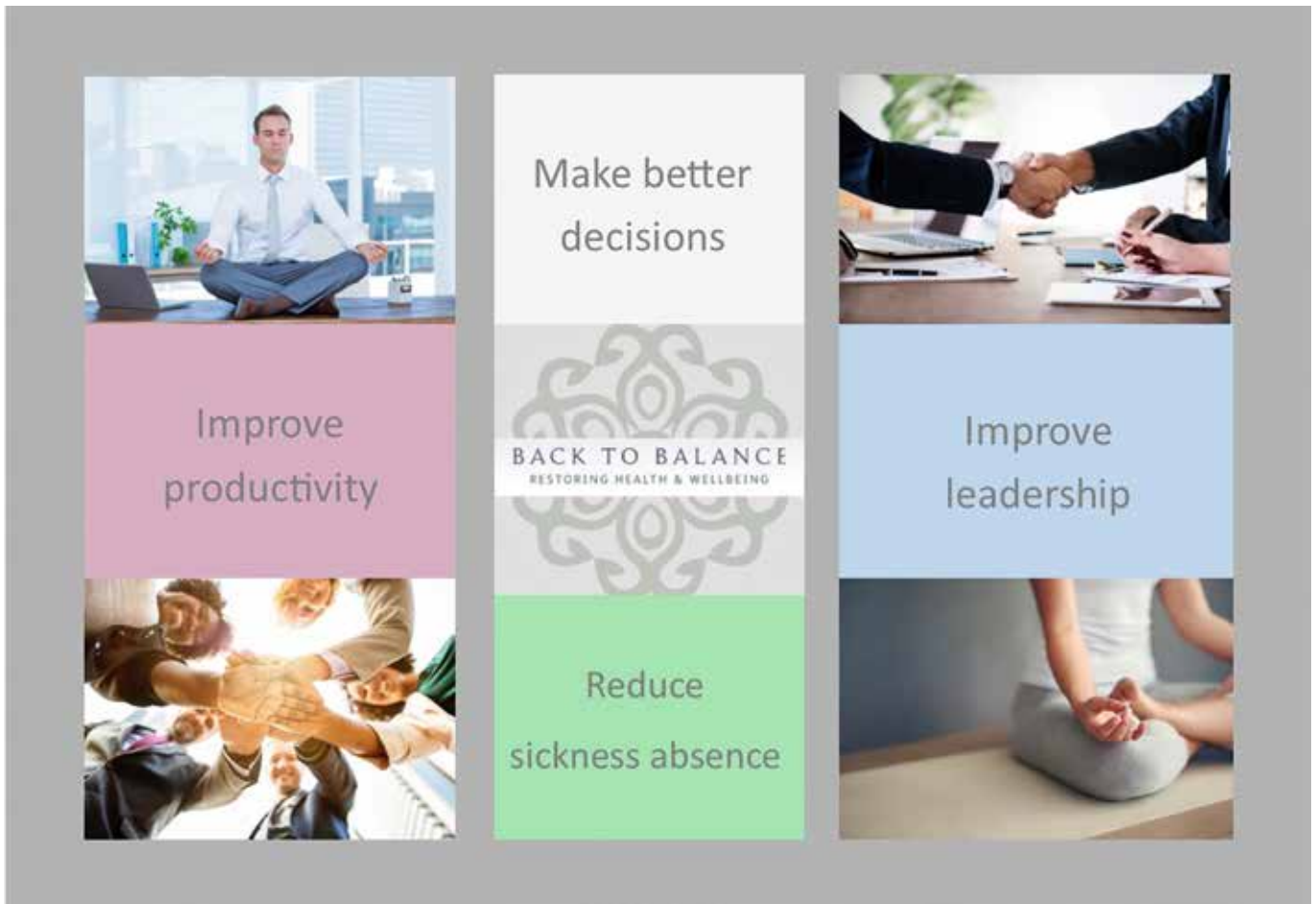
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MINDFULNESS AT WORK

Times are changing, with a move towards employee wellness becoming a key part of more and more companies policy

We mentioned in our last article that the emphasis on improving employee productivity and reducing absenteeism as well as maximising individual's skills such as decision making and leaderships qualities has shifted well in to the wellness model – with a focus on improving physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing at work.

When we talk about spiritualism in the workplace, you can be sure we mean showing kindness and tolerance towards your colleagues, and being mindful in your working day which enables you to become aware of your contribution to the workplace and how you affect others at work around you.

The main tenets of mindfulness and meditation include these key areas of kindness and tolerance and aim to work on reducing the mental clutter our minds carry, which improves our mental clarity. Yes, there is plenty of qualitative research to show that mindfulness and meditation in the workplace positively impacts on stress and anxiety levels, allowing better decision making experiences, good leadership choices and a happier workforce. The evidence is so clear in fact that you will find that mindfulness and meditation practice is happening

in all the big companies including Google, Apple, the Home Office, GlaxoSmithKline, Price Waterhouse Cooper and Transport for London. Here at Back to Balance, we are already working with teams within the British Airways contact centre as well as others to introduce mindfulness to the workplace.

You don't have to be a big corporate multinational to be able to introduce mindfulness and meditation into the workplace, the outlay for the cost of running a programme easily balances with the increase in profitability from savings in sickness absenteeism (temp cover and sickness pay) and improved productivity.

But how do you know that you are getting a properly trained teacher with the right experience to ensure the quality of the instruction, and the experience which ensures that the classes are tailored and adapted to those who are in them? Because there are many techniques and approaches to take when it comes to mindfulness and meditation, your teacher should be able to tailor the class to your needs – like most things – one size does not fit all. There is a pandoras box when it comes to meditation techniques, the variety is vast. The evidence however, shows that it doesn't matter what type you do, just that you find

an approach which suits the individual or team to enjoy the benefits.

Mindfulness brings the awareness of your thought processes at that moment and how it is impacting on your environment and surroundings. The mindfulness tools will teach you to still your mind and disconnect – and give your brain a rest. This in turn creates space in your mind meaning that you can put your worries into perspective, your work day becomes more efficient and you show more kindness and tolerance towards your colleagues.

So, in the absence of a total reform of our working lives with a shorter workday and improved holiday allowance (think Denmark with the happiest workforce) the next best thing is mindfulness and meditation because employers in the UK are seeing the benefits on their workforce.

Our mediation and mindfulness teacher is Nicky Robertson, who is co-director at Back to Balance. Her vast knowledge on wellness, and expertise in mindfulness and mediation comes from 20+ years of learning and teaching in the subject both nationally and internationally.

We would be happy to have a no obligation chat with you about how we can help meet your companies wellness needs.

www.back-to-balance.co.uk contact@back-to-balance.co.uk 01914661441



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On the Tee Box

TYNESIDE GOLF CLUB

Location

Situated in the village of Ryton, 6 miles west of Newcastle City Centre and in the picturesque Tyne Valley area. Within easy reach of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle districts.

Setting

Perched high on the 'falls' of old Ryton Village the course is tucked away in tranquil surroundings with magnificent views over the River Tyne and Tyne Valley.

Length of Course

Par 70	White Tees	6103 yards
Par 70	Yellow Tees	5851 yards
Par 73	Red Tees	5504 yards

Course Type

Tyneside is the oldest inland club in the North East, established in 1879 and its Colt design is still one of the finest parkland courses in the region. The course has undergone some recent redesign from world renowned Frank Pont to bring it further back to its Colt origins. Known for its quality of greens and free draining nature of the land means it is playable all year round.

Facilities

18 Holes, Club Pro Shop with Head Professional Gary Vickers, practice ground and grass hitting range, 6 hole Par 3 course, Historic clubhouse offering food and beverage to members and visitors with views out to the course.

Interesting Facts

Two ex Professionals of the club went on to win the Open. (Willie Park Junior 1887&1889 & Mungo Park 1874)

Its 4 par 3's all face in different directions. North, East, South & West.

Toughest Hole

2nd Hole. Long Par 4, with a blind tee shot contending with a pond on the left hand side of the fairway, at around 260 yards off the tee. Out of Bounds tight on the left doesn't make life any easier as your approach is also semi blind with green sloping away from you. Make your par and move on if you can!

Signature Hole

13th Hole known as the 'Coffin' a long, tough par 4 with trouble everywhere for any wayward shots! Play sensibly and your approach shot is to a narrow green, where the play is to keep right with the option of using the bank on the right as a stop.

Course Record

62 – Dan Beeson

Prices

£25 Mon-Friday
£30 Weekends and bank holidays
Membership 7 Day £750, 5 Day £475

A word from the General Manager

"Tyneside offers golfers a great mix of golfing history & heritage with naturally excellent playing conditions all year round. Recent course changes to bring back to its original Colt design and additions of the practice ground and Par 3 course have really added another dimension to the club, as it looks forward to the future."

Contact: General Manager – Peter Smith, 0191 413 2742 Email: peter.smith@tynesidegolfclub.co.uk Book online: www.tynesidegolfclub.co.uk

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