

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2018

ISSUE 39

NORTHERN INSIGHT - YOUR EYE ON THE REGION

SEPTEMBER 2018



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issue 39

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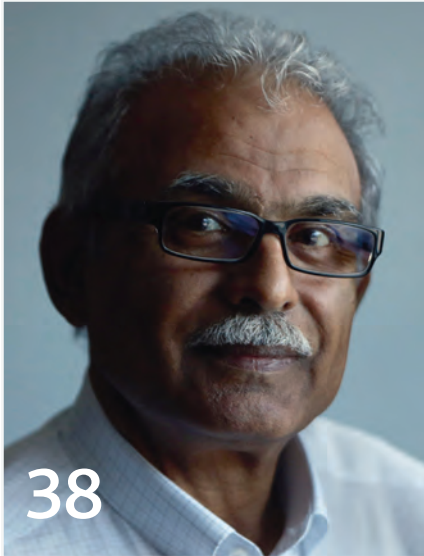
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FOREWORD

Welcome to our September edition of Northern Insight.

As the nights close in and memories of a long glorious Summer fade we are delighted to bring you another jam packed issue brimming with content, features and social photographs.

Our cover star is Argyle House School, a unique educational environment where children come willingly to learn and happiness is key.

In our latest Meet the Entrepreneur interview we talk to Mohammed Ishaq of Punjab Kitchen who talks about his journey in business and future plans.

Amongst a wealth of event coverage we showcase the popular Ladies Day meeting at Newcastle Racecourse and the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid's recent visit to Jesmond Towers.

Our popular Out and About feature returns with a focus this month on Peterborough.

For Business Lunch we visit the lovely El Paso which is bringing a flavour of Latin America to Jesmond's dining scene.

In conclusion much for you to enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support.
Till next month.

M.J. Grahamslaw
Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher

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Barry Speker

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NORTH EAST BIOMETRIC INSOLE INNOVATOR STRENGTHENS ITS SUPPLIER NETWORK

Podfo is partnering with Northumberland-based clinician Chris Oakey as part of its growth strategy to strengthen its network of national suppliers.

Since its launch earlier this year, North East manufacturer Podfo Ltd has experienced significant national growth and demand for its innovative bespoke biometric insoles. Utilising its highly advanced design technology, Podfo provides clinicians with an adaptive seamless orthotic that offers huge prescriptive possibilities, but also meets consumer needs for a highly durable, hygienic, comfortable and effective bespoke insole.

Chris Oakey has 25 years' experience treating patients within the NHS and within his private clinics. He will be one of the first podiatrists in Northumberland to offer Podfo and is currently sole provider of Podfo in the Ponteland and Rothbury areas.

Podfo is a bespoke biometric insole seamlessly designed for the closest fit to the foot. Tailored to the wearer's individual foot shape and corrective requirements, Podfo is designed using exclusive Geometric Hole Orthotic Support Technology.

Elaine Hall, Managing Director at Podfo, said: "We work closely with specialist clinicians throughout the UK to ensure that the public are provided with the best possible bespoke insole to help keep them moving in comfort. We are delighted to welcome Chris to the Podfo network."

Chris added: "People are more active than ever, so I have an increasing number of patients walking through my doors looking for biomechanical help, some high-performance athletes, others just



wanting to remain active in later life. I need to use the best possible treatments to provide the optimum solutions for their needs. Podfo not only provides me with uncompromising functionality in

an orthotic, but also meets patient demands for a discrete, light and slim bespoke insole that is highly durable and incredibly comfortable to wear."

GATESHEAD CHARITY RAISES MONEY FOR FARMERS OF THE FUTURE



Gateshead charity Traidcraft Exchange has raised more than a million pounds thanks to the generosity of the British public. The 'Hidden Entrepreneur' appeal funded a project to create sustainable livelihoods for more than 2,000

entrepreneurs in Kenya, Bangladesh and Senegal.

The British public raised more than £500,000 for the appeal and every pound donated was doubled by the UK government through the Aid Match scheme. The scheme gives the public a say in how

the budget is spent, matching donations for Aid Match appeals pound-for-pound.

The International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, recently celebrated the success of the appeal with representatives from Traidcraft Exchange at Newcastle's innovation hub Campus North.

Penny said: "I want to say a huge thank you to the UK public for their generous support for Traidcraft Exchange's Aid Match appeal. It is this support that allows the UK to boost entrepreneurs and create businesses around the world to help achieve sustained economic growth that will reduce poverty. The appeal will empower the farmers of the future in Kenya, Bangladesh and Senegal whilst nurturing British skills and innovation."

The appeal will help these people, especially women, to earn a fair price for the work they already do and get access to the right training they need to set up their own businesses.

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FREEMASON CHRIS TACKLES BEN NEVIS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH CANCER

Dr Christopher Tait of Layer 7 IT Security has swapped his computer for walking boots in a bid to raise more than £5000 for charity.

In September, Chris will take on Africa's highest peak, the 5890m tall Kilimanjaro, to raise much needed funds for Newcastle-based national charity Josie's Dragonfly Trust. The charity makes a positive difference to the lives of young cancer patients with limited time.

Chris is also an active freemason and is using his latest fundraising adventure to raise awareness of the charitable work undertaken by the Freemasons of Northumberland.

Chris explained: "Last year was the 300th anniversary of English freemasonry and to celebrate Northumberland Freemasons gave £300,000 to local charities in Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland."

To prepare for the mammoth five-day trek, Chris has been practising in the Cheviot Hills and has recently tackled Britain's highest peak Ben Nevis.



GATESHEAD TRAINING PROVIDER AMONG BEST IN UK

Gateshead-based Access Training has been revealed as number one in the North East region, and in the top 6% nationally, for quality training, according to the learners they work with.

The annual Further Education Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey has given Access Training a 97.4% satisfaction rating, which is more than 10% above the national average and at least 5% above every college in the North East.

Malcolm Armstrong, Managing Director of Access training, explained: "Making sure that the training and support we offer learners meets and even exceeds their expectations is vitally important to us. We are delighted that the survey results show we are leading the way for learner satisfaction."

Access Training, which has operated in the region for over 30 years, delivers apprenticeships in a range of areas including business, accounting, management, warehousing and manufacturing.



FIREFIGHTERS GET A LITTLE HELP IN FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Firefighters have thanked Little Mix fans for their generosity following a recent fundraising collection which raised more than £1400 for two charities.

Team StrongArm, set up in memory of Peter Metcalfe, a firefighter with Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service who died from stomach cancer at the age of just 35, recently held a charity collection outside the Little Mix concert at Gateshead International Stadium.

Donations taken at the event will be given to The Fire Fighters Charity, which supports injured firefighters, and The If U Care Share Foundation, a charity that helps families that have been affected by suicide.

The firefighters are also getting ready for the StrongArm Challenge 2018. Spread over four days, StrongArm 2018 will include a swim of 12 miles in Lake Windermere, a Mountain Marathon in England's highest four peaks, a cycle event from Keswick to Newcastle totalling 110 miles, and finally The Great North Run.



ABBNEYFIELD HOUSE CELEBRATES ALNWICK'S HISTORY

Residents at an Alnwick care home have partnered with local school children to commemorate 100 years of life in the town.

Abbeyfield House, a well-established care home which accommodates 25 people in a purpose-built facility just outside Alnwick town centre, successfully bid for a £10,000 Heritage Lottery Fund Grant to unite young and old people by celebrating the town's rich culture and history.

Freda Snaith, Activities Organiser for Abbeyfield

House, arranged a number of sessions with school children from Swansfield School where the elderly residents were able to share their memories of past times with the young schoolchildren. Stories, music, dance and art were used to explore the last century of life in the town.

A lasting reminder of the project is now on display in Abbeyfield House, a wall hanging depicting a collection of poppies in tribute to those who lost their lives from Alnwick in the Great War.

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JUST THAI AND STOP US

How a period of national mourning in Thailand created challenges for a restaurant opening almost 6,000 miles away in Newcastle.

When the Thai Leisure Group (TLG) approached Karol to launch its new flagship restaurant Chaophraya in Newcastle, we soon realised we had a huge number of strands to 'Thai' together.

Karol's brief was to position the contemporary Thai restaurant as the 'jewel in the crown' of TLG's chain of 21 venues across the UK, organising a successful launch event to make it the 'talk of the town' and generate positive coverage before, during and after opening. But with just eight weeks till opening night, there was a lot to do!

Located in the new Grey's Quarter in Intu Eldon Square, Chaophraya was due to open within weeks of 20 other restaurants. The timings for the opening also coincided with NE1's popular 'Restaurant Week', creating additional competition for coverage and restaurant sales – the race was on to make sure Chaophraya wasn't left Thai and dry.

To add to the challenge, much of the restaurant interior was sourced directly from Thailand. However, there were unexpected delays in delivery due to the country undergoing a period of national mourning. So the opening date was becoming increasingly uncertain. Our plans would therefore have to remain flexible right to the wire.

Our launch activity sought to identify Chaophraya's points of difference – the restaurant's authentic Thai interior and offering became central to our plans, which saw Karol include a piece of gold leaf in every invitation to the opening, so guests could decorate one of the UK's largest Buddha's in a traditional Thai ritual. Hosted by TLG's Managing Director, the gold leaf ceremony provided guests with a chance to meet the senior team and created an intriguing story angle to help the launch stand out beyond its food and drink offering.

As well as inviting media and lifestyle bloggers to an exclusive launch party, individual restaurant visits were arranged for the region's top food bloggers, resulting in all important reviews. Beyond the media we also needed to ensure Chaophraya became the destination of choice for the all-important business audience, so we invited key regional figures to a VIP lunch and dinner ahead of the official launch event. We also organised for Chaophraya senior staff to introduce the restaurant at regional networking events, such as the NE1 business breakfast and the Entrepreneurs Forum.

Combined, our launch events reached over 200 regional businesses and media influencers and achieved over 30 pieces of coverage in the region, with a combined reach of over 1 million. The restaurant was also fully booked for two months after opening.

To find out more about one of the North's leading PR Agencies visit www.karolmarketing.com

CREATING AN ASIAN-GEORDIE FUSION

1. Our bespoke invitation included a square of gold leaf to be used in an immersive ceremony at the launch event



2. Much of the restaurant interior was sourced from Thailand, including the giant Buddha statue



3. At the launch guests could decorate the Buddha statue with gold leaf, as part of a traditional Thai blessing ceremony



4. Regional business influencers were invited to a VIP exclusive event

5. Coverage in leading business title, The Journal



6. Restaurant reviews in North East media





Andrew Silver

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

'The only way to do great work is to love what you do' Steve Jobs

As you return to work after taking some time out over the summer months it is time to re-engage and focus on all those objectives set before the sunshine and football! But have you stopped to consider **what is your why** before you dive back into the **what** and **how**.

What

Most businesses focus on **what** they do and ensure they have the right systems, processes and people to deliver what they do at an agreed profit. The challenge is that most businesses work in a competitive marketplace where someone else is able to offer pretty much the same product or service at a similar price to the same audience. Put yourself in your customers shoes and ask why they should buy your product or service over your competitors?

How

Your success at delivering your **what** is likely to depend on how your teams work together. Articulating your culture and ways of working is key to delivering the desired results for your business. What are the core values and behaviours that guide your teams and are they evident in your day to day activity?

Finding your why

Really successful businesses, from start up to blue chip corporates, start with **why**. How does Apple remain one of the most innovative companies year

after year? They started and continue to focus on **why**, not the **what** or the **how**. Steve Jobs mission statement was 'to make a contribution to the world by making tools that advance humankind.'

What is your purpose? It is your mission that defines you and truly sets you apart from your competition. Loyalty, where it exists, comes from people who share your beliefs and values. Your product or service appeals to them beyond its basic features and benefits.

Manipulation v inspiration

Simon Sinek in his book 'Start with Why' talks about manipulation v inspiration. Wouldn't it be great if you could inspire your customer to buy rather than manipulate them via special offers, discounts and promotions. Manipulation leads to customer transactions not loyalty. How do you find those customers that believe what you believe? We need to appeal to them on a different level. They buy because they want to and your product is partly what defines them.

Give the people something to believe in

Before you can inspire your customer you need to inspire your own people. Your **why** bonds your teams together. It drives people to perform because they want to. It becomes the reason why people want to join your business. It attracts the right people who will further enhance your **why**. It becomes the

engine room for growth as individuals perform for their own self-fulfilment as much as for the business benefit. Their personal needs are aligned to those of the business. Their objectives are met by the delivery of the business objectives.

If growth or financial targets are your only **why** expect to lose talented people to those companies that are inspiring performance on a different level. And if you don't understand your **why** then don't expect your customers to. Expect to see them continue to shop around or seek another company who is delivering to a higher need.

Return to pragmatic delivery of your why

Once you know your why then turn your attention to the what and how. Steve Jobs, Herb Kelleher of Southwest Airlines and Walt Disney were all visionaries who inspired others with **why**. However they all needed **how** people to ensure they built the foundations for long term growth. You still need a clear plan, a team involved in its creation and a clarity of how things work in your business. **Why** is no substitute for having clear KPIs, accountability and the most talented team but it might just be the reason you still exist in years to come.

Can why be your difference

'If you always do what you always did you will always get what you always got.' If you are not reaching your goals perhaps finding your **why** might help.

Andrew Silver is the owner of 360 Growth Partners who identify, coordinate and make the adjustments businesses need to accelerate growth. For more information go to www.360growthpartners.co.uk or e-mail start@360growthpartners.co.uk

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**BOBBY VICKERS
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Newcastle Falcons stars stepped away from the rugby field for a series of shots, taking their cues from the more risqué and fun side of the game. The alternative calendar and event raised money for the Newcastle Rugby Foundation, Doddie Weir Trust and Stay Strong Stu.

The 16-month calendars are on sale now in the club shop and online at www.shopfalcons.co.uk for just £10. Support some amazing causes and purchase yours today.







THE 2018/19 RUGBY SEASON IS SET TO BE A BIG ONE FOR THE NEWCASTLE FALCONS

Launching into the new campaign of the back of their highest placed finish in the Gallagher Premiership for 20 years, the club will also be playing European rugby at the game's top table after qualifying for the Heineken Champions Cup.

The Falcons last graced the competition back in the 2004/2005 season when they made the quarter finals for the first time ever after doing the double and beating Newport Gwent Dragons and Edinburgh Rugby along with a memorable home win over the then French powerhouse of Perpignan.

Having been drawn against Edinburgh again in Pool 5 alongside Montpellier and Toulon the three home games in the pool stages at Kingston Park will ensure fans can see the North East club's stars test themselves against yet more of the best players in world rugby.

And in a season where the showpiece final of the competition along with the European Rugby Challenge Cup will be held in Newcastle at St James' Park, there is added incentive for the region to support the Falcons in these crunch games.

Newcastle Falcons director of rugby Dean Richards, a two-time Champions Cup winner during his time in charge of Leicester Tigers, said: "It's exciting for

us to be back in the competition and we always knew we would be facing tough opponents.

"All six group games will provide fierce opposition, but we are relishing the opportunity and looking forward to testing ourselves in Europe's top level tournament."

The campaign gets underway on Sunday October 14 when Newcastle tackle Toulon at Stade Felix Mayol in a 3.15pm UK-time kick-off, with all six of the Falcons' group games being shown live in the UK on BT Sport.

Montpellier are the first Heineken Champions Cup visitors to Kingston Park Stadium on Sunday October 21 in a 1pm kick-off, before Newcastle face back-to-back clashes with Edinburgh during the middle two rounds.

The first of those takes place at BT Murrayfield on Friday December 7 (7.45pm), followed nine days later when the Scottish side visits Kingston Park on Sunday December 16 (3.15pm).

A second trip to France comes in round five when the Falcons visit Montpellier on Saturday January 12 in a 1pm UK-time kick-off, the pool campaign culminating on Friday January 18 when Toulon visit Kingston Park Stadium (7.45pm).

For fans in the region wanting to witness Falcons in Heineken Champions Cup action live, the club have also introduced a special three-game bundle which allows fans to secure a ticket for all of these mouth-watering ties with prices starting from just £45 for adults.

Award winning hospitality packages are also available to purchase as a three-match bundle, with the Fifteen @ the Falcons package offering a superb fine dining experience available at £375 + VAT per person while the 100 Club package with chefs grazing table is available at £297 + VAT per person. For hospitality bundle packages, email our Commercial team corporatesales@newcastle-falcons.co.uk.

To book your European bundle or to find out more about Newcastle Falcons matches, contact the stadium box office by calling 0871 2266060.

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF FINANCE TECHNOLOGY

"The pace of change has never been this fast, yet it will never be this slow again," said Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister at Davos earlier this year. It is for this reason, the Investment Association, the trade body that represents 200 firms that manage assets worth £7 trillion, has created a "Velocity" FinTech Accelerator programme.

The programme will bring together leading figures from across the industry to help shape the strategy of FinTech innovation and adoption within asset management and the wider buy-side sector. As part of this, Brewin Dolphin's Head of Digital Channel and Investment Services, Gareth Johnson, based in their Newcastle office, has been appointed to the Advisory Panel. The primary role of the Advisory Panel will be to help determine the most innovative FinTech organisations into the Velocity programme.

"This is an exciting time to be involved in FinTech and I am delighted to take a role on this key industry accelerator panel," said Gareth. "I am also keen to unlock the potential of the Newcastle FinTech scene to solve problems within asset and wealth management. I hope my appointment will give the region a further opportunity to participate in this key accelerator programme."

Ultimately, the Velocity FinTech Accelerator programme aims to create an industry centre of excellence for the advancement and utilisation of the best tech solutions for the benefit of the industry and its consumers. The programme launched in July with the first cohort expected to be reviewed in Q4 of this year.



Gareth Johnson

Gareth, joined Brewin Dolphin in 2002 and has worked in numerous different parts of the business. "I'm very fortunate that I've grown up in the business learning about the entire infrastructure of a large wealth management business as well as selling our proposition to our customers. This gives a real sense of the end to end." In addition, Gareth has been responsible for the Group's Managed Portfolio Service for the last eight years which has grown from around £10m to almost £3bn during that time. "I like to think of myself as an intrapreneur; creating new business units from within. To that end, you go through all of the challenges a start-up goes through and that will hopefully allow me to have empathy with those starting their own business or trying to scale up."

Gareth's enthusiasm for innovation and change saw Brewin Dolphin CEO David Nicol put him forward for the Advisory Panel for the Velocity. "I was

delighted to be asked to join the panel by David. The desktop picture on my computer is a Forbes magazine front cover dating back to October 2007. The headline is "Nokia – One billion customers – can anyone catch the cell phone king?" This was not even a year after the launch of the iPhone... and we all know what happened!" said Gareth. "It serves as reminder not to be complacent but also, the customer-centric innovation that genuinely solves challenges will always succeed."

The prospects for FinTech and also, Newcastle as a city, is fantastic. With the new National Innovation Centre for Data en route as well, I think there's a lot to be excited about."



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For more information on the accelerator programme, go to www.iavelocity.com, follow on twitter @IAVelocity or contact Gareth @Brewin_Gareth or Gareth.Johnson@brewin.co.uk

SUSHI ME ROLLIN LAUNCHES IN NEWCASTLE

As part of the official opening of Newcastle's own shipping container complex STACK on Pilgrim Street, a brand new concept in Japanese sushi dining has launched in the city.

Rolled fresh to order, Sushi me Rollin recently opened its doors bringing serious flavours, fresh ingredients and mind-blowing sushi to the people of Newcastle.

Previous Head Chef of Avieka, current holder of Newcastle's Restaurant of the Year Award, Kurt Toulson, is spearheading this new creation, along with previous Sous Chefs of the prestigious Peace and Loaf in Jesmond, Simon Whitehead and Hugo Embleton-Black.



Robson Laidler Accountants in Jesmond has helped set up the restaurant with a point of sale system, a card payment and receipt management facility that fits in line with the generation of the owners. Accounting system Xero has been implemented to make the restaurant ready for new tax reporting changes that are coming into place next year.

WATSON BURTON SUPPORTS MULTI-MILLION POUND SITE ACQUISITION



Newcastle-headquartered commercial law firm Watson Burton has advised Lok Developments on the purchase of Eagle Star House, a deal valued at £9.5 million.

The investment is in a disused tower block in Gosforth, formerly used by the DVLA. The large residential development will see the creation of 54 high end units and there are plans for further units and parking.

Watson Burton delivered a range of legal services to

Lok Developments to support the corporate investment and property deal.

Marc Allison, Partner at Watson Burton, said: "We are delighted to have worked with Lok Developments in securing this investment and helping them move forward on the development of the site. Our expertise in working on high-value investments and property deals, together with our experience in the employment, property, corporate and commercial fields, ensured we were well placed to advise Lok Developments on this deal."



SQUARE ONE LAW CONTINUES TO GROW

Expanding North East law firm, Square One Law, is continuing to attract quality lawyers and its new managing partner, Gill Hall welcomes commercial litigator, Vicky Lowrie as a senior associate and property lawyer, Andrew Foster as an associate.

Their appointments form part of Square One Law's continued strategic growth, which has recently included the opening of a new office on Stockton's riverside.

Vicky qualified as a solicitor in 2008 with Ward Hadaway and has specialist experience in property litigation undertaking work for a range of clients including commercial landlords and tenants, public sector, national charities and lenders. She has extensive knowledge in matters involving landlord and tenant matters, and also advises clients on insolvency matters, professional negligence claims and contractual disputes.

Andrew has a broad range of experience acting for commercial clients and lenders on a variety of commercial property transactions. He has gained extensive experience acting for property investors, occupiers, banks and SME clients as well as land owners and developers on a variety of commercial property and banking matters.

ACCLAIMED BUSINESS EXPERT APPOINTED TO DRIVE GROWTH AT LOCAL LAW FIRM

A North East business guru has been appointed to assist an ambitious Tees Valley law firm with its growth strategy.

Gary Lumby MBE has joined the Ingleby Barwick headquartered firm Punch Robson and will be working alongside its partners to help achieve the company's development plans.

The traditional mixed-practice high street law firm, which also has offices in Middlesbrough and Coulby Newham, will benefit from Gary's extensive knowledge gained from his many years' experience

working with numerous leading North East businesses, including Active Chartered Financial Planners, Biochemica Ltd and Techconsult.

Gary aims to use his expertise in sales, marketing and business development to assist the driven firm in increasing its turnover and expanding its team.

Gary said: "I'm very excited to start working with a well-known and respected law firm like Punch Robson. The business has a great foundation and there's lots of scope for growth."



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TAD WEB EXPAND TO NEW HOME TO ACCOMMODATE AMBITIONS

A specialist web development agency has celebrated this year's growth with the move to upmarket office space, that reflects both the success of the company and of its further planned growth.

Tad Web Solutions, a company that is proud to be based in Middlesbrough, has opened a new office in Commerce House in the heart of the city, to ensure that the address and reputation match the clientele the company has been attracting.

Owner Ian Elcoate, also needed a larger office to house his latest expansion of one front end developer and a further software developer. The plan in the next five years is to create another 12 jobs.

Ian said: "We needed reliable services, including top end wifi, and support services including a receptionist. Our clientele are of a certain standard so it was important for us to reflect that with luxury surroundings and a quality building. The location right by the train station is also a huge bonus, plus there is plenty of parking available."

Commerce House is a Grade II listed building, that has recently had £1.2 million poured into a loving renovation project. The building boasts office space of varying sizes up to the largest which holds 14 desks. There is also a stunning reception, boardroom (The Chairman's Room) and business lounge. Virtual office services, hot desking and business event space is also all for hire.

Christine Huntington, facilities manager at Commerce House, said: "Ian and his team moved in and were straight to work on the first day – our seamless service ensured that everything was ready for them from the word go. They are an ambitious company that launched in 2011, so to watch them on their next stage of growth will be very interesting. We will of course, do all we can to help them with that!"

Tad Web Solutions focuses its business growth and efforts in two main industries; Professional Service Companies and Manufacturing Companies that sell to trade as well as those directly selling to consumers. Two clients the company currently services are The Framed Picture Company and Red Driving School.

Ian concluded:

"We will be growing at a fast rate and needed space that will accommodate that drama free – Commerce House is just perfect!"

More information is available at www.commerce-house.co.uk or www.tadwebsolutions.co.uk

READY FOR BUSINESS

And with offices
filling fast!



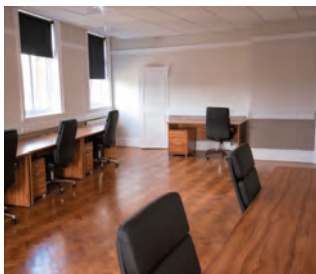
Commerce House, the outstanding, iconic, grade II listed building in the heart of Middlesbrough is now fully refurbished and has released the last of its stunning office space. With rooms available for two to fourteen people.

With enviable facilities, Commerce House is the perfect opportunity for a head office, satellite office or to expand operations within the prestigious TS1 area of Middlesbrough in the heart of the newest regenerated location in the region. And now we have some great deals available for a limited time only!

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Contact Christine Huntington on 01642 917 116 or Christine@commercechambers.co.uk**

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THE INCREASE OF THE BANK RATE



Dr Emma Black

Dr Emma Black, managing director of Cascade Cash Management shares with Northern Insight readers information on the increase of the Bank Rate by the Bank of England last month.

The Monetary Policy Committee voted unanimously in August's meeting 9-0 to increase Bank Rate by 0.25 percentage points to 0.75%.

Emma said: "The Bank of England increased interest rates for the second time in over a decade earlier this month after the UK economy performed as expected since May's meeting. The committee voted unanimously by 9-0 to increase Bank Rate by 0.25%, to maintain the stock of sterling non-financial investment-grade corporate bond purchases and to maintain the stock of UK government bond purchases.

"In announcing the decision, the committee recognised the ongoing impact to the UK economy of the negotiations to leave the European Union, particularly on sterling in the near-term which depreciated slightly since the last meeting. Brexit negotiations continue to heighten uncertainty in the market, which has dampened growth below pre-referendum expectations.

"In July, Governor Mark Carney warned of the impact of protectionist policies emerging

internationally in the US-China trade war during his keynote speech at the Great Exhibition of the North. Carney referenced the slowdown in global growth and the minutes released from August's meeting touched upon this too. The MPC minutes however stated that world growth should remain above the estimates of growth in potential supply despite this emerging shift.

"GDP growth in the UK was reported at 0.2% in the three months to May, higher than the three months to April, which had remained flat due to the poor weather conditions at the start of the year affecting the retail sector. Construction output in the dry summer months has increased driving the economy upward and it is expected that growth for Q2 will continue to rebound to 0.4%.

"Annual inflation figures in June were weaker than expected at 2.4% while the UK labour market has continued to tighten. Unit labour cost growth has firmed and this is not expected to loosen in the near-term. Inflation is expected to remain above the 2% target level during the ongoing Brexit

negotiations and corresponding uncertainty. As a result of this, the committee felt a further rate increase at this time was appropriate.

"The committee next meet on 13 September 2018. The outlook remains consistent that an ongoing tightening of monetary policy will be appropriate."

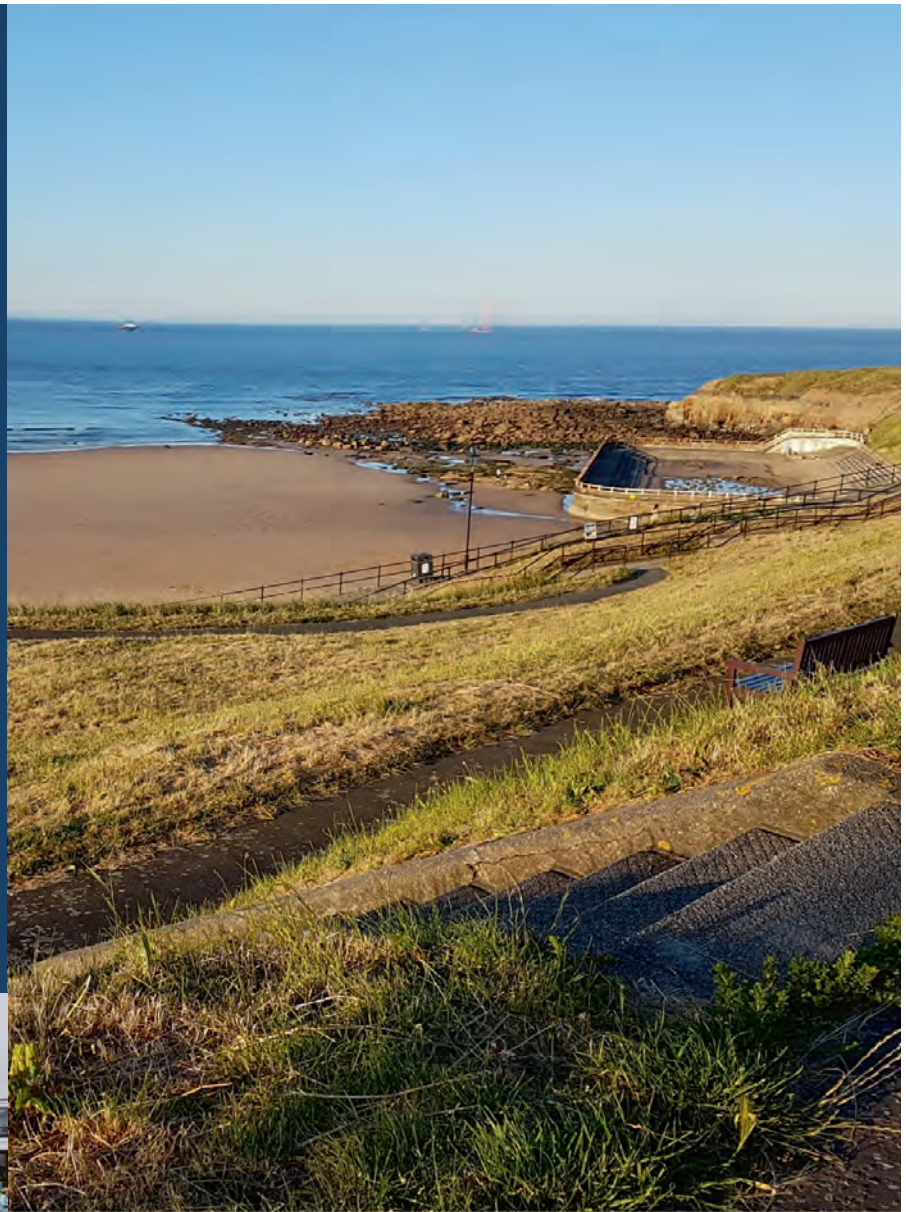
Cascade is an independent and transparent service created to generate enhanced cash returns and increased protection on deposits through professional cash management.

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.

For further updates or information please visit www.cascade.co.uk

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
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VAT COMPLIANCE
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS
STATUTORY AUDITS
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INVESTIGATIONS
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BUSINESS START-UPS
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& COMPANY

Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors

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INCOME PROTECTION PAYS THE BILLS WHEN YOU CANNOT

Ok, so we know why people insure their car - it's the law, similarly if you have a mortgage it is compulsory to insure the property.

Every other insurance is in theory optional, with many people choosing cover for pets, mobile phone and their household appliances either by their own choice, thinking it was compulsory or worse not even knowing what they are paying for each month!

However, very few people insure the very thing without which a pet, mobile phone or many household appliances would become a luxury...I am talking about protecting your income, salary, wage, whatever you want to call it, this is what pays the bills for most of us.

- What would happen if due to long term illness, injury or accident your income stopped? Take a look at your monthly net pay and then ask how long you might survive without it.....
- If you are really lucky your employer will pay you for a period, maybe even full pay for the first 6 months of illness but what happens after that....
- Possibly you have savings, but how long would these last even in just maintaining your "essential" monthly outgoings....
- "My family would help" is another common response, maybe, but how long could this be sustained before tensions arise....

Research by Legal & General in 2017 shows that employees on average have a 32 day deadline before money starts to run out.

Some people say that they could survive on a partners' salary alone – either your partner loves his/her job and works for this reason alone, or you currently save all of their wages each month – are either of these scenarios realistic?



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

One of the main reasons for clients not taking cover is because there is a belief that the state would help them. But is this true? Not really, as Statutory Sick Pay is £92.95 per week (£403 per month) for a maximum period of 28 weeks. After that, any future state benefits are means tested but are hardly generous, and if anything, likely to reduce over the longer term as the Government purse strings are stretched by other demands such as the NHS, education etc.

Income protection cover is an obvious solution, which can be tailored to your individual circumstances:

- To begin after any employer's sick pay ceases.
- To end in line with a mortgage being fully repaid or children finishing education.
- To increase in line with inflation.
- To be underwritten by the insurer at the time of application so that you know exactly what is covered and any exclusions.
- Provide an income in line with current net salary for the lifetime of the policy.

A good way to determine how much cover is required is to divide a recent bank statement into 3 categories;

- Monthly payments which are absolutely necessary for survival, eg mortgage, food and bills.
- Those outgoings that you would like to keep, eg gym membership, Sky etc.
- Those that you can do without.

This helps to determine how much cover you ought to have in place to maintain your home and lifestyle.

The average age of an income protection claim is age 42 (Legal & General claims payment record 2017). That's earlier than most people think. Ah, I hear you say "but these policies don't pay out when you need them". This is a myth and recent statistics available from Legal & General for 2017 are as follows;

- 94.8% of income protection claims paid out with those which weren't successful usually due to existing illnesses not being declared when applying for the policy.

So taking things back to reality, pet insurance may well prove to be essential when your beloved cat, dog etc. is ill, but who feeds him / her if you are too ill to afford to?

Speak to us today about how you can improve your financial security. What have you got to lose?

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.

BRITISH ACCOUNTANCY AWARDS 2018 - HERE THEY GO!



Have you heard? North East accountancy firm, Wellway, has been shortlisted for the Independent Firm of the Year Award in the British Accountancy Awards 2018 (Scotland, Northern Ireland and North, England). Having entered for the first time this year, Wellway are well on their way towards making their mark in the national accounting industry and putting Morpeth on the map.

Not shy to being shortlisted for industry awards, Wellway has been assisting and supporting their clients' and their businesses since 1998. With a team of accounting specialists and finance advisors, Wellway believes that any firm is as good as its people and pride themselves on having a team who are highly trained, friendly and approachable and who care about the success of our clients' businesses.

The British Accountancy Awards are regarded as the highest accolade in the accounting and finance industry, an amazing achievement for a local Morpeth based firm. The award category 'Independent Firm of the Year', states that the winning firm will show how the services it has provided have been fundamental in enabling their clients to achieve their specific business goals, increase revenues and satisfy and delight their customers – All of which, Wellway prides themselves on.

The 2018 British Accountancy Awards (Scotland, Northern Ireland and North, England) will take place this month on 26th September at Grosvenor House.

Good luck to the Wellway team – Bring that trophy back to the North East, where it belongs!

www.wellway.uk.com



Are you looking for affordable expertise about your pension savings?

If you're aged 55+ and you're starting to think about retirement, look no further than **Explore Wealth Management**. Our highly-experienced team are specialists in retirement planning and advice.

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THREE OLD FARMERS

Three “retired” farmers were sitting and chatting in their local over a couple of pints.

“It’s your round, Billy” says Jack.

“Don’t be daft, It’s Bob’s turn,” came the retort.

Bob sighed. “Same again I suppose.” The others nodded.

When Bob returned from the bar, the conversation turned to tax and Inheritance Tax in particular. This was a bit of a change from the price of wheat, sheep, beer or whisky (a.k.a. Scottish wine!)

Billy declared “I don’t have too much to worry about as the farm is in a limited company and my son, William, is still farming it. So that means it qualifies for Agricultural Property Relief. As I understand it, my shares in the company are free of tax when I die regardless of who I leave them to. I think we get it almost automatically”

Jack furrowed his brow. “When I sold four years ago, I had no one to take on the farm, so I guess I do have a bit to worry about.”

“A hell of a lot from what I hear,” laughed Billy.

“Who told you that?” snapped Jack. “I don’t like people talking about my business!”

“Calm down before you give yourself a heart attack. I am only pulling your leg.” Billy could see that Jack’s blood pressure had been raised by the fact that his rather bulbous nose was now the colour of a red traffic light.

“What about you Bob?” asked Billy. “You’re in a similar position to Jack as your lad, Robert, wasn’t interested in the farm. Is he still teaching embroidery?” Billy and Jack started to snigger.

“It’s arts and crafts, for goodness sake!” Bob raised his eyes to the ceiling. “He is very talented at creating things.”



Peter Rutherford

“As it happens, the Missus and I are ok. We took some advice from the chaps at Rutherford Hughes. They explained that whilst the farm qualified for IHT relief, once I sold the business and received cash, we would lose that relief. However, we could immediately qualify again if we invested in qualifying Business Relief investments within three years. They provided a spread of recommendations and we did that with some of our money.”

Jack squinted. “Three years, you say. Just my blinking luck, it’s too late for me.”

Bob smiled as he was enjoying being the one in the know for a change. “Not really, Jack. You could invest in these qualifying investments and have the value outside of your estate after two years.”

“That’s good. There is a chance I could last that long,” laughed Jack, as he knocked back his chaser.

“Not the way you’re getting through the whisky these days!” roared Billy.

Bob chuckled, “Don’t worry as long as your old girl or you survive the two years, it works.”

“Perhaps I better have a word with these chaps,” Jack mused.

“Perhaps you ought to buy Bob a bottle for all this information he is giving you,” laughed Billy, whilst winking to Bob.

Jack looked horrified. “I wasn’t think of going that far! Fancy a half, Bob?”

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

BR schemes should be considered a higher risk investment as they may invest in AIM investments and can fall in value. The success of your portfolio will depend on how the investments are managed and this cannot be guaranteed. Agricultural Property Relief is a tax break that may apply to land and buildings. Rutherford Hughes Ltd. is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Rutherford Hughes Ltd company registration no: 10431722. Country of registration: England. Office & Registered Office address: Collingwood Buildings, 38 Collingwood Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1JF.

HOW WILL THE RATE RISE AFFECT YOUR MORTGAGE?



You may have heard about last month's rate rise, The Bank of England increasing their base rate by 0.25%, making it the highest it's been since March 2009. But what you may not know, is how it is going to affect you and your commercial mortgage. Chris Adlam, Property Development and Finance Expert at Advanced Funding Solutions, is here to tell you how your bank balance will be affected.

As a lender, the base rate is an incredibly important guide on what rates we can offer to our clients. It can ultimately have detrimental effects on loans, mortgages, savings and credit cards. The base rate rise means that the 3.7 million peoples who are on variable and tracker mortgages could see their monthly bills go up significantly.

Whilst you may be thinking that the 0.25% rate rise isn't going to affect your bank balance too harshly, the combination of the rise with price hikes to petrol, energy bills, council taxes and goods, will all contribute to make a bit of a dent in your bank account. The rise will consequently lead to a negative impact on consumer spending which drives the economy.

As a commercial mortgage broker, it's our job to ensure that our clients are getting the best possible deal and that's exactly what we do. Our financial experts offer advice and solutions to your commercial mortgage problems, so you can concentrate on running your empire.

No matter what mortgage you're on, at Advanced Funding Solutions we can present the best options available for you. You don't need to feel tied down, contact us to find out how we can help you beat the rate rise slump.

If you want a no obligation quote for a re-mortgage, give us a call on 0191 486 2089.

ANDREW POTTS IS OUR LATEST INSPIRATION

If you're lacking motivation whether that be in sports or your work life, the journey of KP Simpson's Managing Director is all the motivation you need to get up and go. Having undergone surgery on a brain tumour in June 2017, Andrew Potts is now fighting fit and joining over 50,000 runners in this year's Great North Run.

Having previously ran the famous Newcastle to South Shields route just twice, Andrew is ready to get back on the track, and though most would shudder at the thought of the 13.1 mile run, Andrew began his training just three months post-surgery. Unable to drive following the operation, Andrew's training involves running from his KP Simpson Accounting offices in Jarrow to his home in Cleadon and having completed a whopping 700 miles in training this year, Andrew will undoubtedly be ready to cross that bridge and make it to finish line.

Running in aid of The Brain Tumour Charity, Andrew hopes to raise awareness of the charity and support those who are in the situation that he was just one year ago by hitting his fundraising target of £1000.

With just a few weeks to go, Andrew is excited to join the atmosphere and even more excited for that finish line feeling.

Good luck Andrew, from all of the team at KP Simpson and the Jammy Dodgers at JAM Marketing.



Andrew Potts

If you would like to sponsor Andrew, go to: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrew-potts9

GENDER PAY REPORTING MAY SOON APPLY TO EMPLOYERS WITH 50 EMPLOYEES OR MORE



Charlie Barnes

On 2 August 2018, the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee (the Committee) published its report on gender pay gap reporting, making several proposals to change the reporting requirements.

The report notes that while the median pay gap across the economy is 18% in favour of men, at an organisational level, the new figures reveal some alarming truths: with gender pay gaps of over 40% not uncommon in some sectors and 78% of organisations reporting gender pay gaps in favour in men. New analysis by the Committee finds that 1,377 employers (13% of the total) have gender pay gaps in favour of men of over 30%.

The results have led the Committee to call for more to be done to close the gender pay gap and more quickly. The Committee's key recommendations for closing the gap are:

- Requiring all employers to publish alongside their figures, a narrative to explain them and an action plan for closing the gap;
- Reducing the threshold for reporting from 2020 to all those employers with 50 employees or more;
- Clarifying the sanctions the Equality and Human Rights Commission can impose on those who fail to comply.

A real concern for the Committee is that only around half of the UK workforce are expected to be covered by the present reporting requirements. Currently, gender pay reporting is only compulsory for employers with 250 or more employees. The

Committee's findings are that the pay gap is higher in smaller businesses and as a result, the Committee recommends that Government widen the net of organisations required to publish gender pay gap data to those with 50 employees or more.

Considering half of the working population were not included in the first round of published figures, one can certainly see the need for reducing the reporting threshold if the UK is to make real progress in closing the gender pay gap. However, the reporting exercise requires considerable resource which isn't readily available to those businesses. There are also areas of ambiguity in the reporting guidance which has led to organisations interpreting the rules in different ways. That lack of resource and failing to clarify those ambiguities may lead to reporting irregularities, distorting the true figures and possibly giving a false impression that the gender pay gap is narrowing. It could also potentially place a greater burden on the EHRC in its efforts to establish compliance. Government must therefore balance the need for reducing the reporting threshold against the regulatory burden weighing heavily on the shoulders of SMEs and medium-sized employers.

It is unsurprising that the results have yielded significant gaps in favour of men in many sectors. Whilst there are a number of factors contributing to the UK's gender pay gap, the Committee's

report places the onus on businesses and investors to drive change to tackle the gender pay gap, with those failing to do so being held to account. The second deadline for reporting is 4 April 2019 (30 March 2019 for public bodies). As we approach that deadline, it will be interesting to see how employers have fared in reducing their gap. Larger businesses need to be implementing their strategy to close the gap now, since the third snapshot date is fast approaching in Spring next year after which organisations' progress in closing the gap over the first three reporting years will be scrutinised.

The report follows the recent announcement that all 10,000 employers the Government expected to have to report their gender pay gap figures have done so. This is an impressive outcome considering the absence of any penalties for non-compliance. However, if the threshold for gender pay gap reporting is reduced, and the Government is serious about tackling the gap, it will be surprising if they don't introduce tough sanctions for those that fail to do so.



For more information on gender pay gap reporting requirements, please contact Charlie Barnes, Associate Director, at charlie.barnes@rsmuk.com or your usual RSM contact.

UNW PROMOTES HEAD OF CHARITY AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT ANNE HALLOWELL TO PARTNER



Anne Hallowell

The Newcastle-based chartered accountancy and business advisory firm has built a strong presence in the charity and not-for-profit sector over many years, tailoring a wide range of services to organisations within the sector such as tax specialisms, audit and independent examination, as well as day-to-day accounting.

Anne's promotion to become UNW's first charity sector specific partner encapsulates an ever-growing portfolio of charity clients that now includes The Great North Air Ambulance Service, Durham Cathedral, The Newcastle Royal Grammar School and National Youth Choirs of Great Britain.

She initially joined UNW in 2013 as senior manager in the audit and assurance department and has worked extensively with not-for-profit organisations to offer a wide range of accounting, governance and funding services.

Before arriving at UNW, Anne gained a wealth of experience within the sector, spending seven years as Trust Manager with The North of England Civic Trust where she gained experience of charity funding first hand. Prior to this she, spent 16 years - at PwC, latterly working as part of their national

Charities team. She also holds the Diploma in Charity Accounting (DChA), being amongst the first to gain the qualification when it was introduced in the UK.

Andrew Wilson, Managing Partner at UNW, said: "Over the past few years, Anne has been responsible for significantly improving our charity and not-for-profit offering, so much so that UNW is now recognised in the region as experts within the field. This is in no small part due to her dedication to strengthen our presence in the local marketplace through newsletters, seminars and dinners.

"She has also developed a very strong team around her that engages effectively across the firm's specialisms and service lines, ensuring our charity and not-for-profit clients can benefit from the broadest service offering possible.

"I am delighted this has been recognised in a richly deserved promotion to partner, and I offer her my best wishes and ongoing support in her new role."

Anne Hallowell, Charity and Not-for-Profit Partner at UNW, said: "I'm delighted to be promoted to partner of such a fantastic firm as UNW. I have a great team around me and the support and encouragement I have received from my fellow partners has made me extremely excited to continue to grow our impressive client portfolio in my new role."

"The charity and not for profit sector has quickly established itself as one of UNW's core specialisms and I believe we have the strongest cross disciplinary specialist teams in the region. I look forward to further cementing our standing in the local marketplace in the coming months and years."

UNW is a leading, independent firm of chartered accountants and business advisors that provides a wide range of services to its clients. For more information on our work within the charity and not-for-profit sector, please visit www.unw.co.uk



(L-R) Durham Distillery's Jessica Tomlinson and Jon Chadwick, Helen Brain of Square One Law, Michael Vassallo of Maven Capital Partners and David Cudlip of Harlands Accountants.

FINANCE DURHAM INVESTEE STARTS PRODUCTION FOR THE NORTH EAST'S FIRST EVER SINGLE MALT WHISKY

Durham Distillery to make history as local pioneer of craft spirits, founding the region's first Whisky

2018 has already been a huge year for Durham as the city's high-profile leisure developments open for business and more than £3 billion of investment is underway across the County, including the transformation of the waterside in Durham City.

The latest tenant at the £30m leisure quarter, in the heart of Durham, is Finance Durham investee, Durham Distillery. The company's new site will house an enlarged production and storage facility, and visitor centre where people can learn about the science of the distilling process and craft behind their making. As part of plans to become a tourist destination, the visitor centre will host a range of informative and interactive tours, showcasing the distillery's finest drinks by the glass or bottle through public and private events; all with the impressive backdrop of its working distillery.

The business secured the Finance Durham Fund's first investment in September 2017. Twelve months on, Durham Distillery is celebrating an outstanding year, with the investment fuelling the company's exciting expansion plans, set to create up to 20 jobs over the course of the project.

Founded in 2014 by former NHS chief Jon Chadwick, the small-batch craft distillery makes spirits with a

400-litre copper pot still. Durham Distillery is now one of the region's leading craft distillers producing gin, vodka and gin-based liqueurs sold under the Durham Gin and Durham Vodka brands. Cemented within the roots of Durham, the company's brand incorporates elements of the city, the logo was inspired by Durham Cathedral's Medieval Rose Window and colour palette complements the ecclesiastical purple from the Bishop's vestments.

Durham Whisky, the North East's first ever Whisky, is produced by Head Distiller, Jessica Tomlinson. The first bottles will be available for consumption in 2021, and customers can now pre-order their bottles from the first batch. Using local spring water and malt, Durham Distillery will create a true grain to glass whisky from mashing and fermenting through to a double distillation on two custom built copper pot stills, a 1200L wash still and a 1000L spirit still. Those keen to be part of the company's latest plans can sign up to reserve a Founder's Cask from the first whisky run, as well as cases or bottles.

Jon Chadwick, Founder of Durham Distillery, said, "We can't wait to move into our new Distillery and start making the North East's first Whisky. We are looking forward to welcoming people from

Durham and further afield to come to experience our award-winning craft spirits!"

Head Distiller, Jess Tomlinson, added, "Heading up the production of Durham Whisky is very exciting, as well as it being a first for this part of England, it's also a shake up for the industry as there are very few female distillers, especially producing whisky."

Michael Vassallo, Investment Director of Maven, "We are delighted to see Durham Distillery go from strength to strength following investment from Finance Durham. Jon is a real entrepreneur with a very talented team behind him. The investment is a great example of a local company utilising the support from Durham County Council's innovative fund to grow their business. We look forward to helping Durham Distillery in its quest to become the region's distiller of choice."

The Finance Durham Fund, managed by Maven Capital Partners, was established by Durham County Council and is overseen by economic development organisation, Business Durham. If your business is based in County Durham, or you are relocating to the County, it may be eligible for investment. If you feel you could benefit from funding to help achieve your growth ambitions, then please contact Maven's local team.

Please contact Maven's local team to discuss your business and its plans, or visit www.mavencp.com to find out more.

CREATING VALUE

The £20 million Finance Durham Fund, managed by Maven Capital Partners, provides flexible equity and loan packages to support a business at any stage of its growth cycle.



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:

info@financedurham.co.uk | T: 0191 731 8595

financedurham.co.uk



MAKING TAX DIGITAL FOR VAT - ARE YOU READY?



Of all the days to release the Making Tax Digital for Business (MTDfB) update, HMRC chose Friday 13th (July). But it wasn't the horror show you might expect, the release has narrowed the level of uncertainty facing businesses in the run up to April 2019.

Tait Walker's new publication on Making Tax Digital for VAT simplifies some of the language and gives examples of businesses you may be able to relate to.

The Background

In a digital world, MTDfB is the government's vision to have one of the most digitally advanced tax systems, to improve efficiency and to reduce error. By forcing businesses to store and share information digitally, HMRC will have quicker access to data and clear audit trails from source documents to filed returns.

The first step in the MTDfB process focuses on the way VAT return information is stored, processed and communicated and will impact VAT registered business with a taxable turnover greater than £85,000.

In general the requirements will place different pressures on businesses depending on how complex their VAT position is. For simple VAT structures there are software solutions available that will quickly make you compliant. For more complex VAT profiles and group companies life may not be so straight forward.

Cutting through the jargon

There are phrases in the guidance that you may

not be familiar with so here is our summary of the important ones:

FUNCTIONAL COMPATIBLE SOFTWARE This is a software program, or set of programs, that can record and preserve digital records and communicate directly with HMRC. Packages like Sage (v 24 or later), Xero and Quickbooks for example, are classed as functional compatible software. If you are already using them to file your VAT return direct to HMRC then you are MTDfB compliant as long as you adhere to the rules of processing and retaining data.

DIGITAL RECORDS These are software programs that are capable of recording and preserving digital information but do not have all the attributes of functional compatible software like communicating directly to HMRC. For many businesses this may be a combination of bespoke accounting ledgers, legacy accounting systems and spreadsheets. To be MTDfB compliant, the information stored in these digital records needs to be shared using Digital Links...

DIGITAL LINKS These are the means to transfer information electronically between software programs, applications or products without any manual influence. The days of 'cut and paste' are no longer allowed in the new MTD landscape. Digital

links can be anything from an excel formula to complex API's...

There are a few more you should be aware of such as API and bridging software for a start...Head over to www.taitwalker.co.uk and read the full publication to help you get MTD ready.

So what do you need to do now?

First of all, don't panic and start by working out whether your current systems comply with the new requirements. Do you have digital records at all? Have you got non digital legacy accounting systems? Do you have complex group reporting? Is the software version you use compliant? Start by making a list and working out what action you need to take ahead of April 2019.

Businesses will take a range of approaches to these changes, some early adopters, some gradual changers, a few last-minute panics and some will remain in denial...although beware of the fines if you choose this one!

From our experience of regulatory changes, the early adopters faced the least disruption. Ensure a thorough solution is in place and its business as usual when the effective date arrives. We would urge as many of you as possible to take this approach to MTDfB.

If you want to find out more, Tait Walker are holding a number of MTD update seminars on the 2nd October, to find out more and book your place, please contact joanna.leach@taitwalker.co.uk

SEPTEMBER MEANS BACK TO WORK FOR MANY OF US



Jessica Dooley, Chief Chemist, UK & North West Europe, Deloitte.

Holidays are behind us, and the stresses and strains of work are upon us once again. Wellbeing, including stress, is fast becoming one of the most talked about workplace topics of our time. So how do we recognise and cope with stress in the workplace? Jessica Dooley, Chief Chemist at Deloitte explores how Business Chemistry® can improve the art of relationships in a business environment.

Stress affects us all. It manifests itself in different ways depending on how we prefer to work. While some level of stress can be beneficial to getting things done, excessive levels can take a toll on individuals, team productivity and performance, as well as our overall physical and mental wellbeing. But how does our working style affect how we cope with stress? How often are we stressed? And do some people experience more or less of it in the workplace than others? Deloitte's Business Chemistry team conducted a study* to find out.

Business Chemistry® is a system used by Deloitte to identify and talk about similarities and differences between people's working styles. It reveals primary patterns of characteristics associated with four Business Chemistry "types": Guardians, Integrators, Pioneers and Drivers. Guardians value stability, and bring order and rigour. Integrators value connections and draw teams together. Pioneers value variety, the art of the possible and spark energy. Drivers value challenge and results, and generate momentum. But how do they react under stress?

The majority of survey respondents said they felt stressed only rarely (15 percent) to sometimes (57 percent). Overall, 25 percent said they're stressed often, and just three percent, almost always.

When we take a Business Chemistry lens to this we see something else; one third of Guardians and Integrators revealed they felt stressed often or always, compared to their Driver and Pioneer colleagues, where less than one quarter reported the same. Drivers and Pioneers said they work best under moderate to high levels of stress as opposed to the Guardians and Integrators who said the opposite.

We asked which situations people found stressful. Realising one had made an error caused stress for 82 percent of respondents, with around half the respondents reporting feeling stressed due to heavy workload, conflict, urgency, and face-to-face interactions. Although all Business Chemistry types reported feeling stressed about the same things, the study revealed that Guardians and Integrators found each of these instances to be more stressful than did Drivers and Pioneers.

The potential benefits of cognitive diversity such as sparking innovation and mitigating Groupthink have been known for a while, but under stressful working conditions are we losing out on these? What can we do to help reduce the impact of stress?

It's important to recognise that people respond differently to stress. A particular event may not feel stressful to you but a team member may feel differently. You may also want to remember that not everyone uses the same strategies for coping with stress. Knowing how others prefer to cope can help support each other when stress levels are high. And if you're a leader hoping to get the most from your team, you may want to consider how to reduce stress levels for those who feel less effective under such conditions, most notably Guardians and Integrators.

Understanding the differences between people is a powerful step for teams looking to improve their working relationships and team performance at any time, but particularly during periods of stress.

*study based on 23,000 professionals

For more information on Business Chemistry visit, www.deloitte.co.uk/businesschemistry



NEW MANAGER TAKES THE HELM AT HARDWICK

A County Durham hotel restaurant has enlisted one of the region's most respected restaurant managers to help steer it into the future.

Liam Fishburn is now heading up a new team at The Rib Room Steakhouse and Grill at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield.

His appointment comes as hotel owner Ramside Estates looks to raise the profile of the restaurant, which offers a selection of meat, fish and pasta dishes along with its famous speciality steaks.

Liam said: "To be here at Hardwick Hall as restaurant manager is great. I'm coming in armed with 15 years' experience in the industry and I believe I can really make a difference."



EX TIGER ON THE PROWL AT STACK

Ex Tiger Tiger manager Tania Woodhouse has recently been head-hunted by former boss Kevin Walker to head up Newcastle's latest exciting project, STACK.

Situated on Pilgrim Street, the container village of 52 shops, retail units and street food stands required a savvy, experienced team player to manage it and Kevin could think of nobody better to take on the role.

Kevin said: "Tania and I have worked together for many years now and she was my absolute first choice for the role. Thankfully we were able to persuade her that this was the right job for her and we're pleased to welcome her on board."



MUCKLE LLP APPOINTS NEW HR DIRECTOR

Nicola Leyden has joined North East-based Muckle LLP as its new HR director, with the aim to further develop its innovative workplace culture and drive forward its employee engagement.

Nicola, who lives in Boldon, joins Muckle from global digital partner marketing company Performance Horizon.

Nicola said: "This is a very exciting move for me. There are lots of amazing things already going on at Muckle and I've got lots of ideas about how we can embed our values further. I'm looking at maximising the benefits of agile working, continuing with our legal apprenticeships and taking a fresh approach to the equality and diversity agenda."



NEW APPOINTMENT FOR CAN COMMITTEE

Construction Alliance Northeast (CAN), an organisation established to represent over 500 regional SMEs in construction and civil engineering, welcomes Caroline Meehan from the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) to the committee.

Caroline previously worked in Australia where she founded award-winning charity Heartfelt Homes. Her recent career move brought her back to the UK where she joined the FMB as Northern Regional Director.

CAN and FMB have worked closely together in the past. Caroline joining the committee means that they can strengthen their relationship and continue to combat issues that their members face, particularly in relation to public sector procurement and fairer payment terms.



HIGHLY-RATED SPECIALIST NEURO LAWYER JOINS SINTONS

Kate Nickin has moved to Newcastle-based Sintons after ten years at Irwin Mitchell, where she successfully built a reputation for her work in neurotrauma and serious injury.

Kate joins Sintons as an associate and becomes the latest addition to the firm's growing neurotrauma team, which handles claims for people across the UK who have suffered life-changing injuries.

She said: "I've seen the fantastic work Sintons' neurotrauma team have been doing and without question they are now one of the market leaders in the North East. This is an exciting opportunity for me to be part of."



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MENTORS HOLD THE ANSWER TO FUTURE BUSINESS SUCCESS

The word entrepreneur conjures up the image of someone who is confident, determined and a calculated risk taker.

You might think that someone with these characteristics would find it difficult to accept the advice of others, but more and more leaders are turning to business mentors for regular support and guidance. After all, entrepreneurship thrives on innovation and many new ventures present fresh challenges for even the most experienced business people.

Having one of your peers to speak to, who has already walked the path you are on and benefitting from the lessons they have already learned can be the catalyst to overcoming a challenge, making a strategic plan or putting the building blocks in place for your future.

A trusted and respected person who has done it all before offers welcome clarity to help you find a clearer way forward.

The best mentoring relationships are based on mutual trust, allowing the mentee to own up to weak spots and knowledge gaps which need to be addressed.

A mentor must be impartial, supportive, consistent and act as a sounding board for those all-important ideas.

They should encourage new ways of thinking, provide advice on improving personal strengths, addressing weaknesses and developing new skills and knowledge. The process often has a strong and

positive motivational effect on both parties.

Dr David Cliff, winner of the Entrepreneurs' Forum Mentor of the Year award in 2017, recognises that the process can initially seem intimidating and uses his 35 years of experience to help people to make significant changes at a personal, business or organisational level.

One entrepreneur helped by Dr Cliff is John Savage who founded Flame Heating Group, one of the North East's fastest-growing businesses. Despite John's many years of experience and knowledge working within his industry, he found that he required extra help when it came to setting up his own business in 2011.

He readily acknowledges Dr Cliff's support as invaluable and says his guidance helped Flame grow, particularly in terms of the location and size of new branches. Dr Cliff also helped refine the way the company operates and tailored its five year plan.

"David's ongoing advice and guidance has been instrumental in shaping the way in which we do business and, on a personal level, he has helped with my own development." John Savage.

Dr Cliff also provided Flame with expert advice on alternative ways of raising finance and persuaded John to engage with various marketing and public relations companies. This allowed him to promote

Flame's key messages across numerous platforms and raise the company's profile.

Another North East entrepreneur who is supporting the next generation of businesses is Sarah Pittendrigh, who recently launched her own consultancy.

Sarah, who founded the award-winning Simply Bows and Chair Covers, has never forgotten the invaluable advice she received courtesy of the Entrepreneurs' Forum when establishing the business.

As a result of winning a Business Growth Award, she received ten sessions of free business mentoring. She recalled how vital it was in those early days to receive expert advice and have someone to brainstorm ideas with.

Sarah is now keen to pass on her own valuable experience which ranges from personal bankruptcy to setting up a business as a single mother to winning Most Promising Business in the United Kingdom in the British Chamber of Commerce Awards.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum offers a peer-to-peer mentoring programme to help its 300+ members, with more than 100 experienced business leaders willing to share their extensive experience with others.

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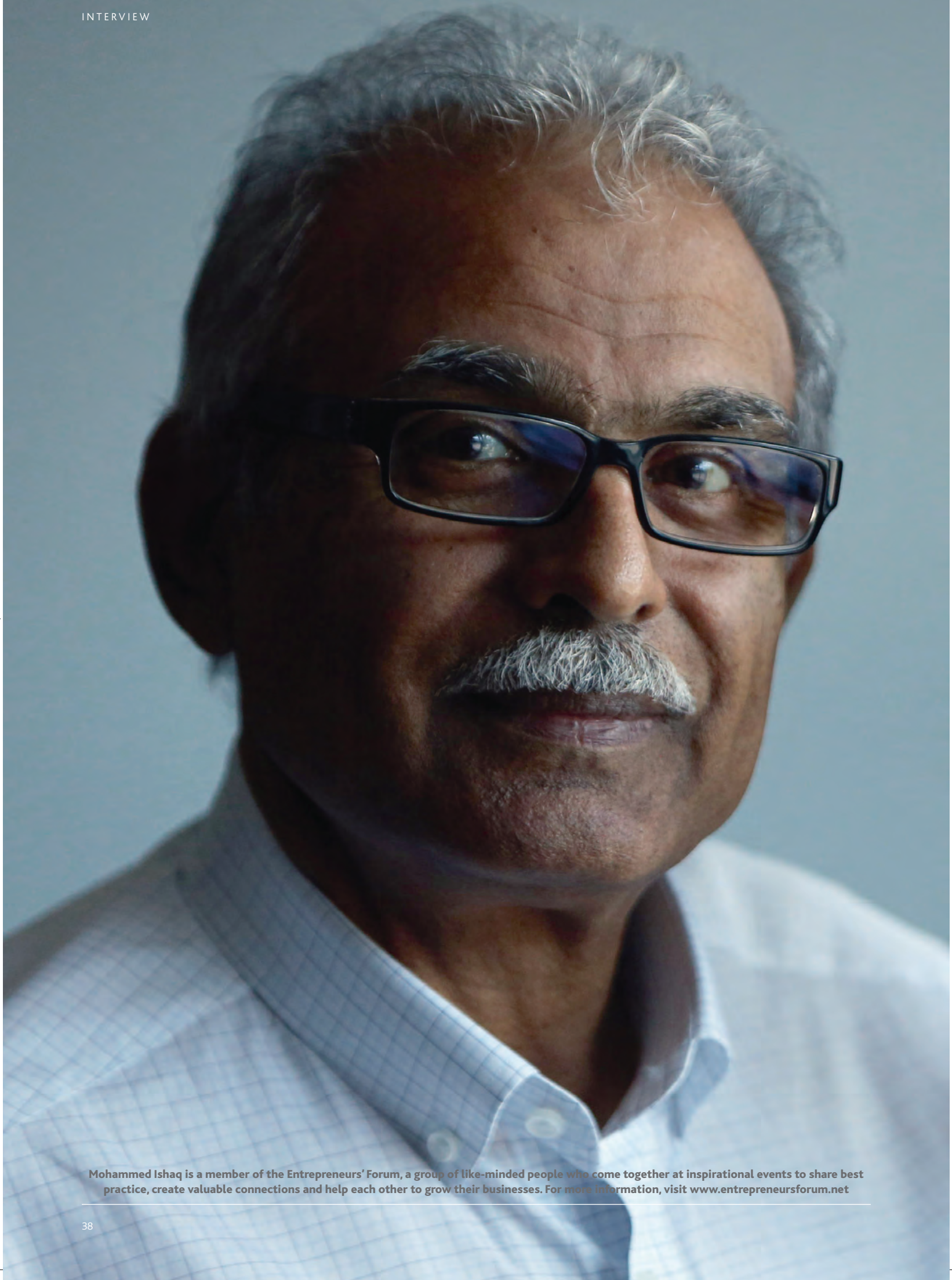
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Mohammed Ishaq is a member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, a group of like-minded people who come together at inspirational events to share best practice, create valuable connections and help each other to grow their businesses. For more information,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

An Entrepreneur Interview with...

MOHAMMED ISHAQ

Punjab Kitchen

Tell us about your background in business?

I attended John Marlay School in the Westerhope area of Newcastle but left during my first year of 'A' levels to help my father with his business. He had just bought a shop and was unable to cope on his own so I had to cut short my education.

After a good few years I got married to Yasmine and we set up our own retail business which we ran for 20 years until 1996.

I had a good grounding in business, firstly helping my father, then establishing my own business. Although this knowledge was very important, Punjab Kitchen was a whole new concept and I again had to learn as I went along.

We already had premises in the Team Valley Trading Estate fitted out for food production and at the time wondered how best we could use it.

What was the inspiration for Punjab Kitchen?

I used to play a lot of badminton and after hurting my back had to undergo an operation. As a Muslim, it was impossible to get any Halal food in hospital so Yasmine cooked my meals at home and brought them in.

As I lay in my hospital bed, I realised I had the right premises and could supply Halal food to hospitals in the area. At the time, it was a pioneering move.

It was a long process to earn the necessary NHS approvals but we got the go-ahead and then made up samples after researching how best we could improve hospital food. I then went from hospital to hospital to generate interest.

We established Punjab Kitchen in 1996 and initially had no customers and 10 staff. It was only through the good will of the bank that we were able to keep going.

My wife cooked the meals using recipes handed down from my mother. We began winning orders from hospitals around the North East and I was then able to travel further afield, to cities like Leeds and Manchester, to win more business. It was then that Punjab Kitchen began to make a little money.

In your own words describe what it is Punjab Kitchen does?

We have created a range of breakfasts, dinners and deserts catering for all dietary requirements. We began supplying Halal and ethnic meals but now produce a range of more than 600 meals to satisfy a wide variety of tastes and dietary requirements.

We cater for vegetarian and vegans and we also provide Kosher, gluten free, allergen aware and renal suitable meals together with energy dense and calorie restricted diets.

Punjab Kitchen also produces a range of texture modified meals for patients living with Dyspragia, or difficulty in swallowing. The natural ingredients are

pureed and reshaped to look like the real thing while remaining appetising and delicious.

As well as hospitals, we also supply meals to care homes, prisons, schools and a home delivery service for those unable to cook for themselves.

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

We have grown steadily year on year from the start in a competitive market place. We can attribute our growth to 'providing meals suitable for purpose' as well as being tasty and healthy.

As the business grew we moved to our present site in South Shields in 2001, investing over £800,000 in its refurbishment and expanding the production facility. At the time we had 24 employees in a 35,000 sq ft production area!

We now employ 100 people and have 85 per cent of the market supplying diet specific meals to the NHS. We sell around 130,000 meals a week into the NHS.

We are constantly listening to hospitals and patients and meeting any new gaps in the market whenever they arise. My son Yaqoob, who has a degree in medical microbiology, leads the New Product Development team and is always looking to develop fresh lines. We now supply meals to the whole of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

I was lucky enough to spot a niche in the market at the right time and we were able to come up with the right products.

What is Punjab Kitchen's USP?

We are a family company and the go-to firm for the public sector when it comes to the provision of meals for specialist diets. We provide the right nutrition in the appropriate form and are dedicated to providing a range of delicious, nourishing and wholesome meals to the very highest of standards.

Our standards were used by The British Dietetic Association to set the benchmark for other companies within the sector.

We have a dedicated and talented team building data profiles for diet specific meal solutions in NHS Hospitals. The data is used to implement and replace costly labour intensive processes in hospitals, enabling them to make savings.

What is the most important part of your business?

I'm very proud of creating our range of pureed food. I was visiting a hospital one day when I saw a patient being served 'gloop' on a ward while other neighbouring patients were eating 'normal' meals.

I asked about it and I was told that they blended meals for patients who had difficulty in swallowing. It looked awful, smelt awful and probably tasted awful.

Following six months of research we came up with our own version where the ingredients were pureed and reshaped to look like the real thing.

We took our ideas back to the hospitals and we quickly won orders and that range has grown phenomenally. It allows such patients to eat something suitable for their condition while still maintaining their dignity.

For many patients, mealtimes are the highlight of their day and it is important they receive food appropriate dietary needs which are tasty and inviting. Food plays such a vital part on the road to recovery and it is important to me that people enjoy their food while in hospital.

What are your proudest moments with Punjab Kitchen?

I think it has to be receiving an MBE in the Queen's Honours List for services to innovation and the economy in Tyne and Wear. I dedicated it to my mother because I have never forgotten that it was her recipes which made all this possible.

I'm also very proud to have blazed a trail in hospital catering and to have contributed to improving the lives and wellbeing of patients.

Do you live by a certain motto?

It's an old cliché but it must be 'The impossible we do at once, but miracles take a little longer'. That's how we run the business. We can turn an idea into reality in a matter of weeks rather than the months or years which it can take a corporate company to respond.

Is there a particular mistake you have made while in business?

Being in business for over 20 years, I certainly have made some mistakes but thankfully I haven't made any big mistakes. I always learn from my mistakes and am very careful not to repeat them.

I'm an old school businessman who secures new business first, beds it in before moving on to the next stage of expansion.

What are your future plans?

Our special diet section is our fastest growing line as there are many more elderly people requiring these types of products. Over the last couple of years we have introduced many new products such as pureed breakfasts and desserts – we also do pureed fish and chips, cheese on toast and beans on toast.

We continue to develop new meal ideas and new ranges and Punjab Kitchen always seeks to respond to fresh demands. It's been a lot of hard work but a very enjoyable journey

UNLOCKING GROWTH WITH INTERNAL RECRUITMENT DRIVE

BMC Recruitment Group is gearing up for a major internal recruitment drive to increase its technology division with a series of appointments that will support the growth of the business.

In less than three years, BMC Recruitment Group has achieved 100% growth, established working relationships with major clients, from home-grown SME's to multinational organisations, and seen its team grow from 2 to 15.

Heading up the technology division is principal consultant, Aqueel Ahmed, who joined BMC Recruitment Group in February 2018. Aqueel successfully expanded BMC's tech offer with a number of fruitful client projects and high profile placements across the tech sector.

Principal Consultant, Aqueel Ahmed explained: "We're at a significant turning point here at BMC – our priority for the remainder of the year will be to focus our efforts on developing and building upon our reputation in the industry as a leading provider in technology recruitment. This will be achieved by our internal recruitment strategy – with the addition of exceptional talent joining the team to support our clients."

Aqueel continued "BMC already plays an active role in supporting the technology community with the appointment of talented, skilled tech professionals across the marketplace. It's a very candidate-driven market, so we are looking for personable, high energy technology consultants who know

the market inside out to join us here at BMC Recruitment Group."

Situated in one of Newcastle's most prominent office buildings, Milburn House, BMC Technology, is working with and supporting a number of clients including: Partnerize (formerly Performance Horizon), Visualsoft, WhoCanFixMyCar.com, and

many more to fulfil the demand for premium tech talent.

Aqueel added: "As a fast-growing, innovative business it's essential that we recruit the right people internally to lead and develop our client offer – I'm looking for impressive, passionate individuals at all levels to join the business."



BMC Technology Principal Consultant, Aqueel Ahmed.

To submit your CV and to find out more about opportunities at BMC Recruitment Group, please email: aqueel.ahmed@bmcrecruitmentgroup.com

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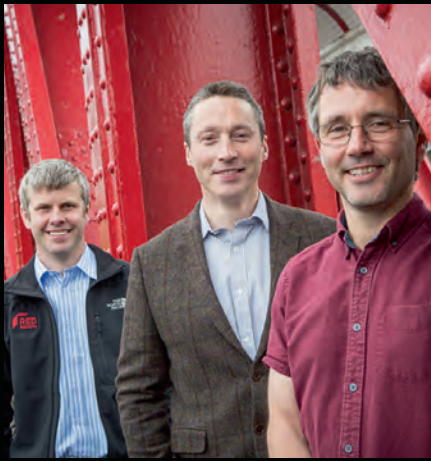
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NORTH EAST ENGINEERING FIRM EYES CONTINUED GROWTH

A Northumberland-based engineering specialist is marking 10 years in business and the completion of hundreds of projects with plans for further growth.

RED Engineering, which provides consultancy, equipment and testing services to the energy industries, has seen its workforce expand to 24 people.

Located in Hexham, and with a turnover of £3.5m, the firm has seen the completion of more than 300 contracts. Working closely with engineers from the likes of Sellafield, TechnipFMC and AVID Technology, the firm's presence has grown among sector leaders who operate in some of the most challenging environments in the world.

RED Engineering's approach has been recognised at a national level, securing a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Innovation, one of the highest honours that can be bestowed on a UK company.

Now, the company is expecting further growth as it looks to take its services to new clients, which includes building on recent gains in the nuclear decommissioning sector.



UTS ENGINEERING EMBRACES CAN-DO ATTITUDE OF TRIATHLETES

Jarrow-based UTS Engineering has further demonstrated its community credentials by sponsoring one of the UK's leading triathlons.

The fourth and final British Triathlon Age-Group Championship event of the 2018 season recently took place in Ashington at the Woodhorn Museum Triathlon, organised by V02 Max Racing Events.

Shaun Sadler, Managing Director of UTS Engineering, explained: "As a business we regularly work in very demanding and challenging environments. To do that, we need to employ a special breed of people, those who are resilient, show individual leadership and never give up. That is what attracted us to sponsor the event. There is so much to admire in the focus, dedication and can-do attitude of triathletes."

UTS Engineering is the leading supplier of pipework to the UK utilities sector. The last 12 months have seen a period of significant growth for UTS, including the opening of a 50,000 sq ft facility in Newport, Wales.



ARCINOVA STRENGTHENS TEAM WITH TWO NEW APPOINTMENTS

Multi-service Contract Research and Development Organisation Arcinova has boosted its expanding team with two key appointments.

Andrew Watson and Zoë Wright have joined the Alnwick-based firm as Isotope Labelling Chemists.

Arcinova provides both integrated end to end solutions and standalone services to pharmaceutical and biotech companies across the globe. It works across drug product manufacture, bioanalytical and metabolism services and synthesis of toxic/highly potent APIs.

Andrew graduated from the University of Leeds with a Master of Chemistry degree. He has held a number of post-doctorate research positions with the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and most recently at Cardiff University.

Zoë has joined Arcinova from The Scripps Research Institute in California where she completed a post-doctorate research on novel antiviral treatments for influenza. She has also completed a Master of Chemistry degree at the University of Oxford.

WASDELL GROUP INVESTS £500K INVESTMENT IN NEWCASTLE LAB

The Wasdell Group, a national company that provides a range of contract services to the life science industry, is investing £500k in its Newcastle facility to create a new laboratory and extend its service offering.

The 1,200 sq.ft lab is the latest addition to the company's manufacturing site on Newburn Riverside and will allow Wasdell to offer more services to pharmaceutical and veterinary drug makers.

The facility will attract new talent to the area, creating roles in analytical positions across quality

assurance and project management.

Daniel Tedham, Managing Director at Wasdell, said: "The latest investment is part of a strategy that ensures we continue to grow the number and quality of services we can offer to existing and new clients across the globe. Our Newcastle site is an important part of this strategy as the North East's pharmaceutical industry is thriving and will allow us to recruit excellent people."

This investment is the first phase of the company's expansion strategy to add to its laboratory capabilities.

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MARKETING AND THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Samantha Davidson, managing director of leading B2B marketing agency Horizon Works, talks us through how the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) will impact upon the way in which organisations market themselves.

We specialise in working with companies within complex industries such as manufacturing and engineering. It is these industries that are consistently at the forefront of technological change due to the high amount of machinery and processes that are involved within this space. Through years of experience of working within these industries, we can quickly grasp complex technologies, products and services and ensure that they are transformed into ideas that can be marketed effectively – nationally and globally. We strive to keep updated with the latest technologies and trends to help our clients stand out in an ever-changing market place.

It is estimated that in five to ten years' time we will be in the midst of the 4IR which will ultimately mean new and evolving technologies becoming more and more prominent within the B2B world. It will affect key attributes that are pivotal to business today; more machines will be doing work for us; new methods of communication will allow us to communicate faster and to a wider audience and an increasing amount of data and information will become available.

An example of technologies that will shape the 4IR are Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). VR is a great example of an emerging technological device that will impact upon the way in which we market and work. This was also heavily stressed during the 'Emerging Tech' series as part of The Great Exhibition of the North as an upcoming and key tactic. For example, if a client is bringing a new product to the market, VR is a strong technique to implement as it allows your customers to interact with your product in a much more personal and interactive way.

Modernising your brand will be critical to this future way of industry and devices such as VR will be key to helping you achieve this. Your brand is your business and should reflect who you are and your future ambitions. We encourage our clients to implement a range of upcoming and 'modern' marketing tactics such as video, animation and other visual and immersive devices. One of our core values is innovation and innovation will be key to the 4IR. Ensure that your business embraces change to successfully future proof your organisation and make sure that you are choosing the right

technologies that will work for your business.

Ultimately, the 4IR is a transition that many organisations should start preparing for now. For marketing to be effective, businesses will have to make sure they are reviving the way in which they market their products. It will become more about creating a story and experience for your customers through key methods such as VR and AI.

Horizon Works shares with its clients all the latest trends and insights within the complex industries and helps them to implement the latest techniques that will benefit the business and overall deliver marketing that is clear, connected and purposeful. Horizon Works has a diverse portfolio of clients including US-based AmeriWater, a premier provider of water treatment equipment, Cellular Solutions, a business communications and systems provider, The Expanded Metal Company, an expanded metal mesh manufacturer and Fera, which works across plant and bee health, crop protection, sustainable agriculture, food and feed quality, and chemical safety in the environment.

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

AKZONOBEL ASHINGTON CELEBRATES MILESTONE FIRST ANNIVERSARY



AkzoNobel's state-of-the-art manufacturing unit in Ashington, Northumberland.

They say that time flies when you're having fun, but it appears that the same is true when you're making paint. AkzoNobel is celebrating the first anniversary of the opening of its flagship manufacturing unit in Ashington.

The launch of the £100 million state-of-the-art facility in September 2017 was a significant milestone in AkzoNobel history. Designed to be the world's most advanced and sustainable paint factory, the Ashington site created 150 skilled jobs for local people and remains one of the largest investments AkzoNobel has ever made, anywhere in the world.

Boasting cutting-edge manufacturing technologies developed specifically for AkzoNobel, the site is capable of doubling the UK's current paint production levels to 200 million litres per year, the equivalent of 80 million 2.5 litre cans of Dulux, in up to 33,000 different colours.

Over the past 12 months, the site has been steadily increasing its production volumes, transferring products gradually from other AkzoNobel sites to become the new home of the company's Dulux megabrand in the UK.

Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel Ashington, said: "We can't believe how quickly the last year has gone! From day one, our priority has been to ensure that our customers continued to receive the high-quality products with which they were familiar while we transferred volume to Ashington from some of our other manufacturing units.

"By introducing product lines gradually, we have been able to achieve this and we are now comfortably producing an equivalent of 30 million litres per year with scope to increase this further by the end of 2018."

The site's production prowess saw AkzoNobel recognised with the top award in the Manufacturing

category at the North East Business Awards earlier in the year, as well as the Green Business Award at the 10th annual Northumberland Business Awards and the Sustainable Innovation Award from British Coatings Federation (BCF) in acknowledgement of the company's dedication to sustainable manufacturing practices. AkzoNobel's presence in the region however has always been about more than just paint.

From the moment that the diggers broke ground at the 100,000m² site, AkzoNobel has been on a mission to bring colour to people's lives.

Through its Smarter Spaces and Human Cities initiatives, AkzoNobel Ashington has donated over 500 litres of paint and raised more than £25,000 for various charitable organisations and community projects across the North East.

"The work we have carried out within the local community is something we are incredibly proud of," said Alex Wardle, site support coordinator at AkzoNobel Ashington.

"We are passionate about the local area, its people, places and history and from the outset, we wanted AkzoNobel to become an intrinsic part of that.

"By working together with local schools and community groups as well as dedicated charity partners such as the Nicole Rich Foundation and Northumberland National Park, we have been able to make a real difference to people's lives, either through fundraising activities or the donation of time and resources."

The company's efforts were recognised at the Tyneside and Northumberland regional heat of

the North East Business Awards with the Heart of the Community Award, only narrowly missing out on the top prize at the grand final to Keepmoat Homes.

Externally, AkzoNobel has enjoyed a stellar year of award wins, but the same is also true within the factory. The company prides itself on maintaining staff engagement rates and promotes a culture of colour within all of its manufacturing units. In late 2017, this dedication was rewarded with Gold-level Investors in People (IIP) status, an outstanding achievement for any new site or business. In addition to this, following 12 months of campaigning and various staff-led activities, the site was also recognised with Silver Better Health at Work status.

Looking to the future, AkzoNobel's key priorities are very much focused on increasing its production volumes still further while also maintaining its position as an outstanding employer and contributor to the local community.

"Our first year in business has been so spectacular, it might be hard to top it!" Jeff Hope added.

"First and foremost, as a manufacturing site, our focus is on the safety of our team and our visitors. We're also driven to increase our production volumes and producing the best quality products for our customers, but keeping up the good work that we have already started within the local community and the factory itself to keep staff morale high, is also of great importance to us.

"We are incredibly excited about the future at AkzoNobel Ashington and we can't wait to see what the rest of 2018 and 2019 brings."

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



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SEAN McCANN & NORTHERN GAS AND POWER LTD

A company's culture, particularly during its early years, is inevitably tied to the personality, background, and values of its founder or founders, as well as their vision for the future of the organization and Northern Gas & Power is no different. Culture is so hard to change once it has been established: It is shaped in the early days of a company's history. When Sean joined NGP, he was determined to set realistic goals for the company, and organise the structure set-up. He was determined to work with the Directors to find the solution to developing a sound and convincing method of creating an energy management consultancy and procurement specialist that combines a global reach and buying power with a local attention to detail from all of our team.

The core values we have instilled in Northern Gas and Power can still be observed in the current company's devotion to being number one in the country and making a real difference to the environment. Sean explains, "The energy market in this day and age has become so competitive, as energy becomes more and more crucial to the everyday running of businesses large and small.

Our bureau services have been developed so that we are able to look after the details so that our clients can focus more resources on their core business operations.

We want our clients to be able to work in partnership with us to reduce energy consumption and their carbon footprint. Helping to bring energy costs, use, and management under ultimate control. We want to make an unexpected and significant difference to businesses as a whole. As a market leading consultancy in energy, that's exactly what we're in business to deliver".

After starting in a small office in South Shields, and dealing with smaller companies, since 2015 we have procured over 11,476,607,093 KWh and saved our clients over £173,457,588.662. With intelligent procurement and reduction of energy usage, we are making a huge difference.

We are now a global force to be reckoned with. I am extremely proud of our team's achievements to date, and for our Energy Management System having been short-listed for Product of the year at the National Energy Efficiency Awards. 2018 is going to be our biggest year to date and we have so many exciting events on the horizon. We consider our team as family, and family come first. On the 16/08/2018 we were voted by Glassdoor the highest rated company to work for "work/life balance 2018". This is an insight into how we value our team, and the incentives we constantly put into place will continue.

“

Our integrity has been the driving force behind our success.

”





Lynn Beasley, managing director, Washington Direct Mail



'TRUE GRIT'

There have been many challenges on the road to building one of the North East's leading independent mailing houses and each has been met head on and overcome by Lynn Beasley and her team.

Washington Direct Mail was established in 1983 when a Tyneside print company was encouraged by its biggest client, Renault, to provide a dedicated mailing facility. Lynn's mother was one of the people involved in its formation and such was her workload that Lynn would give her a helping hand at home in the evenings.

After a short time she was encouraged to join the business full time and her first task was to input data for one of the company's biggest clients, Myson Heating.

"I very quickly became fascinated with the whole aspect of direct mail and the potential of the business. In particular, I loved working with Renault, a huge, dynamic business that understood the power of direct mail. We looked after 300 dealerships, coordinated customer satisfaction surveys and at one stage managed vehicle safety recalls for 170,000 vehicles. It was demanding work but very exciting to provide a specialist service to an international brand.

"Then, in 1994, the managing director informed me that he was close to selling the business to an interested party. I had put so much effort into building it that I could not bear to see it go to a third party. So, along with a colleague, we met the asking price and took on the ownership. It all happened very quickly and there was no time to take it all in as our contract with Renault was shortly to end and that represented 65% of the business. We had to replace it with 100 smaller customers just to maintain the income that we were about to lose. It was tremendously hard work but with sheer determination and drive we got there."

On more than one occasion Lynn was advised that the only realistic option was to close the business. Today, with over 300 clients and a robust expansion plan in place that includes investment in world class

technology and high quality people, Lynn can reflect with pride on the tenacity that she has always demonstrated when the chips were down.

"I come from hard working, resilient Tyneside stock and we would never allow ourselves to give in on anything that really matters to us.

"There are many, many business people like myself that have dug their heels in and battled it out. Despite how tough things were at times, if you cling in there is always hope. Business opportunities manifest themselves in the strangest ways and you can suddenly find that from rock bottom you see a chink of light and you are on your way again.

"That said, no matter how strong we are, each of us needs someone to look to for reassurance. My husband John, has been at my side every step of the way, offering guidance and support, especially through the more difficult times. I think he's put in more hours than me over the years, working all weekend to fix one machine or another, so it's up and running for Monday morning."

Washington Direct Mail, is now very much a family owned business that employs 30 staff, amongst whom are Lynn's two sons and fellow directors, Jon and David. Jon's wife, Rachael, is business development manager.

The company provides a full range of print and mailing services such as personalised direct mail, litho and variable digital printing, data cleansing, fulfilment, dispatch and response handling.

"Jon and David have introduced impetus and new vision to the business and we are supported by a wonderful, dedicated staff that have a can-do attitude to every challenge that comes their way. To see them

come together as a highly supportive team when we are under pressure gives me great pride."

While, like so many other businesses, Washington Direct Mail has challenges to face, the focus these days is very much on taking advantage of new opportunities for growth. In the last 12 months the company has grown by 50% and is looking to end its financial year with a turnover well in excess of £3million.

"If you stand still in this industry you fall by the wayside. The world is getting faster and faster, so the key is to invest in adaptable technology and adaptable people. That way you have confidence that whatever changes in the business environment, you'll have the best possible chance of dealing with it and turning it to your advantage."

The company has also invested £250,000 in digital printing and envelope enclosing technology and processes to become one of the very few companies in the UK to achieve ISO27001 certification for data privacy and protection. Very unusually for an SME, it has also been certified to ISO9001 (quality management), ISO14001 (environmental management) and ISO18001 (Occupational health and safety).

"Business success for me is not about accumulating wealth, it is about achievement, honesty and reputation. By using these as our guiding principles we automatically put in place good business practices. Having four ISO certifications is witness to that as is the fact that we have a very loyal and dedicated workforce. The same principles reach out from the business and help us to attract highly talented people looking to take up a fresh challenge by working in an encouraging environment where they can make a real impact."





GIVING A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Simon Weston, War Veteran, meets Mother & Toddler Group.

Earlier this month St Martins Care saw a visit from Simon Weston to open their new head office in Cramlington and visit their Parent and toddler group at one of their local care homes first hand to see the impact it is having on residents.

Simon Weston, who is a huge supporter of the principles and ethics demonstrated by St Martins Care, visited to open the new head office based in Cramlington. The office was officially opened on the 18th August with more space for training and focus meetings to improve the care offering for the residents across the whole of the business.

Simon moved on to Park View Care Home, Forest Hall, which is one of the six homes in the group which specialises in residential, dementia and respite care. One of the innovative introductions to the home in the past year is their popular Parent and Toddler group, where ages range from new born to walkers. The group is held every Wednesday morning where residents are able to interact with the children in different ways. The group has been a welcome addition to the local area but most importantly to us with residents and their families in that, they have seen improvements in resident's interaction and happiness. Simon was amazed at some of the stories he was told by parents about the impact the group was having and thought this was a great idea of something different to do with their children.

Finally, he was visited by Age UK war veterans where he enjoyed a drink with him in the garden and swapped stories of past experiences,

before retiring upstairs to another new at the care home, 'The Waggon Way Pub', a social space where residents can enjoy a drink with one another. Simon welcomed being able to officially open the drinking hole and being the first to enjoy a glass of fizz and some nibbles whilst mingling with residents and veterans for the afternoon.

Simon Weston said 'St Martins is always improving its offering for the residents and staff alike, and always has a positive feeling whenever I've visited'.

About SMC Group

SMC Group operates six care homes employing over 400 caring staff across the North East under the St Martins Care brand providing care and support to older people with complex and enduring health needs.

We're committed to delivering truly person-centred residential care. To achieve this, we focus on really getting to know the people we support – their life-story, what is important to them and their personal aspirations. With our excellent facilities, wide range of activities and commitment to providing our residents with the highest standards, we will offer them the very best in residential care.

To find out more about St. Martins Care call: xxx xxx xxx



PROSECCO BAR ADDS TOUCH OF LUXURY TO HISTORIC CASTLE

With one of the best UK summers on record this year, outdoor dining has never been so popular, and the younger generation has only enhanced restaurateurs' desire to create new roof top bars, pavement seating and beer gardens.

One of our latest projects saw us work with Levy Leisure UK to create a new moveable Prosecco bar within the historic grounds of Hever Castle.

We worked in partnership with Levy Leisure to create a bespoke solution. We completely transformed a storage unit into a flexible counter, allowing the moveable bar to be locked away for

safe storage. The new bar not only enhances the customer experience but also provides an elegant addition to the Loggia terrace overlooking the lake in the Italian Garden.

Neil Addyman, Director at RDA, said: "For the design of the bar, our team created an old English, traditional look and feel in keeping with the Castle's

heritage. A copper roof and marble add an element of luxury while the deep tones bring an ambient bar atmosphere."

Rak Kalidas, strategic director, Levy Leisure UK said: "It's been a pleasure working in collaboration with RDA. The Prosecco Bar is a fantastic addition to the guest experience."



To find out how RDA can help with your next catering project please call 0844 873 4993 or visit our website www.rdalimited.co.uk

KEY APPOINTMENTS AT NORTHUMBERLAND-BASED TRENCH NETWORKS

A Northumberland-based internet solutions provider is preparing its business for future growth with a number of key appointments.

Trench Networks, which specialises in bespoke connectivity services for the construction industry, has launched its recruitment drive as the company approaches its third anniversary. The bolstered team will enable Trench Networks to service the further growth of the business and better serve the needs of its existing clients.

Kevin West is Trench Networks' new field service engineer. Having previously worked for multi-national construction firm, Carillion, Kevin is an experienced site engineer and will be responsible for the installation and maintenance of Trench Networks' systems on customer sites and will also provide IT support and technical assistance.

"I'm delighted to have joined the team at Trench Networks," Kevin said.

"It's a young, dynamic company to work for and I'm really enjoying learning about what they do and how they build their Outpost product from scratch, install it on sites and see it deliver results for clients."

Luke Davison is the team's new apprentice. Luke will shadow the rest of the team to build up work experience while studying to complete his Level 3 Infrastructure Technician training through Newton Aycliffe-based Baltic Training. Once fully qualified, Luke will provide first-line support to Trench Networks' clients in his role as junior systems analyst.

"To be able to work alongside the team at Trench Networks as part of my apprenticeship is fantastic," Luke said.

"The technical knowledge and hands-on experience that I will gain will stand me in very good stead for my future in the IT sector and I'm keen to learn as much as I can from Kevin and the team as I progress through my training."

Claire Hollyman, operations director at Trench Networks, added: "This is a really

exciting time for the business.

"Since establishing the business in 2015, we have brought our 'Outpost' product to the market and attracted several blue chip clients including a number of prominent housebuilders, civil engineering companies, utilities and commercial contractors across the North East.

"To have grown the business organically to a point where we can create sustainable jobs for good people is a real achievement and we are delighted to have Kevin and Luke on board."



(L to R): Claire Hollyman, Kevin West, Kevin Latimer and Luke Davison of Trench Networks pictured with their Outpost product.

To find out more about Trench Networks' products and services, call 0333 101 4101 or visit www.trenchnetworks.com.

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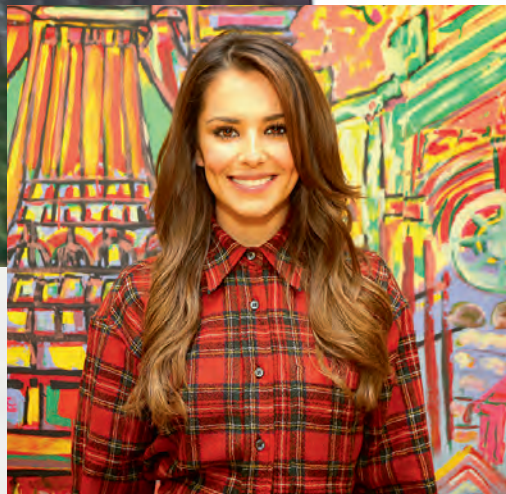
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Want to get your message across? Check out Simons varied work on the Crest Photography Facebook page and feel free to call him on 07889 532545 or send an email to simon@crestphotography.co.uk



CREST PHOTOGRAPHY

CREATING WORDS WITH PICTURES

We'd guess that you've heard the proverb, "A picture paints a thousand words." Loads of folk have claimed credit for its origination, but there's no doubting that it really is true.

A cracking photograph instantly gives colour to any story and frequently makes words obsolete. However, creating that cracking photograph isn't down to good luck.

Here's something you can try. The next time you spot or happen to be working with a professional photographer, go and stand next to them with your own camera or smart phone. Take a shot of the same view at the same time. We can guarantee that their photo will hit the nail on the head and create exactly the right image to 'sell' the story.

And that's where over 35 years of experience behind the lens makes Simon Williams stand out from the crowd. He has the eye and can create some magic from a seemingly mundane story.

He set up Crest Photography, based in Northumberland but working throughout the North East and frequently throughout the rest of the country in 1995. All of the clients Simon began working with in 1995 still use his services today. They plainly

like the way he works and the sort of photographs he produces.

"I guess I've developed a style over the years and I never cease to be amazed at how many people can recognise my work," said Simon. "I'm lucky that I've had some private sittings with Prince Charles and have another coming up this month. I've also had private sittings with two Prime Ministers. I spent several days working Richard Branson and I've also worked with a host of personalities such as Sting, Cheryl Cole, Ant and Dec etc."

To be honest, if there's an official opening in the North East or a ceremonial visit featuring anyone from the Royal family or a well-known VIP, Simon will be there.

Simon's forté at Crest Photography is making stories 'work'.

"I see my role as bringing a story to life and helping a person, company or organisation get their message across. Although I frequently do architectural/Industrial work, the majority of my work revolves around Public Relations. PR jobs invariably involve

photographing a chairman, unveiling a new product, introducing new staff or breaking some good news. Initially, the story can seem rather dry, but with a bit of imagination, and putting years of experience to good use, I can produce a photograph which helps provide some colour, some fun or perhaps helps explain something which is quite complicated."

It's always interesting to see Simon in operation because he invariably asks the client two questions. First, what is the message they're trying to get across, and secondly, where would they like it to appear? He will take photographs differently to make them appeal to different outlets.

"There is a difference to taking a photograph which is destined for a magazine cover to one that is going into the business section of a newspaper. Thankfully, I know all of the magazines and newspapers and can gauge exactly what they will be looking for and, more importantly, what they will use."

In other words, Simon knows what works.





Ammar Mirza

TRANSFORMING BRAIN DRAIN IN TO BRAIN GAIN

According to research humans get distracted 47% of the time!

So our mind wanders nigh on half of the time we spend doing anything or listening to anyone. And this was all before you introduce smart phones or the internet into the mix.

The last few weeks I have had almost a constant furrow in my brow from the unimaginable amount of work I have on, constantly juggling 20 odd projects, all with competing deadlines and priorities. However, upon reflection this is probably only 1 more than the usual 19 projects I have to contend with, so why have I felt as if my brain is frazzled on an evening.

One of the reasons is that I had a wonderful holiday with my five year old in Portugal where I had to switch off and reconnect with my inner-youth. Upon getting back after this mini break I got withdrawal symptoms of not spending time with him as he went off to Liverpool to spend a week with my outlaws.

However, one afternoon I returned home early, after wasting a few hours waiting for a BT Engineer

not to arrive, the intercom rang. Now it is quite unusual for me to be at home during the day or for someone to ring the buzzer unannounced. I answered and this young plucky voice announced he was Steven and he was an ex-offender on a sales course and was selling some items.

I opened the gate and this tall young scruffy looking boy came up the path. Inviting him in, he seemed slightly unsure, I gave him a drink whilst I listened to his story. He told me he had been sentenced to 3 years for hitting his sister's abusive boyfriend and had been recently released after 18 months. He enjoyed boxing but his offending meant he was precluded and now wanted to join the Army.

Steven was genuinely sorry for committing the offence and didn't really have an excuse for getting into trouble as both of his parents were well to do with respectable positions. In fact his father had been in the Army. We looked through Steven's items and I bought 3 items for far more than I could pick them up at the pound shop, although by doing so he got a free driving lesson. I agreed to

connect him with the Army and encouraged him to remain focused, disciplined, and concentrate on the bigger picture. He now had a plan and was disciplined on achieving it regardless of the steps involved in doing so.

Now this isn't a story of a good deed on my part, but more that we can get distracted with focusing on the tasks in hand rather than the impact they have or our longer term ambitions. The vast majority of time I do what I enjoy, and enjoy what I do and I have a routine. Meeting Steven helped me re-establish my connection with the impact of my projects, rather than being caught up in movement as opposed to momentum.

By focusing on the positives in life and realising progress the Brian Drain that I felt had turned into a Brain Gain making me feel better already. I now need to spend the weekend with the family to get my mojo back. We have agreed to disconnect from our phones. Now where was I before I got distracted and started writing this blog...

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.



SELL-OUT ABC ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

in association with

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Thursday 20th September 7pm at The County Hotel, Newcastle, NE1 5DF

INDEPENDENT AWARD (BREWIN DOLPHIN)

Nadeem Shah - Health Hut Pharmacy, Morpeth, Northumberland
 Sabrina Din - Teacher, Time Day Care Nurseries, Middlesborough & Stockton-on-Tees
 Salim Saddique - Raj Bari Indian Restaurant, Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees

ARTS & CULTURE AWARD (NEWCASTLE COLLEGE)

Nadia Iftkhar - Artistic Director, Company of Others
 Shahbaz Hussain - Tabla Teacher/Maestro
 Tahmina Begum - Tahmina Arts

PUBLIC SECTOR AWARD (UNISON)

Asma Shaffi - Deputy Principal & Head of Centre, Prior Pursglove College, Guisborough
 Ben Banerjee, Lt Col. - Deputy Commander South (Reserves)
 Paramjeet Bhogal - Newcastle City Council

PROFESSIONAL AWARD (NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL)

Dr. Karen Naru - Consultant Anaesthetist
 Liaquat Ali - Latif Solicitors
 Prof. Sugata Mitra - Prof. & Principal Research Investigator, Newcastle University

BUSINESS AWARD (NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY)

Behroz Beni - Managing Director, Prima Cheese Ltd
 Mrs. Kay Hussain - MD Piramal Healthcare, UK Ltd. Morpeth
 Mohammed Ishaq - Managing Director, Punjab Kitchen Ltd.

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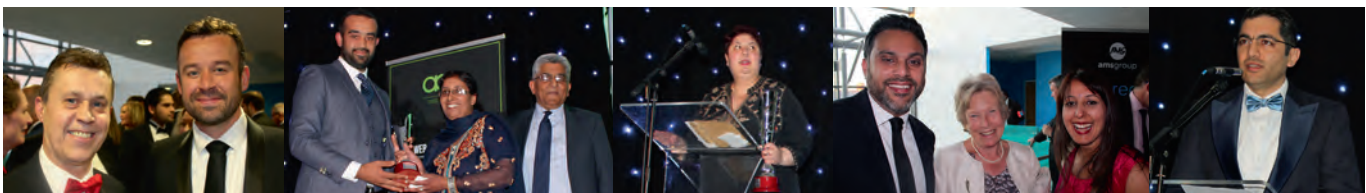
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MOTIVATED STAFF MAKE FOR PRODUCTIVE BUSINESS



Gateshead College was recently named the Best Place to Work in the North East but what does that really mean for its staff? Maths teacher Sands Dobson gives an insight into what lies behind this prestigious title.

It's well known that happy staff make for a productive workforce but many companies can forget this. Winning awards is great and gives us all an incredible boost and something to be proud of. But it's just a moment in time. It's the other 364 days of the year that need to count too and I can honestly say that every day I get up and look forward to work, which I think is extremely important. We spend such a high proportion of our lives at work and if employees dread turning up, they won't stay in the job or if they do, they won't be productive.

Working in such a supportive environment has worked wonders for staff and students at the college. The supportive, open door policy comes from the leadership of our principal, Judith Doyle CBE, and permeates our entire staff structure. This in turn is clearly reflected in our outstanding student results and positive feedback.

Recognising and rewarding staff for their achievements is a quick and simple way of making staff feel valued and something that Gateshead College continually does. Just recently I received the innovation in teaching and learning award, voted for by my colleagues, which was truly humbling! Recognising employees not only incentivises them;

it gives them a real boost throughout their careers.

The college is honestly like a second home to me. They invest in the personal development of all of their employees, which acts as a huge incentive for them. Teachers are given the opportunity to tailor their own training and development to areas in which they're interested. I'm keen to learn British Sign Language and could clearly articulate the strengths and benefits of this training for the college, so they were only too happy to let me pursue this.

When we're away from the college, we can't wait to get back to teaching and influencing students. Our end of year conference was so interactive and down to earth; the college made every effort to make everyone feel welcome. Little touches like buying ice cream to cool us in the blistering heat had us in extremely high spirits and looking forward to what our next term would bring.

Another thing the college does is encourage peer to peer feedback; we do this by sitting in on each other's lessons and we're tasked with finding three positives and one area they could potentially improve upon. It could feel quite uncomfortable giving feedback to colleagues, but we've managed

to create a supportive environment where we have a great network of support that runs throughout the year.

New ideas are also regularly welcomed which helps you feel motivated when you see them in action. I recently tabled an idea to communicate more with our students and their parents to help them understand what we were teaching in the classroom. Many people find maths daunting, so this is a way of building bridges and helping them overcome the fear factor so they can then offer support at home with homework and projects.

I'm also a proud member of our Knit and Natter club, a lunchtime club where staff come together to knit, chat and chill out which is part of the college's mental health programme. I'm a complete beginner but have really enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people, learn a new skill and do something different with my free time.

Businesses that focus on the health and well-being of their staff, and their personal development, are generally respected and valued by their employees. The culture at Gateshead College is one that breeds enjoyment and success – and that can only be good for business.

www.gateshead.ac.uk

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We would like to show you around our newly refurbished centre on the 3rd September between 10-2pm. Please drop in and have an informal chat with one of our centre experts and see what we can do for you.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

BRYONY GIBSON

Managing Director of Bryony Gibson Consulting

What time does your alarm go off?

I wake up just after 6am and three days a week go straight to a spinning class. On the other days I head out for a walk with my dog, Buddy.

Do you work in an office or from home?

Recruitment isn't a 9 to 5 job, so as long as I have my laptop and phone I can - and usually do - work from anywhere. I'm often out at appointments and use my time 'on the road' wisely to make and take a lot of calls. Early morning on a weekend it wouldn't be unusual to find me working poolside at Freeman Quay in Durham, while my son is swimming; you just have to be flexible!

What's your first task when arriving at work?

E-mails, it's always my e-mails! Then I begin working through my to-do list. I cannot finish my day without making a list of priorities for the next morning. If you're busy, you can't underestimate how important it is to be organised.

What does a typical day entail?

Although the fundamentals of recruitment remain the same, every job is different and needs to be approached individually. That means my days are a real mixture of speaking or meeting with employers about vacancies, writing job specs and adverts for clients, posting on social media, interviewing and offering career advice to people looking for new opportunities, arranging and prepping candidates for interviews, relaying and negotiating job offers, organising start dates, the list goes on. Happily, no two days are ever the same.

Where's your favourite spot for a business meeting?

I have to be a little discreet when meeting people, as they don't always want to be seen having a coffee with me, so I can't give too many of my hideaways up! The North East has a huge number of amazing venues however and I try to be as flexible as possible when meeting people, so it's as convenient as it can be for them.

What's the one piece of kit you couldn't live without?

If you asked my children they would probably say my phone, but I would say the piece of kit I need most is my laptop. Last time I bought a new one I converted from Windows to a MacBook Pro and wish I'd done it years earlier. It's so much faster and easier to use. I really couldn't live without it!

When's your favourite time of the day?

I like the simple pleasures in life, so time with all my family before the children go to bed can be special. Also walking the dog as the sun rises and before anyone else is about is always a fabulous way to start a day.

Do you find it easy to maintain work/life balance?

I would love to be able to say yes, but the reality is no. To be honest, I'm not even sure work/life balance is relevant when you're a mum who runs their own business in a service sector. I think it's much more about striving for a positive 'work/life integration' which I do much better at. It's normal for me to be working well outside of core hours, so you can never completely switch off, but I do give myself flexibility when I need it, especially around my family.

How important is social media to your daily life?

It's very important, as it gives us all our own channels of communication, but it is only one of many tools we need to use. Working in recruitment means you need to be able to appeal to a cross section of people and reach every demographic, geographic and socio-economic group, so you need to use a lot of different methods.

How do you find time to work on your business as opposed to in it?

I have quarterly and annual goals and each month try to find time to take stock of what has been achieved, so I can identify what still needs to be done to reach what I set out to do. This is often difficult however, when you work on your own, which is why I try to attend a couple of networking events each month, such as with the Entrepreneurs' Forum. They to me are invaluable self-indulgent days where I can take time out to focus on business strategy.

What do you get up to after hours?

When I'm not working I spend a lot of time at my children's many clubs - like me they live pretty full-on lives, so relaxing in front of the TV is rare. I love to exercise and go to Pilates. Walking my Labrador is a daily pleasure and at the weekend it's all about spending time at home with my family, or maybe popping out with the girls to go shopping or for a meal!



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

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYMENT STATUS WITHIN A BUSINESS



When it comes to employment status within any business, it's essential that both the individual and their employer are familiar with the various categories and that it is determined correctly.

Employment status is the foundation of employment protections in the UK and affects the taxes that an individual and their employer pay. Here, Paul Lott of Hadrian HR addresses how employment statuses are defined, and where the lines between them are drawn.

Where does employment status currently stand?

There are currently three categories of workers in employment law; employee, worker and self-employed. In the alternative, for tax purposes individuals are generally classed as either employees or self-employed, without a third category of classification available.

It is therefore possible that an individual may be confident as to their employment status for the purpose of employment law rights but not for tax status, and that confusion and uncertainty may arise as a consequence.

The question of employment status is currently not clearly set out in legislation, relying instead on guidance supplied by case law, and where there is a dispute, it is the responsibility of different courts, for example Employment Tribunals and Tax Tribunals, to determine the status for the purpose of employment rights, although even these decisions can be subject to appeal.

What are the three tests for determining employment status?

- 1. Mutuality of obligation – this is the legal requirement for employers to provide work, or to pay for work done, and the individual's obligation to perform that work.
- 2. Control – whether control, or the right to control, exists over the individual.
- 3. Personal service – whether the individual is obliged to personally provide their services.

The courts will also consider other criteria relevant to the individual case, and make a decision based on the overall picture and the reality of the working relationship.

What does the future hold for employment law?

A recent consultation document produced by the Government in response to the independent Matthew Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices discussed different ways that employment status could be simplified. These include:

- Issuing more guidance on the current rules.
- Attempting to 'codify' (enshrine) all case law in primary legislation.
- Drafting new primary legislation incorporating

the 'main principles' of case law, although those principles would need to be determined and additional factors may be required in an attempt to make the assessment more reliable, consistent and accurate.

The consultation document also explores the potential for developing a formal test to establish the employment status of the individual, and the possibility that there should be alignment between employment rights and tax. It is argued that conflicting employment law and tax case law decisions means that clarity on employment status will only be achieved when employment law and tax rules are aligned.

Following the closure of the consultation period on 01 June 2018, we wait with interest to see whether any of the changes that are proposed are implemented and provide the clarity that is suggested they could achieve.

Hadrian HR is an employment advisory team with specialist knowledge in both employment law and human resource management. Its team of specialists are on hand to provide advice on creating an equal environment for employees, with consultancy advice ranging from one off contracts to a full audit of current policies and provision of customised contracts and handbooks.



Michelle Rainbow

NORTH EAST CHOSEN TO LEAD THE WAY WITH NEW CAREERS HUB

North East LEP Skills Director Michelle Rainbow explains how a new initiative will transform careers guidance for the next generation.

We recently received the news that the North East has been selected to host a prestigious Careers Hub dedicated to improving careers education for young people.

This is fantastic news for the region and for our young people; this achievement is an important milestone on the road to giving every child access to the very best careers education.

The 'North East Ambition: Careers Hub' will support schools and colleges in the North East to implement and achieve the eight Gatsby Career Benchmarks – the clearly defined framework for 'Good Career Guidance' which was successfully piloted in schools in the North East before being rolled out across the country as part of the Government's Careers Strategy.

We'll be delivering the new Hub in partnership with colleagues at The Careers & Enterprise Company and this North East Hub will be a national leader, supporting 20 other Hubs nationwide to deliver the Gatsby Career Benchmarks in schools and colleges across the country.

Here in the North East, the Hub will comprise of 40 secondary schools with a separate Hub servicing

10 colleges, including all nine Further Education colleges in the North East and one sixth form college.

Schools and colleges enrolled in the Hubs will work with universities, training providers, employers and career professionals to improve careers education. They will be supported by a Hub Lead and Enterprise Coordinators who will help coordinate activity and build networks. They will also be able to access a Central Hub Fund, equivalent to around £1k per school or college, with additional support available, including access to training for career leaders and enhanced employer encounters.

Not only will our region be home to the lead Hub nationally, but the North East is the only region in England to host a dedicated Hub for colleges.

Like the Gatsby Careers Benchmarks, these Careers Hubs form a central part of the Government's Careers Strategy which was published in December and it's a recognition of our track record of working with schools and colleges to deliver outstanding careers guidance that the North East has been chosen as the location for the lead Hub.

Both Hubs will be intrinsic to the North East LEP's

skills initiative, North East Ambition, through which we aim to make sure that each and every student in the region is given access to high quality careers education, and that all secondary schools and colleges in the region are achieving the Gatsby Career Benchmarks by 2024.

The potential of the North East Ambition: Careers Hub to have a positive impact on the lives and future careers of young people is huge. We're not only working to secure a skilled workforce to take the North East economy into a bright future, we're also working to make a real change to the lives and prospects of young people who are currently learning and preparing for their future careers.

The North East Ambition: Careers Hub will go live in September and will build on what we have already achieved through the North East pilot of the Gatsby Career Benchmarks.

We have great support from the schools, colleges, universities, training providers and employers in the region and I'm confident that we can work together to make a real difference to the prospects of young people here in the North East.

Find out more about the North East Ambition: Careers Hub at www.nelep.co.uk

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

How many times have you heard one of your employees tell you about yet another App or piece of software that will help with some minutiae part of your sales process?

But if you're not careful you can end up adding unnecessary complexity into your organisation which rather than streamline process and increasing productivity, could create confusion, communication overwhelm, double-handling and ultimately increase the cost of your sale.

Are your team being bombarded by multiple communication channels? Are they required to check email, check your CRM, review an internal WhatsApp group or Slack feed, check their calendars, check their tasks on Reclaro, Asana, Trello or Basecamp AND review some other platform of customer stats before they can make any decisions about what to focus on first?

All of these Apps and software (and lots of other examples like them) can be extremely useful and drastically improve your team's output but used without any guidance can create overwhelm and paralysis.

Try this: ask your team to write down ALL of the pieces of software they use over the course of a single day – I suspect it's three times more than you first think.

So how do you decide what are the right Apps and software to help support your business effort?

Before you can even contemplate answering that, my answer to business owners is always the same. 'Don't even think about that until you've completed the steps below.'

1. Map your entire customer journey FIRST. (A blank wall and lots of post-its is a good place to start.)
2. Then decide what functionality you need from your software to support your customer journey. (This is where doing some research into what's available on the today's market may help. Let's face it, you don't know what you don't know



Nicola Cook. CEO of Company Shortcuts.

and you could find some useful functionality. However, be wary of over-engineering. Simple is always best.)

However, be warned...don't fall into the trap of fitting your process, around a software's template. Any software you introduce, should fit around your customer's journey, which is why you should always map it first.

3. Complete a full market review. (Do a side by side comparison. Which software will give you the best ROI in the simplest possible process with the widest functionality of all of those on your shortlist?)
4. Aim to have as much of your end-to-end customer journey managed within one main system, supported by the least amount of Apps bolted-on. (The smaller the number of interfaces, the less the chances of integration issues.)

And finally ...

Ensure your software is mobile friendly. It's a must in today's world! Your team need to be able to access everything they would in the office, on their smartphone.

All of your data should be real-time and sync'd, regardless of how many pieces of software you use

across the business. I once consulted in a firm and within three hours found seven sources of client data. Not surprisingly this firm were struggling to deliver a consistent client experience both pre & post sales.

Choose software with an open API, so you have the option to employ some brainy coders to bolt together some new fandangled App perhaps with an inhouse legacy system, if required.

Watch out for hidden sources of client data lurking in your team's mobile contacts, in their LinkedIn accounts or anywhere else where it has not yet made it onto the centralised system.

Introduce a 'save for later' folder for your team to store new ideas or Apps when they come across them, then pull out the ideas box at your next quarterly sales meeting and review it together.

Remember, if your software doesn't help your team deliver on a day-to-day basis they'll drive you bonkers as they side-step the tech and ignore all protocols, but this will likely inhibit your ability to deliver a consistent brand experience. The accuracy of your data will be compromised, skewing any reporting and your team will be frustrated that they have to work around the technology rather than the technology working for them.

To receive a free chapter from Nicola's upcoming book on 'How to Map your Process', email info@companyshortcuts.com with the words FREE CHAPTER in the subject line. www.companyshortcuts.com

ACCOUNTANCY FIRM WELL ON TRACK TO SMASH £100K CHARITY TARGET

Newcastle accountancy firm Robson Laidler has announced that it is well ahead of schedule to hit its ambitious target of raising £100,000 for local charities before 2020.

The CSR team have confirmed that they have already reached £82,600 within only two years of setting the challenge and have helped over 100 different charities or community projects in 83 different ways.

Fundraising activities have included a high profile chocolate themed charity ball that raised more than £7000 for the firm's charity of the year - The Tiny Lives Trust, as well as staff taking on the gruelling Three Peaks walking challenge and one of the directors slept rough for one night for local charity Leading Link.

Those efforts have been supported by a number of smaller, more regular fundraisers including a movie night within the firm's Jesmond office, raffles, tombolas, cake bakes, and dress down days. Staff have also used their paid volunteer hours to contribute towards this.

Robson Laidler's tax senior Emma Thompson heads up the firm's CSR cell. She said: "I am very proud of the efforts of the entire team – whether they have contributed financially or via volunteering, donating or getting their hands dirty baking cakes or making sausage sandwiches it is all helping us to reach our fundraising target.

"We still have £20,000 to go within two years and I am confident that with the sustained calendar of events we have planned including a Hats, Hotdogs & Halloween fundraiser in October and a sponsored Christmas lunch in December, as well as the enthusiasm from staff in getting involved that we will achieve this."

Robson Laidler pledged to raise £100,000 for 100 different charities to tie in with its 100th birthday in 2020. The firm also gives its staff 7.5 hours paid time per year to volunteer within work hours. Some initiatives so far include painting garden furniture at a community bowling club in Newcastle, supermarket bag packing and talking to young people about careers in accountancy at local schools.



To donate email: ethompson@robson-laidler.co.uk or for more info visit www.robson-laidler.co.uk

IT'S ALL ABOUT US



At TDR, we are proud to have a reputation for offering both businesses and apprentices alike the very best in service, but even we were blown away with this testimonial. Have a read and see for yourself and if what you're reading makes sense to you and your business, then give us a call.

Coveris is a global company specialising in high performance packaging, with more than 10,000 global employees and 60 strategically located facilities.

"Growing and retaining our own talent was a key part of our 2016 People Strategy. The medium to longer term solution was to introduce apprenticeship programmes across the organisation to build capability, fill the skills gap, grow and retain our own talent and move towards becoming an employer of choice.

"A partnership was agreed with TDR to deliver an organisational wide apprenticeship programme. Our brief to TDR was clear: we needed a business partner that could work with us to address the critical skills gaps and high employee turnover in technical areas of our business. "During the early part of our relationship we jointly explored how we could work together and align apprenticeship frameworks to the needs of our business.

"TDR met with a number of key stakeholders and also spent extensive

valuable time in our operation to ensure they understood our requirements. "A programme was then proposed by TDR for engineering, design, maintenance, tool making, machine setting, customer service, supply chain, and business administration.

"TDR are our chosen, preferred and trusted supplier of apprenticeship programmes. We have a great working relationship with them. You will see a representative from TDR in our business on a weekly basis, we consider them part of our team. "Whether it be working with apprentices on NVQ's, PEO's or team leaders with higher level NVQ's the service is outstanding!

"We are fully utilising our levy pot and also working with TDR on two leadership cohort's to deliver Level 3/5 ILM from August 2018.

"Coveris applied for the CIPD North East of England Award – Excellence in People Development during 2017. We were delighted to win this prestigious award for our business. Without the great work, guidance, support from TDR this would not have been possible. They were and continue to be critical partners to the success of our People Strategy: Growing and Retaining our Own Talent". Kerry Hardy – Head of HR UK – Coveris.

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Booking now for Monday 24th September

Speaker - Ammar Mirza CBE

Venue - Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle upon Tyne

Date - Monday 24th September, 12 noon

Price - £50pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee

**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. Ammar was shortlisted for the Northern Powerhouse Northern Lights Business Personality of the Year 2017 and featured in the top 50 of the 2017 Smith and Williamson Power 100 UK Entrepreneurs. Currently Ammar is helping forge international b-lateral trade links working with Turkey and Indian based businesses to attract foreign investment into the North East.



Booking now for Monday 1st October

Speaker - Peter Barron MBE

In association with **HARVEY HUGO**
PUBLIC RELATIONS | SOCIAL MEDIA

Venue - Wynyard Hall, Stockton-on-Tees

Date - Monday 1st October, 12 noon

Price - £50pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee

**We are delighted to open our Tees Valley Business Lunch events
with Peter Barron, MBE as guest speaker.**

Peter was one of the longest serving editors in the regional press, now establishing own media company, specialising in writing, PR, presenting, broadcasting, after-dinner speaking. Also a children's author. Awarded the MBE "for services to journalism and North-East life" 2013

A long career in journalism will undoubtedly have provided some great stories to tell and we are very much looking forward to hearing Peter speak.

Limited places available - contact Linda Hitman to reserve your space, Linda@exclusivebusiness.net

Diary Dates: Monday 29th October - Stefan Lepowski, Karol Marketing - Jesmond Dene House

Monday 5th November - Matt Scott, Navada Studios - Wynyard Hall

Monday 26th November - Jon Chadwick, Durham Distillery (Durham Gin Ltd) - Jesmond Dene House

Monday 3rd December - Tony Robinson OBE, Enterprise Rockers - Wynyard Hall

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As a cohesive group, MEN and WOMEN can address the balance in the boardroom, we encourage ALL those who would like to make a difference to attend our event and join the conversation, be a part of the North East agenda to be LEADERS in CHANGING MINDSETS!
Our panel of experts will answer your question's, reserve your place now! and add your support to this important initiative.

Wednesday, November 7th, Ramside Hall, Durham DH1 1TD

9.30am Registration/networking coffee and breakfast pastries

10.00am Introduction & Speaker Panel

11.30am Coffee

11.45am Question & Answer Session

12.30pm - 13.00pm Networking

Price £25.00 inclusive VAT ...Tickets available via Eventbrite or visit www.exclusivebusiness.net

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

ECHO CELEBRATES EXCELLENCE ACROSS THE NORTH EAST!

By Graham Courtney



L-R: Tracey Christy, Claire Westgate, Dorothy Inverarity

It's difficult to stand out from the crowd in today's 'event heavy' world but this year Echo have done just that with not one but three successful award ceremonies taking the region by storm.

The Northern Law Awards and the North East Accountancy Awards saw record numbers of attendees and nominations this year, highlighting the greatness of these regional awards which continue to go from strength to strength. Following hot on their heels is the North East Marketing Awards which, in its inaugural year, has already had a huge impact on the sector with over 100 nominations being submitted. So what's the secret to their success – I caught up with company directors Dorothy Inverarity, Claire Westgate and Tracey Christy to find out more.



"I think it's the credibility of our awards that makes all the difference" explains Dorothy. "Finalists meet with an independent judging panel for a face to face interview as well as submitting a written nomination, which makes it a tough process but all the more rewarding for it. The calibre of our judges is outstanding – we're very lucky to have the support of so many industry giants who give up their time to meet with the nominees."

The team brings with them an impressive array of knowledge, from running international events for the UN to project managing B2B conferences for London publishing houses they have the type

of experience other agencies can only dream of. Along with their events expertise the company has an impressive portfolio of association management clients who they provide membership and financial services for, as well as producing their annual conferences.

Tracey tells us more, "We're very proud of the work we do for our Association Management clients, it makes up over half of our business but it's the part people know least about. The Echo membership team manage the needs of around 10,000 members across six associations. Each of them are very different and have bespoke requirements, from medical and critical

communication professionals to motorbike enthusiasts and sporting club members. It's a varied day in the Echo office!"

So, what does the future look like for the Echo team? Claire tell us "Echo has so much potential and is constantly evolving, with so many different organisations to manage and events to deliver, every day is a challenge but it's one we thrive on. We'll be continuing to build on that with some exciting new projects in the pipeline. Most importantly though we'll be focusing on what makes us great – our amazing, talented team, our clients, and our commitment to deliver outstanding levels of service."

If you're looking for event support, membership management services or to get involved in next year's regional awards visit www.echoevents.org for more information or call 0191 241 4523.

HOW STRONG LEADERSHIP CAN HELP REVOLUTIONISE THE HOUSING SECTOR

The housing sector should embrace modern leadership thinking and strive for greater efficiencies if it wants to attract and retain the right talent, says Gradvert Leadership and Management Coach Alan Shaw.

The social housing sector has faced many challenges over recent years. From regulation, to financial pressures and mergers, it has been a period of significant change for many organisations.

And this uncertainty has had a knock-on effect when it comes to attracting the right calibre of talent, according to a top expert.

Gradvert Leadership and Management coach Alan Shaw has worked with a number of housing associations over his career and says the sector is now at a crossroads and needs to take the opportunity to reshape and modernise its way of working to avoid future talent shortages.

"Changes cause confusion and issues around attracting talent, especially talent that is more commercially experienced," said Alan.

"There is a lot of potential in the housing sector but the main challenge is the reputation of the sector and whether it's seen as an attractive proposition to encourage the right type of talent.

"Across the board, people need to think much more innovatively and creatively to attract the best talent.

"We need to see modern leadership, good succession planning and a strategic talent mapping framework that attracts the top candidates from across the UK."

One client Alan recently helped is Broadacres, a successful and innovative not for profit housing association based in North Yorkshire.

The company currently owns and manages more than 6000 homes across Yorkshire with the vision of making 'a real difference to people's lives'.

Broadacres strive to maintain its homes to the highest standard so that customers ultimately say they are proud to live in a Broadacres' home.

Broadacres wanted to develop the leadership skills within their senior manager teams. They were



Alan Shaw

particularly keen to develop their senior managers in a way that did not repeat academic theories used in previous management training implemented in the business.

Instead, they wanted their managers to understand how they could use their influence within the business as leaders and the positive results this can generate.

Alan delivered an 'Emerging Leaders' programme which consisted of a blended approach of practical experience, coaching and reflection.

This allowed delegates to fully reflect on and implement their leadership skills within the business and help Broadacres achieve its mission.

Alan also reinforced the importance of working as a collective team of leaders and that challenges within the organisation should be faced together and not as individuals.

The 'Emerging Leaders' programme helped the senior managers within the organisation to really understand the true values of the business and also increased their confidence to take responsibility and

consistently strive to improve their services.

It is this type of emphasis on modern leadership that Alan feels could help the housing sector become a more attractive proposition for emerging talent.

"The sector really needs strong, transformational leadership," he said. "It needs to ensure everyone from top-level executives and trustees to non-executive directors are really equipped with current and future leadership thinking.

"The housing sector needs leaders who are clear on purpose and who have the right skills and qualities to act to drive transformational change.

"There are a lot of fabulous leaders in housing, but it's not widespread. We need dynamic leaders in housing who can think and act both commercially and socially and truly understand the company's values.

"The sector is really at a crossroads with its identity and image and where it goes next in terms of leadership and attracting and retaining talent so now is a great time to take the opportunity to make these important transformational changes."

For more information, visit www.gradvert.com



DO YOU NEED DRIVER SKILLS?

Are you looking to get on the road but time just isn't on your side? Learn to drive in just one week for as little as £300 with Driver Skills North East.

Stretching from Durham to Newcastle, Driver Skills is a family-run driving school with a history of placing thousands of safely trained drivers on the road. After years of working independently

with driving schools in the industry, husband and wife duo Dave and Sarah Gill noticed a gap in the market for high quality driving instruction provided in a safe environment with the ability to consolidate tuition into a shorter time frame.

In today's whirlwind society, the Gills were made aware that prospective drivers no longer have the

time to take lessons for months on end and so they introduced their very own Driver Skills North East Intensive Course. Not only does the intensive course result in a more cost-effective way to learn, a better pass rate and safer drivers but it is also your time saviour and the quickest way to get those lessons behind the wheel, behind you.

If you're thinking about getting on the road, and you fancy doing it in just one week, then look no further - with Driver Skills North East, give them a call on 0191 374 9083 or follow their Facebook page: Driver Skills North East for regular updates and offers.

PROTECTION FOR PETS

For most pet owners, their beloved animals are a hugely important and fulfilling part of their lives, often being regarded as part of the family.

However, while they play such a central role on a daily basis, all too often, consideration is not given to what will happen to these cherished pets after their owner's death.

Without express provision being made in a will, an animal is treated as a mere asset under the law and, as such, forms part of the residuary estate. So while a pet may be a cherished part of life, after death, they could well be treated as 'just another possession'.

To avoid this happening, it is crucial to make provision for your pet to ensure that their future care, accommodation and medical treatment is catered for.

It is possible to leave a gift in your will for your pet's care but it is important to clearly state what it relates to. You should use your pet's name and make express statements as to your intentions. Through a letter of wishes, full information should be given about your pet – including breed, age and microchip ID number – alongside detailed arrangements for their future.

You should take into account who will care for your animal on the event of your death, be that a friend, relative, or someone else who would be willing and able to take responsibility for their care. It is a good idea to also name a substitute beneficiary, in case your first option proves not to be viable through their own death or ill health.



Michael Cattermole

Life expectancy of your pet is a key factor to consider in deciding who should look after it - many breeds of dog can live beyond the age of 13, koi can live more than 30 years and a cockatoo can even exceed the age of 65, so it is important that the age of the new owner is well considered.

Financial provision can be made for the ongoing care of the pet either through an absolute gift (which gives a named person the right to take care of your pet on your behalf) or else a trust can be established, which can give one or more people financial provision for the pet. If your animal is to be entrusted to an animal welfare charity, like the RSPCA or Dog's Trust, a will can provide for this by making a gift to that charity.

When making financial provision for your pet, you must specify any current needs, such as vital medical or dietary requirements and behavioural issues, as well as taking into account its likely future needs – for example, medication and vet bills may increase as it gets older and its care needs grow. Your gift can be index-linked, so it remains in line with inflation.

It is important to ensure the provision is adequate since the person to whom you have bequeathed your pet may be reluctant to accept it if the amount given is likely to fall far short of the cost of caring for it. If the amount falls short, it can be difficult for executors to increase this.

As pets play such a central role in so many people's lives, it would be unthinkable that the love and care they enjoy would not continue should anything happen to their owner. That is why it is so important to make express provision for them in a will.

If any guidance is needed on exactly what should be included, it is important to seek professional legal advice, so that you can be safe in the knowledge that your beloved pet will be looked after as you would wish.

Michael Cattermole is a solicitor in the specialist wills and probate team at law firm Sintons, based in Newcastle. To speak to him about this or any other matter, contact Michael on 0191 226 3791 or Michael.cattermole@sintons.co.uk

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Big enough for big business.
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We've grown a lot over the last few years from our base here in Durham City. We believe our success has been helped by giving our clients 'Legal solutions that fit'. What we mean by this is that we give clients what they really need. We don't give them flannel, over complication and quite frankly, stuff they don't need. Being big has its benefits, however, we realise that size isn't everything. To our family and private client teams, it's all about personal relationships; empathy and care for the individual.

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DIVORCE REFORM COULD FOLLOW IN WAKE OF OWENS V OWENS



Sarah Crilly

Ward Hadaway family law expert, Sarah Crilly, looks at a divorce case which hit the headlines recently after the Supreme Court ruled that a 68-year-old woman must remain married to her husband.

Currently in England and Wales it is impossible to be divorced unless you issue a petition based on one of five facts, namely, adultery, unreasonable behaviour, desertion, two years separation with consent or five years separation.

Unlike America no-fault divorces are not possible in this jurisdiction. The recent case of Owens v Owens and the Supreme Court's decision has highlighted the need for Parliament to take action to remove unnecessary conflict in divorce cases.

Mrs Owens petitioned for divorce citing her husband's unreasonable behaviour and some examples of her allegations included not being shown love and affection, lack of support for her role as a homemaker and prioritising his work over her home life.

These types of allegations are often seen in petitions but the husband defended the divorce. The wife amended her petition to include more examples but the Judge rejected her petition saying

the examples she had given were not enough and of a kind to be expected in marriage.

Mrs Owens appealed to the Court of Appeal and they dismissed it agreeing with the previous Judge for the same reasons. The matter came before the Supreme Court who "reluctantly" dismissed her appeal. Mrs Owens therefore has to wait five years until she can be divorced.

The case has produced great reaction in the Press and among commentators. Attempts to bring legislative effect to no-fault divorce came close in 1996 with the Family Law Act which was then aborted.

For practitioners and parties alike having to blame the other spouse adds additional costs and conflict in what are already stressful and difficult times. Sometimes fault is not relevant to the division of assets, yet a couple can't get divorced unless there is unreasonable behaviour.

In order for behaviour to be relevant to the split of assets there has to be conduct which is gross and obvious whereas the usual test on a divorce petition is that a party must have behaved in a way that the other spouse cannot reasonably be expected to live with them. It certainly does not have to be gross and obvious.

The Supreme Court felt the previous Judicial decisions were correct in their application of the law as set down in the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 and it was not their job to change the law.

Mrs Owens must remain married to a man she does not love and is estranged from. A Dickensian position in anyone's view. To use our outgoing President of the Family Division's words, in his recent commentary encouraging courts and the profession to embrace the modern world of technology to provide better access to Justice, "we have got to get a grip".

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



L-R: Wendy Mustard & Julie Duncan, Solicitors at Richard Reed Solicitors



WHERE THERE'S A WILL

At its most simple, a will is a set of instructions indicating how you want your estate to be dealt with after your death.

However, it is important to remember that a will is an important legal document that has stringent technical rules that must be complied with to make it valid. For example, a will must be signed in a particular way – get this wrong and you risk invalidating the whole document.

Why make a will?

The main reason to make a will is so that you can be certain of what will happen to your assets following your death. It is especially important if you have children or other family who depend on you financially, if you want to leave something to people outside your immediate family or if you do not have any immediate family.

A will makes it much easier for your family or friends to sort out your estate when you die. Without a will the process can be more time-consuming and almost certainly more stressful.

A will would usually appoint executors and these people will have the power to deal with your assets immediately following your death. If you do not leave a will appointing executors, nobody has the power to deal with your assets until after a court application has been made.

What happens if there is no will?

If a person does not have a will, the law will decide what happens to their estate. The Intestacy Rules are the legal rules that apply when a person does not have a valid will. These rules might not be the most tax efficient way of dealing with your estate, they may not suit your family situation and, perhaps most importantly, they may not distribute your estate in the way you might expect. Often people assume their whole estate will pass to their spouse, but that is not always the case. The distribution of a person's estate will depend on the value of the estate, whether they are married and if they have children.

The Intestacy Rules will also determine who has the right to bring a court application to deal with your estate. It may be that the Intestacy Rules allow a person to deal with your estate that you would not have chosen yourself.

Two-thirds of cohabitants mistakenly think there is some form of "common-law marriage" that gives them rights similar to those enjoyed by husbands and wives. In fact, many people might be surprised to learn that the concept of a common law marriage has been defunct in England since 1753.

A common-law husband or wife is not entitled to anything at all under the Intestacy Rules and their only option is to mount expensive court proceedings with a far from certain outcome.

If a person does not leave a will and does not have any family to receive their estate, it may pass to the government.

As circumstances change, a will should be reviewed. An older will might not take into account any changes in the law which might add an avoidable layer of complexity dealing with your estate. It is a good idea to regularly review your will and correct anything that is incorrect or out of date. Many people do not know that marriage usually revokes a will and having a will rewritten may be advisable following a divorce. A will should also be revisited when a couple separates or moves in together or a child is born.

There is no substitute for proper legal advice when it comes to people with complicated affairs such as those with children from a previous relationship or an estate that might be subject to inheritance tax. Although it may seem more expensive initially, this could save a lot of heartache, time and money in the long run.

For further information and advice, please contact Wendy Mustard or Julie Duncan in the Richard Reed Private Client Team.
0191 567 0465 richardreed.co.uk

THE IMMORTAL NATURE OF CYBER ASSETS

By Richard Marshall, associate solicitor in Hay & Kilner Law Firm's private client team

In 1986, Queen asked the question 'Who Wants To Live Forever?' in one of their lesser known tracks on their soundtrack to the film Highlander.

Whilst 32 years later, death is still one of life's only certainties, our online presence could arguably persist long after our mortal existence.

Thoughts often turn to social media in this regard, and the sentimental value attached to a library of photographs and happy memories, but the rise in financial cyber assets such as Paypal, Ebay and online betting accounts, together with the increasing popularity of cryptocurrencies, pose more of a concern on death.

With the potential for significant wealth to be amassed in such accounts, it will be imperative for anyone dealing with an estate to know that the assets exist and how to access them.

Banks, building societies and investment houses will generally provide some form of physical paper trail, such as statements or annual valuations, but the existence of cyber assets may not be as obvious.

Requests to third party intermediaries such as PayPal, Ebay and online betting accounts to search their databases for deceased loved ones' details may reveal accounts held in their names.

However, direct investments in something such as cryptocurrency, or contracts made by blockchain, may be more difficult to locate, as their very nature cuts out such third party intermediaries.

If Executors and Administrators can overcome this first obstacle, the second concern of access must



Richard Marshall

then be considered. Without usernames, passwords or private keys, accessing assets held within cyber accounts may be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

One way around this would be to keep a secure note of all login details, passwords and private keys for cyber assets, and for the more tech minded, there are third parties who offer a platform for securely storing online login details.

These accounts obviously also require login details to enable access, which again raises the same problem of knowing about the storage facility and its login details.

It's possible that storing the login details either in physical form or electronically with a third party may be a breach of these accounts' terms of use, so all people holding them should ensure they know whether this is the case for their individual arrangements.

If access to the cyber asset is achieved, consideration as to how the assets can be transferred or assigned to the beneficiaries of the estate should also be given.

The international nature of websites can cause some problems in this regard, as can the infancy of some of the technology and a related lack of any policy on how assets will be dealt with on death.

Questions can also arise as to what the deceased actually owned, and whether they had a tangible right to the asset or a mere licence to use it, as can often be the case with, for example, downloaded libraries of digital music.

Hay & Kilner's expert Private Client team can advise on all aspects of estate planning, including the increasingly complex area of cyber asset ownership on death.

For further information or to speak to a member of the team, please call 0191 232 8345.



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DEALING WITH BULLYING IN YOUR BUSINESS

By Sarah Furness, Employment Lawyer

Incidents of workplace bullying are at an all-time high and according to ACAS, the financial impact of bullying related absenteeism, from loss of turnover and productivity, equates to billions per year!

Bullying and harassment creates an unhappy and unproductive workplace with the result being that employers may have:

- poor morale and employee relations;
- a loss of respect for managers;
- poor performance/lost productivity;
- high absence levels; and
- resignations and consequent employment tribunal cases.

Employers need to be proactive in dealing with bullying complaints to avoid losing good employees. Many employees who feel that they have no option but to resign due to the treatment that they have received go on to pursue constructive dismissal (forced resignation) claims and in some instances, costly discrimination claims. Forced resignations can however be avoided if an employer deals with

bullying allegations swiftly and appropriately.

Many employers have in place anti-harassment and bullying procedures. However, putting these procedures into effect is not easy particularly when it seems that employees will not be able to work with one another going forward. Bullying complaints can also become more complicated if an employee alleges they are being discriminated against contrary to the Equality Act 2010 and for example, that they are being bullied due to a "protected characteristic" such as their sex, sexual orientation, age or race. The complainant or the alleged perpetrator may also go on long-term sick leave and claim that they have a "disability" due to workplace stress.

Our seminar

Hay & Kilner are to hold a seminar on Thursday

27 September 2018 at the Centre for Life and this seminar will:

- by way of a work scenario and role play demonstrate how to investigate and conclude a bullying-related grievance where meetings can be difficult;
- the work scenario will also require the HR Manager to deal with the alleged perpetrator who is absent on sick leave and claiming they are 'disabled'.

Why attend?

This will be a practical, focused session with an emphasis on what you need to know as a busy HR executive or professional.

Breakfast and coffee will be available from 8.00am followed by the seminar and questions.

To reserve your free place at this seminar please contact Helen Ward on helen.ward@hay-kilner.co.uk or call her on 0191 232 8345. Further details are available on our website www.hay-kilner.co.uk where you can also book this event and add it to your calendar.

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NEW LANDMARKS ON THE DATA PROTECTION HORIZON

In the as yet unsettled waters of privacy and data protection, GDPR expert Gillian Scribbins, of Muckle LLP, flags up the developments organisations should be aware of to stay afloat.

The tide is beginning to turn. In May this year, the UK Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, heralded the arrival of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 with the forthright words – ‘laws built to last’. Our course through uncharted waters had been set.

“The creation of the Data Protection Act 2018 is not an end point, it’s just the beginning,” she wrote on the ICO blog. Data protection, Denham tells us, is an ‘evolutionary process,’ as no industry stands still. We must all continue to address privacy risks ‘in the weeks, months and years beyond 2018’.

Far from an idle threat to instil fear into boards of directors (or to drum up business for data protection practitioners), these words have already proven to be a prophecy fulfilled.

Leading by example, the ICO themselves have not been standing still. Alongside the routine name-and-shame enforcement action postings on the ICO website, they are also leading several projects to equip UK organisations with preventative data protection and privacy measures.

Informing children

In their typically co-operative style, the ICO sent out a ‘Call for Evidence’ in June, with the aim of producing an ‘Age Appropriate Design Code.’

Children are afforded greater privacy under the GDPR. Written into the legislation are the words: “Children merit specific protection with regard to their personal data.”

To achieve this, organisations offering services to children have additional obligations to consider, such as providing privacy notification information in an age appropriate way. As a post-May priority, the ICO has opened the consultation with such organisations



Gillian Scribbins

to produce a code for processing children’s data. If this applies to you, take note. The ICO has made it clear it has little patience for organisations that don’t take the requirements of processing children’s data seriously.

ICO grants

Last year saw the ICO awarding grants with the aim of supporting innovative data privacy and security research and solutions. The programme is being repeated this year, with grants of £20,000 to £100,000 to be won. Organisations can bid with projects that meet one or more of six strategic goals, with the overall intention of increasing the public trust and confidence in how personal data is used.

Data in politics

The ICO has tackled the use of personal data in targeted political campaigns. An investigation has been ongoing since March 2017 and shifted focus

in February this year at the break of the Cambridge Analytica affair. The Commissioner’s goal: “To effect change and restore trust and confidence in our democratic system.”

The result is a 60 page report explaining how campaigners have been using personal data to target voters by demographic and micro-target individuals on social media. The report also sets out the enforcement actions being taken on political parties, with Denham urging government, parliament and political parties to reflect on their responsibilities, and the importance of transparency in the use of data analytics.

Beyond the decks of the ICO too, the storm surges on. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has opened a consultation with the aim of being able to impose fines of up to £500,000 on the directors of companies making nuisance calls. At present, regulatory fines are made against the company, which according to the DCMS consultation document means a minority of company directors continue to breach direct marketing rules with little regard for the consequences.

In Europe, the newly minted European Data Protection Board is tentatively stepping up to its advisory role with guidance on the upcoming changes to the ePrivacy regulations. It has also opened consultation on the ethics of artificial intelligence.

With such free flowing resource available, there’s no excuse to be ignorant of the world of data protection. If your customers’ data is breached, we can’t stress enough how much more sympathetic the ICO will be if your organisation has embraced its data protection responsibilities and is in ship shape.

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

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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

SIMON DARBY

Founder, SD Legal.

Enforcement agent, Simon Darby founded SD Legal Services in 2007, a 'complete professional service' offering a full range of serving, investigation and enforcement solutions to the legal, financial, property and government sectors. We learnt more:

What were your ambitions growing up?

I changed my mind from journalist to solicitor to banking and subsequently ended up leaving school at 16 and going into banking.

Tell us about your current role.

As Director of SD Legal Services Ltd, I carry out a wide range of processes including serving papers and investigation and enforcement services. I have been a Certificated Bailiff/Enforcement Agent for 15 years.

What has been your proudest achievement?

Our re branding in January 2018 which culminated in us sponsoring, judging and presenting at the Northern Law Awards 2018. Seeing the new company logo and designs up on the big screen alongside presenting onstage were both very proud moments.

What are you currently working on?

I'm overseeing big marketing campaigns throughout the north east, looking to build the companies profile in the area following a very strong July which was 85% up on our figures from July 2017.

Tell us about your team.

We are a small company at present as I tend to run every aspect of the company and carry out all cases within the North East personally.

Stacey Nottingham of Bombshell Design is our marketing manager and also deals with our website.

My wife Sharon deals with admin and I also have help from other family members. We are looking to expand and take on further staff in 2019.



What is your companies USP?

I personally carry out all our work in the North East which means I am all over the region every day until late at night. I can collect from clients offices or any of the courts in the area. We really provide that personal touch.

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

A friend of mine who runs a Bailiff company in London once said that it's important to advertise even when you are very busy and not to wait until you are quiet and in need of the work. It's hard to fit in but it's always best to be proactive rather than reactive.

What advice would you give to your 18 year old self?

I don't have many regrets in business other than not embracing social media for the business earlier as I was slow to promote my own business name and website. I would get started on LinkedIn and Twitter as early as possible as both have proved to be successful.

What changes do you expect to see in the next decade?

I think social media will play a bigger part in the job. It's currently very useful to use social media in terms of finding photos of people that I may be trying to locate but I also think serving papers via social media will become more common.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

Inside - I respect anyone who has built a successful business from scratch but Jamie Waller CEO of Jamie Waller Firestarters in particular has become a hugely successful entrepreneur after initially starting work on the road as a bailiff.

Outside - Aimee Willmott, double Olympian (2012, 2016) in swimming and current Commonwealth Games gold medalist in 400m. She trained at Middlesbrough Swimming Club up until a few years ago alongside my sons and has achieved a huge amount considering the limited facilities available to her during her early career.

How do you like to unwind?

I don't do a great deal of unwinding if I am honest, I tend to be working most of the time averaging 16 hour days! I do enjoy listening to a wide variety of music with my favourite being old school rap such as Eminem and 2Pac whilst I am driving. I also have three teenage sons who have all competed at a high level in swimming so that also takes up a lot of my time.

What's your favourite book/CD/DVD?

I don't tend to read books if I am honest preferring magazines mainly regarding Cars and foreign travel. I listen to a lot of music and like watching TV, particularly NCIS Los Angeles and Criminal Minds.

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Simon Goldberg



THE NORTH EAST IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS...AND PROPERTY

Simon Goldberg, Recorder, barrister, and head of Trinity Chambers' Business and Property Group, looks at what the recent launch of the Newcastle Business and Property Court means for the region.

Last year saw a shakeup of the structure of the civil and commercial courts in England and Wales with the launch of regional Business and Property Courts (BPC) in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Cardiff. The BPC brings together all of the specialist business and commercial Courts under one umbrella. The recent appointment of His Honour Judge Philip Kramer as a full-time Specialist Civil Circuit Judge means that Newcastle now becomes a regional BPC centre.

At an event held earlier in the year at Northumbria University, Chancellor of the High Court, Sir Geoffrey Vos, formally launched what he called the "Newcastle Judicial Super-Highway" allowing and encouraging local and international businesses and their legal teams to resolve disputes locally. The launch will benefit the region's thriving legal sector and the individuals and businesses it supports. In the words of Vice Chancellor Mr Justice Barling at the launch, "No case is too big for Newcastle to hear".

So, what does this mean for the region? In the past, if a contract dispute relating to a local business needed to take place in Newcastle, the court would be forced to find a judge from outside the area to hear the case. Due to problems with availability, this often led to many cases being dealt with in Leeds or London, resulting in general inconvenience, extra travel expenses and large legal bills.

The new Court means that any case with a significant link to the region must be dealt with in the region, which extends from the Tees Valley up to the Scottish Borders, and across to Cumbria. These links include where any of those involved in the case, their lawyers or witnesses are based in the region or the source of the case took place in the region or the dispute involves land, property or other assets located in the region. The sorts of cases that can be dealt with include disputes covering business contracts, property, shareholder disputes and intellectual property.

Simon Goldberg comments: "For as long as anyone can

remember, whilst business disputes have been dealt with in Newcastle it has been by a judge from outside the area. We have never had our own. We have always had to get a judge in from elsewhere and that has acted as a drag on the ability of the court to service work. If you know that the judge works full time in London, then it is likely that you will go to London. We have seen a lot of disputes involving Newcastle-based businesses go to London or Leeds, adding to the legal bill the client has to pay."

Simon adds: "Having our own Business and Property Court through Judge Kramer's appointment will benefit many small local businesses, who often are not able to stump up the fees needed to pay for expensive legal battles outside the area. The changes will also benefit the region's thriving legal and related professional services ecosystem. This is another tick in the box for national and indeed international businesses, looking to move to or expand into the North East."

As specialist legal advocates and with chambers in both the heart of Middlesbrough and Newcastle's Quayside, the barristers at Legal 500 Tier One ranked Trinity are already seeing the benefits to the region of the new structure. Simon notes: "An increasing amount of work is coming to Chambers from outside the region from heavyweight national firms, including from London. We are also seeing cases with an international element, as well as work from regional commercial firms recognising the significant talent we have here in the North East". This increased activity mirrors other areas of significant growth at Trinity with ten barristers joining across Chambers' Family, Criminal, Personal Injury and Employment teams in the last year. Looking ahead to the future, Trinity are recruiting several new pupils, "trainee" barristers. As well as winning a raft of public and commercial sector tenders across a range of practice areas, following a rigorous application process and tight competition, Trinity now has six barristers on the Government Legal Department (Treasury Solicitor) panel of regional counsel.

To find out more about Trinity Barristers Chambers visit www.trinitychambers.co.uk

PUTTING A STOP TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Parliamentary and Women and Equalities Committee has recently published a 5 point plan to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace after a survey found that 40% of women have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour whilst at work.

The problem is not limited to women either with nearly a fifth of men also experiencing harassment in the workplace.

How is sexual harassment defined by the law?

Under the Equality Act 2010 harassment is unlawful and has a specific legal definition.

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct, related to the sex of the individual, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

In addition, where unwanted conduct of a sexual nature occurs which has the same purpose or effect as referred to above, that also amounts to harassment.

In deciding whether the conduct has that purpose or effect, the tribunal must take into account:

- the perception of the individual;
- the other circumstances of the case; and
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

As such, it is a subjective test with an objective overview.

How can an employee bring a claim?

An individual can bring a claim for harassment in an employment tribunal. This must be done within 3 months of the harassment taking place (although this time limit is extended by the compulsory ACAS early conciliation procedure). Usually, an employee will bear their own legal costs for bringing a claim which can be substantial. If successful, then an individual can be awarded compensation for injury to feelings.

What does the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee propose?

Given the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace, despite the current laws in place, the 5 point plan is aimed at strengthening the protection against this type of behaviour. It calls for the following:

- A duty on employers to prevent harassment which would be supported by a statutory code



of practice on how to do achieve this (a breach of which could lead to compensation being increased by 25%);

- A more active role for regulators, including the HSE;
- Easier recourse to tribunals (by increasing the time limit for bringing a claim; tribunals being able to award punitive damages against employers, and a presumption that the employer will pay the employee's costs if the latter is successful);
- Clarification of the use of non-disclosure agreements in cases of harassment; and
- Better data on sexual harassment.

What would be in the statutory code?

The committee suggests the statutory code would cover the following:

- reporting systems and procedures;
- guidance on anonymous reporting and data protection issues;
- support for victims;
- how to investigate and record complaints;
- how to identify criminal offences; and
- the use of training, induction and risk assessments.

What should employers be doing now?

At the time of writing, the report simply sets out proposals and it's not clear which, if any, will be introduced.

For now, it's important that employers treat allegations of harassment seriously and ensure that there is an appropriate workplace culture.

As with any type of harassment, employers should:

- have in place up-to-date policies dealing with harassment and a clear procedure as to what to do when an allegation is raised;
- ensure the disciplinary policy makes it clear that such behaviour will constitute gross misconduct;
- ensure the policies are accessible and brought to the attention of employees, particularly during induction and any updates should be clearly communicated;
- ensure that their employees (and importantly, managers) receive regular training on the policies and procedures;
- keep records of the training and the employees who have attended;
- implement and follow the policies when an allegation is raised.

If in doubt, take advice to ensure the matter is dealt with in the most appropriate way.

CLR Law is a niche law firm specialising in employment law and HR. Contact Claire or Yvonne on 0191 6030061 or hello@clrlaw.co.uk for further information or advice.

WHAT IS A PLANNING BREACH?

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House

If you've found yourself in the situation where you have had a visit from a Planning Enforcement Officer you should know the potential consequences.

A planning breach in itself is not illegal (apart from specific cases such as unauthorised works to listed buildings or to protected trees), however failure to act on an enforcement notice can be a criminal offence.

A planning breach can be carrying out a development without the required planning permission; or failing to comply with any condition attached to a planning approval.

There are a number of possible outcomes in relation to a breach of planning control, the main outcomes are:

No further action (not expedient)

In accordance with government guidance if the development is acceptable in planning terms the Council cannot take formal action against it.

The officer will consider the development against local and national planning policies and will assess whether the development causes harm; if it doesn't the case will be closed and no further action will be taken.

Retrospective planning application

Councils are required to act proportionally for instance if you have built something without planning permission but it would be acceptable the Council will not require you to knock it down, but they may invite a planning application to regularise the development.

It is important to note that a Council cannot make someone submit an application, therefore, if an application is invited but not submitted, the Council must decide whether the development causes planning harm and if it doesn't, no action should be taken.

Certificate of Lawfulness

A development can become lawful if it has been in situ for a period of time - 4 years or 10 years depending on what type of development has occurred.

The developer may decide to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to prove that the development has existed for the required period of time, but again, the Council cannot make them do so.

Negotiate remedial works

If it is considered that the development could be made acceptable with some alterations these could be negotiated with the Council in order to remedy any harm that is being caused.

Formal action

If the development is unacceptable the Council should seek to remedy the matter amicably first by requesting its removal. If that is not successful, the Council will consider what type of formal action is appropriate. There are a number of types of notices, the development circumstances will dictate the type of notice served.

Formal action can be a lengthy process as legal and procedural steps have to be followed, in some instances there is a right of appeal.

There are some notices which could be served without waiting for the outcome of the enforcement process, such as Stop Notices which would normally only be served in a small number of cases where the unauthorised development is considered extremely harmful.

Planning enforcement is a complex and sometimes confusing area of planning if you have been threatened with enforcement action it is essential that you do not ignore it. Enforcement action is discretionary and early intervention and negotiation can resolve a situation quickly and efficiently.

PLANNING HOUSE can advise you on the best strategy should you be faced with an enforcement/planning breach situation and can be contacted on 07944844882, info@planninghouse.co.uk or by visiting www.planninghouse.co.uk





Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

THE GODFATHER SPEAKS

I recently returned from a holiday at my parents' home village, Arpino in the Lazio region of Italy. We were there to celebrate the baptism of my nephew. My sister raised a few eyebrows in the family by appointing me Padrino to the boy.

I am not sure what delighted me more, being entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the latest addition to the Rea clan or the knowledge that I join Al Pacino and Marlon Brando in being addressed as 'Godfather'.

Sitting around the dinner table with my extended family conversation often turns to work. My Italian family are amused and baffled by English leasehold law. How can you lose a property you have owned for decades? How can your ground rent double every 10 or 25 years? In Italy laws have been reformed over decades to ensure a balance between the rights of tenant and landlord. To an Italian the idea you can lose your property for failing to pay £350 in ground rent could be a scheme dreamed up by Don Vito Corleone himself.

Home builder Taylor Wimpey hit the headlines back in 2017 when residents living in a development in Preston discovered their annual ground rent doubled every ten years. What began as a reasonable £250 per annum ended up after forty years costing them

£4,000 per year. Try selling your property with an annual charge like that? Following an outcry in the press the firm agreed to set aside £130m to convert the controversial leases. An expensive exercise all round.

The problem with leasehold law is it is arcane and incredibly complex. Just one of the processes by which a home owner can buy their freehold is the statutory Enfranchisement process. The process has been formed over 50 Acts of Parliament covering some 450 pages so the only people who understand it are very expensive lawyers.

Government has not been blind to the issue. In addition to their previous commitment to banning leasehold houses and trying to ensure all leases are for a 'peppercorn' rent rather than for profit, it has released what they call 'radical new proposals'. These are aimed at making it easier for home owners to buy the freehold of their property. It is to be hoped that legislators apply the Occams Razor principal, known to those of us who are not philosophers as

"Keep it simple, stupid". If a law is fair to both home owner and freeholder, do not change it. If it is not, change it.

Those of us in the property sector will watch developments with interest and through our professional associations, hope to have some influence. For me, a particularly interesting time will be when legislation passes through the House of Lords. A large number of ermine clad members and their chums do very nicely out of leasehold revenue.

Government has an opportunity to right an age old wrong as it reviews freehold law. Hopefully they will replace 50 Acts of Parliament and 450 pages of law with sensible directions delivered in plain English. In the unlikely event they ask the advice of Arpino's newest Godfather, I would turn to fellow Italian Leonardo Da Vinci who said "La semplicità è l'ultima sofisticazione" which translates as "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication".

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PROPERTY FIRM GOES DAFT CELEBRATING 30TH ANNIVERSARY



Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate agents is marking its 30th anniversary by walking 30km for a local cancer charity.

Fifteen members of the team at the leading North East property firm are set to walk 30km in one day for the company's charity of the year Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care.

The walkers are set to complete the trek around Northumberland and Newcastle in a bid to raise as much as possible for Daft as a Brush, which makes

thousands of journeys annually, offering people not only free transport but also emotional support from the volunteers who travel with patients.

Neil Hart, Group Managing Director at Bradley Hall, said: "Our 30th anniversary year is about accelerated growth, celebrating our recent success with our colleagues, partners and clients while also fundraising for the local charities which provide vital support to our communities."

REFURBISHED EARL GREY HOUSE CONTINUES LETTING SUCCESS WITH TWO NEW TENANTS

Earl Grey House, a pioneering Newcastle office and leisure development, has secured two new tenants following a comprehensive refurbishment.

Digital marketing agency Tangent has taken 1,950 sq. ft on the second floor whilst national education recruitment agency Teaching Personnel is relocating its North East office from Mosley Street to 2,772 sq. ft of contemporary office space on the fourth floor.

Joint property agents for Earl Grey House, Knight

Frank and GVA, have now let 90% of the office space at the Grade II listed mixed-use building on Grey Street in Newcastle city centre.

The refurbishment has created a modern, minimalistic new office entrance and reception area. The offices are high specification and incorporate exposed services which bring an industrial style finish. The building has welfare facilities including showers, a large changing area and indoor cycle store.



NEW REPAIRS CONTRACT FOR NORTH STAR AND CASTLES AND COASTS



North Star Housing Group and Castles and Coasts, two housing associations based in the North East, have joined forces with ESH Facilities to bring their tenants a brand-new repairs service, whilst also creating more jobs.

ESH Facilities, part of the ESH Group, will deliver day-to-day repairs services at around 5,000 properties in the North East. With the help of these facilities, both associations will be able to provide noticeable benefits to their tenants, including an online repairs appointment system, text message confirmations

and evening/weekend appointments.

Emma Speight, Executive Director of Assets and Growth at North Star, said: "We are committed to providing an excellent responsive repairs service to tenants and are delighted to be working with ESH Facilities to deliver this. Working in partnership with Castles and Coasts to procure the new repairs contractors will enable us to achieve both cost efficiencies and technology enhancements to improve the customer repairs experience."

DOUBLE AWARD SUCCESS FOR ROOFING AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS SPECIALIST

Tyneside Home Improvements is celebrating being named 'Best Home Improvements' company for 2018 in Tyne and Wear at the recent UK Enterprise Awards.

The accolade is judged on the commitment to innovation and working methods shown by those shortlisted. The win follows on the back of the Jarrow-based business also retaining its title for SupaLite 'Top UK Installer of the Year' for an impressive sixth successive year.

Clinching the award is all part of a successful 2018 for the company, with sales up 15% on the previous year and staff growing rapidly. Having started just over a decade ago with a team of two, the company now employs 26 people across the North East.

Specialising in extensions such as conservatories, orangeries, garage conversions and roofing, the busy team have also recently extended their product lines, adding contemporary and stylish verandas to the growing list of improvements customers can make to their homes.



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82 Runnymede Road is a newly completed property which provides an outstanding, modern luxury home. Occupying a site of circa 0.45 acres, this fabulous property provides approx. 5000 sq.ft of accommodation. The gardens are landscaped to provide pleasant sitting areas throughout the grounds.



Price Guide: £1,495,000

Ashleigh Sundin

ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk

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PROPERTY OF THE MONTH



SAXBY HOUSE, STATION ROAD, CORBRIDGE



PRICE GUIDE: £875,000

Saxby House is a beautifully presented and substantial Victorian detached home, in a lovely private garden site of approx. 0.264 acres, towards the edge of the much sought after village of Corbridge, enjoying lovely views across surrounding open countryside. It offers generously proportioned five bedroomed accommodation retaining much of the original character one would expect from a property of this age and style including period fireplaces, sash windows, original range, ceiling cornice, roses and panelled doors. It has also been remodelled and extended to a lovely standard, taking in all the needs of modern living to create a fabulous family home. Externally, there is a lawned garden with well stocked borders set within a stone walled, hedged and fenced surround giving a good degree of privacy; to the front there are double access gates leading to a gravelled driveway for off road parking.



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WHY THERE'S MORE TO A GOOD VALUATION THAN MEETS THE EYE

Rob Flucker, Associate at Knight Frank Newcastle, shares his expertise on valuations.

Everybody likes to know how much their property is worth and getting a good valuation can open doors, but there's more to an accurate valuation than ten minutes research on Zoopla. And getting it wrong can prove costly.

I've been a residential valuer for 13 years now and provide valuations for property owners as well as lenders so I see both sides of the fence.

But whether I'm valuing a single dwelling, a portfolio of properties, student accommodation, or advising on how much a planned development will be worth – one thing always holds true – accuracy is your friend.

An inflated valuation not only puts the bank at risk, but also the borrower as they may be over-exposed if the market falters or the property needs to be sold. Alternatively, an under-valuation can reduce the loan amount available to the customer, put a stop to their plans or increase the cost of borrowing.

Here are my tips on getting an accurate valuation:

Provide as much information as you can

The level of information a valuer may ask you for can feel intrusive and unnecessary. However, providing as many facts as possible means the report will be accurate. Give all the details you can about tenure, use, alterations and occupancy to make sure you get highly relevant advice and a good strategy for moving forward.

Limiting information means that assumptions have to be made which may not reflect the true nature of the property and can lead to distorted advice.

Ensure your valuer has considered all legislation

Your property adviser should take into account all

current and relevant legislation and point out any upcoming changes that may impact upon your home or investment. For example, the Government is proposing changes to residential leasehold practices which means that leaseholds on new build houses may be banned and ground rents on new build long leasehold flats may be zeroed. These proposals could be backdated to 21 December 2017, the date of the announcement.

Also, if you are buying or own a residential property portfolio, changes to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) regulations come into effect on 1 October this year. The definition of the term HMO has been revised meaning that some properties which currently fall outside the requirement for an HMO licence, may need a licence from 1 October onwards.

Be mindful of location specific trends

Most residential areas will have a 'ceiling' price that people are not prepared to pay beyond for properties in that location. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule. An experienced valuer can give you sound advice regarding specific property trends in that location to ensure any investments you make, are made on an informed and strategic basis.

We value a lot of investment property portfolios for lenders and private individuals. It is our job to advise the investor and/or the lender on the realistic price a portfolio may achieve if sold on the market along with the most appropriate disposal strategy for the specific location. Some portfolios will be sold as a single lot whereas it may be appropriate in another location to break up a portfolio into smaller lots. The correct advice is imperative if the best price is to be achieved.

Look around you

Be aware that infrastructure or development proposals in the vicinity of your property may affect its value. Ensure your valuer is thorough in their research of any recent works or proposed works, nearby planning approvals and potential rights of way that may affect the property. Things like wind farms and landfill sites may impact on values.

Get advice early doors

Whether you are thinking about selling your home or land, buying an investment property or portfolio, building an extension, developing a plot or having a house designed and built – getting advice from a property expert early on in the process can make or save you a lot of money.

We often advise developers on the cost implications of proposed schemes. This can include reigning in an architect's design aspirations. Award winning design may be impressive but development costs can be high and this can ultimately lead to a scheme being undeliverable.

Professional advice regarding location, unit size, specification of the proposed properties and the potential sale prices of the complete units can make or break a developer's aspirational scheme and is essential from the outset to ensure viability.

Rob Flucker works in the Residential Development & Investment, Valuation & Advisory team at Knight Frank in Newcastle.

Rob and his team value high-end single dwellings, residential and mixed-use property portfolios and student accommodation including HMO and purpose built stock. They also provide development and valuation advice for schemes ranging from single house plots and barn conversions to large multi unit housing estates.

Rob can be contacted at rob.flucker@knightfrank.com 0191 594 5048.



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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF BRADLEY HALL

In 1988, Bradley Hall began as a team of two surveyors in its original Sandyford office. Since then, the team has grown to include 42 carefully selected experts with six offices across the region including; Alnwick, Morpeth, Gosforth, Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham.

The group managing director, Neil Hart, began at the firm in 2000 and has since driven the company forward to become one of the most well-known and reputable firms in the North East. Peter Bartley, group director for the firm, joined in 1991 and went on to open the company's second operation in Durham in 1996.

Neil was responsible for the company's expansion – opening the first Gosforth office in 2005, followed by its main commercial operation launch on Grey Street in 2011. The rapid escalation of the firm's commercial operation meant the team quickly outgrew the Grey Street site, and the expanding team was moved to a more central location on Hood Street in 2016.

In recent years especially, the firm has grown at a rapid pace thanks to its successful growth strategy implemented by directors Neil, Peter, Richard Rafique and Geoff Davis. In the past three years alone, the turnover has increased by an impressive 87%, and new offices in Alnwick, Morpeth and Sunderland have been launched.

From one shared commercial and residential office to a now 'field to finish' full service agency, the firm has welcomed several departments

which ensure that all of client's property related needs are met, including; commercial agency, land, development and new homes, valuation and professional services, property management, building surveying, residential agency, mortgages, planning and design and asset finance.

Several exciting appointments are set to be made, with official celebratory events planned to mark key senior members joining the firm. It's recently appointed advisory board will be headed by John Marshall, who is also chair of Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, a non-executive director and council member of North East England Chamber of Commerce, and a council member of CBI North East.

Recent success is also encouraging expansion across the entire company and newly implemented departments including building surveying and planning and design are both already looking for talented new team members to join the firm.

Bradley Hall also marked its 30th year by completing a 30km walk for its chosen charity partner of the year, Daft As A Brush Cancer Patient Care. Over a dozen members of the team completed the trek around Northumberland and Newcastle to raise vital funds for the charity.



For more information please visit www.bradleyhall.co.uk



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MORE MORTGAGE OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITH SMALL DEPOSITS



Lewis Chambers

Director of mortgages and finance for Bradley Hall, Lewis Chambers, discusses the mortgage options for those with a limited amount of equity.

Homeowners with a limited amount of equity now have a greater choice of remortgage options, with lenders including Virgin Money, Tesco and Atom Bank improving their offerings for this particular area of the market.

Although there are relatively few remortgage options available to homeowners with only a small amount of equity, there is a much wider choice of mortgage deals for buyers with a 5% deposit.

Recent weeks have seen increasing numbers of lenders launch new deals for first-time buyers and movers with small deposits, including HSBC and Atom Bank.

Virgin Money, for example, has introduced a range of 2, 3, 5 and 7-year fixed rate deals which are available to homeowners borrowing up to 95% of their property's value.

Fewer lenders offer remortgages up to 95% as they are often perceived as high risk from the lender's perspective, so having more options will come as

good news for those keen to secure a competitive deal ahead of any potential interest rate increases.

Longer term fixes have proved particularly popular in recent months with homeowners who are worried about rising rates and want an element of financial certainty for several years. According to research by Moneyfacts, the gap between the average two and five-year fixed rate mortgage is the smallest it has been since August 2013, so homeowners aren't having to pay much more for three years' extra security.

The comparison site also revealed that average two and five-year fixed rates at 95% loan-to-value (LTV) have bucked the trend of rising rates and are lower than at the same time last year, making it more affordable for first-time buyers to get onto the property ladder.

Homeowners keen to take advantage of Virgin Money's new remortgage deals should bear in mind that if borrowing above 90% of the property value, remortgages will only be available on a like-for-like

basis only. No capital raising can be considered on this specific deal.

Most lenders will also have limits on additional borrowing, so they may not allow borrowers to remortgage for debt consolidation, or to raise money for home improvements.

It is also important to remember that rates for those with small deposits are typically higher than those offered to buyers with bigger deposits to put down, so even saving an additional 5% could leave you better off in the long-run.

We always stress the importance of looking at the overall cost of any mortgage deal rather than the headline rate alone when weighing up which deal to choose. Many deals now come with valuable incentives such as cashback or free valuations which can help keep first-time buyer costs down.

Seek professional advice from me and my team, if you need help deciding which deal is best for you based on your individual circumstances.

For more information please call the Bradley Hall Mortgage team on 0191 260 2000.



BURNSIDE DOXFORD, ALNWICK

OIRO £375,000

EPC Rating E38



x 3



x 3

This unique three bedroom detached property offers picturesque countryside views and an elevated orchard. Its three reception rooms also offer a great deal of versatile space.

An additional extra to this property is the studio which was built on by the current owner at a later date. The studio is very much a multi functioning room and can be used as

a further reception room, a work from home office or hobby room.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

JON TWEDDELL

Director of JT Planning

"We don't just do planning, we help put deals together."

What were your career ambitions growing up?

I didn't really know what I wanted to do growing up. I liked the arts and design, loved drawing, so thought I might do something around graphics, architecture or design. When I left school I did a year out in an engineering company and got an insight into town planning. I went on to university to study it. I've always been motivated, so whatever I did, I knew I was ambitious and would work for myself one day.

Tell me about your career path so far

I started out in private practice working for a planning consultancy. As an inexperienced graduate dealing with major developments, I felt out my depth. I sharp realised I needed some experience in the public sector and took a position as a planning officer in Morpeth. This provided me with great experience at the sharp end of planning, processing planning applications. From there I went back to the private sector but I always wanted to work for myself and soon realised I couldn't keep working for other people! I started Jon Tweddell Planning in 2005 and have never looked back.

What are JT Planning's defining qualities?

Put simply, high quality advice at a reasonable cost. We are still a small practice and I pride myself on being fully involved with all projects. Although a planning consultancy at heart, our remit has changed over the years. Many of our clients expect us to create opportunities and provide them with their next development site. Given our wide network, we are always happy to do this when we can.

What is the greatest challenge you have faced so far?

Without a doubt getting through the financial crisis of 2008 onwards. We had a lot of clients who struggled in that period; many simply went out of business. Our fee income dropped by about 60% during part of this period, so we really had to work hard for less money while chasing a smaller number of jobs. We got through it and have grown the business significantly since then.

What is your greatest achievement to date?

My greatest achievement to date is securing a commission for 350 new homes, which we achieved very recently. Most people

said we would never be able to handle this scale of development, but we have some clients who really trust us with everything, whatever the scale of the proposals. We have numerous other, smaller scale achievements that we are equally proud of. We have had numerous successes at Appeal. This is always a great achievement getting a development approved at Appeal, when the local council has originally refused permission.

Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

Not really. We work by some simple principles and that is providing honest, well thought out advice; being very honest; keeping things simple for clients; and making sure that you engage well with your customers. Humour is also very important – you have to make work fun, it brings out the best in people!

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

My friend's dad gave me quite a bit of advice when I first started out in my own business. His advice has always stuck in my head, but at the time I didn't really get it. The advice was to always bring some humour into your business dealings. Laughing relaxes people and makes the day pass quicker. It also puts people at ease and I feel all people are much more engaging when you have a bit of a laugh along the way.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

In business, I have to thank two extremely good teachers and mentors. I actually worked with them before I created my business but their input into me as a town planner has been incredibly influential. Those two people are Nicholas Lawrence who I worked with in private practice some years ago and Hugh Edmondson who I worked with in the public sector about 16 years ago. Out of business, my hero is my wife, Vicki.

How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?

I have two young children who I want to see grow, they always come first. It's really easy just to work all the time, but you end up losing focus. You must work to live, not the other way round, I will always make time for my family. I work very efficiently so I don't normally need to work evenings or weekends.

How would you like to be remembered?

Just for being a nice guy!

For more details visit
www.jontweddell.co.uk

MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT'S LEFT OF THE SUMMER SUN

They say natural light is a fundamental source of vitamin D but let's face it, we don't all have the time to sit outside and soak up its goodness. What we can do though, is increase the sunlight in our homes so that even when you're washing the dishes or vacuuming the carpet, you can still make the most of the sunshine.

There are plenty of ways to make your home lighter, but the best, according to Conservatory Roof Supplies, is the inclusion of bi-fold doors, a practical yet trendy way to open your home up to your outside space, ultimately flooding your home with natural light. Designed to be completely collapsible and compact while remaining elegant, bi-fold doors create panoramic views and give your home as much natural light as possible.

The beauty of bi-fold doors lies in the fact that they're suitable for any space. Unlike patio doors, which require space to open one way or the other, Bi-Fold doors, once opened up, rest internally, meaning that you can make the most of the space around them, whether that's on a smaller balcony, or a larger garden.

Customisable in size, colour and material, you can make the most of what's left of this summer sunshine with the installation of bi-fold doors.



For more information visit our website: www.conservatoryroofsoutheast.com or follow us on Facebook for regular updates and offers.

LANDLORDS

WE HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR YOU...



WITH ALL THE RECENT CHANGES IN LEGISLATION IS YOUR PROPERTY COMPLIANT?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT COULD MEAN IF YOU ARE NOT COMPLIANT?

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HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS CAN HELP BRIDGE THE DIVIDE IN SOCIETY

By Sarah Hall, managing director of Sarah Hall Consulting Limited

I recently spent a thought provoking evening with Will Self. During the discussion potentially titled "Is The Left Dead", the journalist and political commentator mourned the slow death of debate and society itself.

In a 90-minute talk and question and answer session, Self reflected on the widening divide within communities, at both ends of the political spectrum. He lamented the demise of healthy, constructive debate in which people are receptive to having their opinion changed.

The diminishing art of people to listen and to be persuaded of different stand points and perspectives is hard to argue.

A quick look on Twitter at anything Brexit related throws up a host of examples of people shouting at each other in threads which often descend into personal abuse. Ironically it comes at a point in history where we've never needed to understand each other more.

As Britain prepares to leave the EU, austerity continues to bite, and the behaviour of the US President continues to cause world-wide concern, there is a clear lack of mutual understanding and too few protagonists working to unify our country.

Role of public relations

Times of turbulence and challenge present opportunity and life today presents an unrivalled one for the modern communicator.

As one of the CIPR's founders Sir Tim Traverse-Healy wrote reflecting on the inauguration of the Institute 70 years ago: "To be correctly termed, public relations had to contain three elements in almost equal measure: truth, concern for the public interest and dialogue.

"These men had witnessed the miseries of war and, in this brave new world, believed that improved communication was a means of improving cooperation and reducing conflict between groups in society."

The CIPR's own definition of public relations as



Sarah Hall

'the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics' pinpoints our role.

We're uniquely placed to offer insight and leadership, and to build relationships and to seek two-way dialogue. Our services have never been more critical to a healthy democracy.

With politicians eschewing the traditional media interview, opting instead to use owned and shared media (via influencers) to get their messages out, we are also needed to help our employers understand context, fact check, provide scrutiny and play our own part in holding leaders to account.

Be the change that you want to see in PR and the world

It's one of the reasons a commitment to lifelong learning is so important. Having the appropriate skillset to advise in this way does not just come with years of experience but also training and

qualifications, which must evolve as the industry does.

As yet, there are still only 241 CIPR Chartered Practitioners who have been assessed as having the strategic, ethical and leadership capabilities to formally place them in that elevated advisory position, although no doubt hundreds more must be eligible to get Chartered.

Recognising the need to help the skills of PR professionals operating at that level remain current, the CIPR has partnered with Impeller to introduce a new senior management training offer focused on leadership and strategic thinking. It's a welcome move.

Divides in society can be quickly made and slow to fix but as practitioners with the power to build relationships and truly listen to our publics, we have a duty to use these skills for the greater good, with professional ethics at the front and centre of all we do.

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KAROL MARKETING SHORTLISTED AT CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2018

Leading Northern PR Agency Karol Marketing has been shortlisted in four categories in this year's prestigious Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards. The awards recognise the outstanding work PR delivers for clients and employers across the UK.

Karol has been shortlisted for its work with North East-based technology start up Ocucon, the world's first Video Surveillance as a Service platform, in the categories of Corporate and Business Communications Campaign, Integrated Campaign and Low Budget Campaign.

The award-winning agency has also been shortlisted in the Best Publication category for its innovative brochure and Karol beer produced in partnership with Brinkburn St Brewery, which is given to all visitors to Karol's offices based in a converted pub in Ouseburn.

For the last two years, the agency has swept the board at the CIPR PRide Awards, winning categories including Corporate and Business Communications Campaign, Consumer Relations Campaign and Not-For-Profit Campaign.

Account Director at Karol Marketing, Victoria Ross, commented: "It's a great achievement for the agency to once again be shortlisted in so many categories. By combining winning strategy and insight with brilliant creative executions, we consistently achieve genuine value and business growth for our clients. We're looking forward to celebrating at the awards ceremony this December."

Ocucon co-founder, Gary Trotter, commented: "In the space of just one year, Karol took Ocucon



from being an unknown name to a brand recognised by the likes of Google, Virgin, DEFRA and the Metropolitan Police. The team at Karol has positioned Ocucon as a leader in video cloud storage and the queue of big name customers we

have is testament to this."

Karol is one of the longest established PR agencies in Newcastle, creating exciting and disruptive campaigns for over 25 years, with over 60 industry awards to boot.

Been made redundant? Retired? Fancy a change? Or want to make your passion into your living?

Have you ever thought of starting your own business?

Why not set up your own business, and meet customers? Opportunities are available in Durham City Centre six days a week (indoor) and at regular and specialist retail events.

Becoming a self employed retailer is a great way to start your own business, it is a low-cost option to launch a business.

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WHAT IS IT ABOUT CEO'S OF TECH FIRMS THAT MAKE THEM FORGET THE RULES OF GOOD COMMS?

The nature of the modern tech entrepreneur bears striking resemblance to that of a cult leader. They fit a mould. They undoubtedly spent most of college in their room coding or inventing before dropping out to focus on their product...and then they're a billionaire by 30.

Apple had Jobs, Facebook has Zuckerberg, Amazon has Bezos and Tesla has Musk. These leaders are also, often and for lack of a better word, odd. Jobs was an alleged maniac, nobody will ever forget how weird Zuckerberg was during those Q+A sessions to congress and Musk is getting more erratic by the day.

Despite of and as a result of their success, their synonymy with their brand poses a large obstacle in terms of reputation management. Anything they do or say is intrinsically linked to their brand and how people perceive it. This threat is currently being exacerbated by the fact that the tech giants are under a level of scrutiny that they are not used to.

Facebook's Cambridge Analytica scandal and Google's competition fine last month are just two examples of authorities attempting to crack down on the power that these behemoths are beginning to wield. Worryingly for the giants, the public are also beginning to open their eyes.

Elon Musk, the undisputed king of the PR stunt, has had a disastrous time on Twitter recently. He called one of the divers that helped save the trapped Thai football team 'the pedo guy'. It is a comment that is so far from acceptable that it leaves the reader wondering whether Musk might actually have the mind of Sid from Toy Story...

Musk's comment was a reaction to being told that the submarine he made and sent to Thailand as an escape option wouldn't have worked. This is why his reaction was so visceral. He is a proud man. He sees himself as a genius and his ability to send cars and rockets alike into space has fuelled an arrogance that leaves him vulnerable to overreaction when criticised. It is unlikely that there are many, if any,



James Porter

employees inside Tesla HQ that disagree with him on a daily basis. He isn't used to it and he has not been trained for situations in which he is, hence the petulant reaction.

The consequence of being the billionaire CEO of a company that launches rockets and provides solutions to entire nations in the blink of an eye is a level of hubris that is hard for 'normal' people to understand. He may not think he's God but I wouldn't be surprised if he's tried turning petrol to wine.

Given how synonymous Musk is with Tesla, he must be trained to abandon his hubris when receiving criticism, for the sake of his and Tesla's future. The fact he is not able to hold himself back from calling a hero a paedophile, or aware of the damage he could do by doing so, is extremely concerning. It is a turn off for potential customers and investors alike.

Zuckerberg has also recently found himself in hot water. A front page of a recent New York Daily News edition reads: "Holocaust deniers deserve a voice – says Facebook won't ban them because plenty of people 'get things wrong'". Wow.

Zuckerberg went into this interview either under-prepared or ill-advised, or both. On the topic of fake news and inflammatory content, there is no room for error on his part. It is the single biggest threat to his business and legacy. Facebook have already had to change their news feed algorithm this year in order to control content. Comments like these from Zuckerberg will not reassure users

or governments that the platform will not become filled with hate speech in the future.

The reason behind the fact that Zuckerberg has not received training on this is presumably the same as Musk's - that there are not enough people inside Facebook prepared to tell their leader that he needs to be coached, taught and advised on things that he might not be strong at. Communications is one of these things. The public already thinks he is a robot, if he becomes a heartless robot, there's no amount of CPR that will save him or Facebook.

Communications, and in particular crisis communications, is all about preparation: proactivity over reaction. If you are reacting, you're probably too late. You need to be ahead of the situation and have pre-made plans in place to get ahead of the situation if you do find yourself caught out. It does not take a massive leap of the imagination to see that holocaust denial and calling someone a paedophile are obvious things to avoid being unclear about or doing, and yet, two of the most famous CEOs in the world have done both in the space of a week.

Hours spent thinking through these situations, planning and being open to advice avoids months and years spent trying to claw back reputation capital lost because of one interview or one stupid tweet. Tech CEOs, you may have seen success quickly, but reputation is built slowly and lost in the blink of an eye. Do not let your status let you think you're immune. Your colleagues may fear challenging you, but the public does not.

James Porter is an account executive at W Communications. www.wnorth.co.uk @wcommnorth

SPOTLIGHT

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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...

JACKIE MARSTON

JAM Marketing Limited

Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

In a word, no. I was the store manager for the South Shields branch of McDonald's when I went on maternity leave, 29 years ago. As I wanted to return part-time, they moved me to an office job, as you couldn't, in those days, be a part-time store manager. Basically, they didn't know what to do with me, so shoved me in the marketing department! I absolutely loved it and really enjoyed being part of the creative process in such a huge organisation. From there I became the regions' area marketing manager and responsible for 37 restaurants throughout the Yorkshire and North East regions. The driving was killing me though, so when I was offered a job as the marketing manager at the Newcastle Arena, I took it. I did that for almost eight years and then, realising that there was no promotions available, started JAM Marketing in 2004, just months before my 40th birthday.

What is your favourite aspect of the job?

The variety for me is what I love. We are lucky enough to work with B2B and B2C clients, so the working day is rarely the same two days in a row.

What has been your career defining moment?

That would be meeting the Queen and Prince Philip. I was on the committee for a charity for many years and we got to meet them as a thank you for our services to charity.

How do you measure success?

For me, I love it when our clients see a huge change in their businesses as a result of the work we do for them. I am not a hungry money-monster, my enjoyment comes from the success our clients achieve.

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

The fact that a lot of the print has now gone on-line, which means the journalistic side has been cut, considerably. A lot

of people in the industry are being made redundant and embarking on careers on the 'dark side' (PR), as it is known!

How has your skillset developed accordingly?

Absolutely – We are a very forward-thinking company and our skill sets have to represent the changes in the industry. I went kicking and screaming into the world of social media, however I recognised it is a necessary evil, so we now employ a social media professional within Jammy Dodger Towers.

Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

A bit of a risk taker I'm afraid. If I really want something, I try my best to get it. I've personally had a few knocks recently and the tenacity and stubbornness I have displayed in ensuring I succeed has even surprised me!

To what would you attribute your success?

See above – Tenacity/stubbornness!

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

I am a big softy and my one weakness is that I believe everyone's sob stories. I also assume that everyone has the same morals and ethics as me, which has seen me ripped off in the past, but as I put in systems within the business to ensure that it is less-likely to happen again, I fear that it probably will.

How do you remain motivated?

I love watching businesses succeed and if we can be part of that success, then we've done our job!

Would you prefer to be liked or respected?

Respected every time. Once someone loses respect for you, then whether or not they like you, or not, is irrelevant.

I'll retire when....

I no longer want to work, simples!

MARKETING TACTICS SCALE-UPS USE TO SUCCEED



Gill Burgess

r//evolution Managing Director Gill Burgess examines the North East's scale-up ambitions, and the role marketing has in successful growth plans. There is much discussion about increasing scale-up businesses in the region. Indeed, the North East LEP has a target to increase the number of such

companies in the area by 50% by 2024, viewing them as a major contributor to the regional economy.

Achieving any significant growth, let alone the required 'growth in turnover or employees by more than 20% per year over at least three years' to qualify as a scale-up requires careful consideration and planning, particularly in your marketing efforts.

Understanding all stages of the funnel – from prospect to lead, Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL), Sales Qualified Lead (SQL) and to customer, will enable the production of a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) marketing strategy - helping to drive decisions and focus on inbound techniques.

Why is inbound the right approach to successful marketing through scale-up? Really understanding your customers and positioning your brand to offer valuable content that helps them to overcome their challenge is a powerful strategy - one that has been proven to deliver superior and sustainable ROI compared with traditional, interruption-based techniques.

Inbound goes hand in hand with intelligent automation which has a vital role to play when it comes to scaling your marketing efforts. Taking visitors through the whole user journey - from attraction to conversion, sale and then delight - is far more achievable with slick, automated processes delivering SMART content. Information should be tailored and presented to the viewer based on their individual interests and actions, providing a high-quality, personalised engagement experience.

Sophisticated tracking enables a clear analysis of results, meaning marketing activity can be truly agile, with adjustments made regularly to improve results. This drives continuous marketing improvement, aligned to the achievement of the business' scale-up goals.

Scale-up presents many challenges but, for the astute marketer, it also offers exciting opportunities to roll-out robust, scalable solutions, allowing your business to flourish.

To find out more about marketing for scale-up, visit the [r//evolution blog](http://www.r-evolution.co.uk) and download our complimentary eBook 'How to scale your business through effective marketing'. www.r-evolution.co.uk

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Want to improve your brand's digital performance?

Masterclasses for 2018/19

Mediaworks present their series of Masterclasses for 2018/19, designed to help you develop the skills you and your company need to transform digitally to accelerate online visibility, increase revenue and sustain that competitive edge.

Presented at our head office, our monthly masterclasses are suitable for everyone; from a retailer or digital marketer wanting to maximise ROI; to a business owner who wants to boost their brand's digital performance; or even an upper management to marketing teams who need to monitor the reputation of their brand online. Our experts are on hand to provide you with valuable insights into digital marketing, helping you to discover and understand specific digital marketing topics.

Google Shopping

INTRODUCTION
19TH SEPTEMBER 2018

With busy shopping periods fast-approaching, will you leave your Google Shopping success to chance this year? Or will you take action and join us for our Google Shopping Mediaworks Masterclass?

Google Tag Manager

26TH SEPTEMBER 2018

In the increasingly competitive digital landscape if you don't have the right insights into how users are interacting with your site, how can you possibly better your service offering? Step in Google Tag Manager - an important tool for updating and managing website tags.

Google AdWords

INTRODUCTION
24TH OCTOBER 2018

Google AdWords is a fundamental tool in setting up and managing paid search campaigns. Our Introduction to Google AdWords event covers the basics, helping you create strategic and successful paid search campaigns.

Google AdWords

ADVANCED
28TH NOVEMBER 2018

Building on the knowledge shared in our Introduction to Google AdWords event, the advanced session is designed to support the fine-tuning of your paid search campaign.

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SEO FOR BUSINESS
6TH DECEMBER 2018

If you've heard of search engine optimisation (SEO) but are unsure where to start, our SEO for Business event is for you. The event covers all of the essential aspects of SEO, including technical requirements, keyword research and selection, and optimised content.

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THE INTERNET NEVER FORGETS
31ST JANUARY 2019

When bad things happen to good brands, you'll need an effective strategy in place to deal with the impact. Whether it's reactive or proactive, online reputation management (ORM) can help you regain control of your brand's online image.

Our Masterclasses are essential for any professional who works in a marketing environment
To sign up or for more information, contact us on **+44 (0) 330 108 4418** or email **info@mediaworks.co.uk**

ASK SILVER BULLET...

“

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF OUTSOURCING MY MARKETING COMPARED TO EMPLOYING IN-HOUSE?

”

I think we were first asked this through the #AskSB column back in December 2015 when I declared a vested interest in supporting outsourced marketing services but attempted to see both sides by stating that, in my opinion, out-sourcing and in-house expertise were not mutually exclusive and actually worked very well together to provide the best of both worlds.

Needless to say, some external agencies and in-house marketers disagreed, although we also had a good deal of positive feedback, and I'd stick by my argument of three years ago – combining in-house product and market knowledge with the fresh thinking, cross pollination of ideas, versatility and creativeness of agency expertise can provide the perfect marketing mix for an organisation. This hybrid model won't suit everyone of course, but it does provide a highly cost-effective means of accessing the diverse range of different disciplines now required to market products and services in a digital age.

With universities currently churning out marketing graduates at a rate that exceeds demand and thereby keeping salaries low, there's obviously a temptation to employ someone who may or may not have the skills required at a relatively cheap rate. But, whilst they may well have studied a module in graphic design, for example, they're unlikely to be as expert as out-sourced graphic designers whilst the same is true for the supply of a public relations service, marketing strategy, media and print buying, event management and the host of other disciplines an out-sourced multi-disciplinary agency can provide.



John Dias

What in-house personnel can do, however, is have an expert insight into exactly what products or services the organisation produces and the markets they wish to access. They also have direct access to the relevant expertise within the organisation and understand the budgets the campaigns have to work within. They are clearly focused on their targets and look to achieve maximum return on investment.

External agencies, however, can provide the fresh thinking that is at the very heart of creativity. To ensure their survival in a very competitive sector, they must necessarily come up with fresh and inventive ideas that an in-house team, often tied and controlled by office politics and personalities, may well have not dared to consider or even imagine.

Mark Evans, Marketing Director of Direct Line Group, recently commented on this, "We have done some in-housing, but only where it was so obvious to do it that we would happily forego the potential downside."

"The downside is that as soon as you in-house something, there is a 'snapshotting' that happens. You take an influx of really good talent and they take all their accumulated knowledge and wisdom into the business at that time and they immediately potentially put the shutters up because they only know about insurance and there is less of an

imperative to be in tune with the developing world outside."

"In most cases we have done part in-housing, so we still get the freshness and vitality and external perspective, but we have some of the core skills embedded within."

Damian Ellis, Director of Global Procurement for FMCG giant, Mondeléz International, (owner of the Cadbury, Milka, Oreo and other global brands) goes further, "For us it's about talent and getting that creative freshness, and I'm not sure if you have the in-house model you will be able to keep that - if there is someone that can do a job better than you, then let them do that job and help you in that process," he said.

In pure economic terms, agencies also come without the costs of in-house recruitment – recruitment fees, PAYE, insurance, pension, leave, holidays, hardware, office space, etc. Clients pay a fixed price for the agency services which may be strategy, Public Relations, digital marketing, copy-writing, graphic design or any other marketing discipline and will get an experienced expert in that field. In addition, should the worst case scenario happen where the campaigns don't work or personalities clash, the contract can quickly be terminated without additional costs or internal disruption.

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.

YOU'VE "HIGHLIGHTED" OUR BUSINESS - TRI-HARD FILMS

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.

The destructive impact of loan sharks and illegal money lending was the subject of a brave new film by north east based Tri-Hard Films. The film, "Shark" was commissioned by the Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) and recently premiered at the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle.

The IMLT commissioned Tri-Hard Films to deliver their key messages and information in the form of a short dramatised film. The team consisting of TV scriptwriter Debbie Owen, Director Daymon Britton and Director of Photography Morgan Stephenson engaged Highlights PR to promote their work and help to attract a full house at the premiere.

"Shark" was shot over three days in Newcastle and North Tyneside with Wallsend's Town Hall transformed into a police station and a hospital for the production.

Highlights PR featured Tri-Hard Films in a number of newspaper articles including front page of the Chronicle's entertainment section, online business sites and trade and lifestyle magazines. They also appeared on BBC radio.

Morgan said; "Keith I can safely say, you didn't



disappoint and I was absolutely blown away by the level of press and broadcast coverage we received, as was the client.

"You researched and understood the topic, found exactly the right channels for maximum impact and were instrumental in ensuring we had an extremely well attended premiere event. Thanks to your hard work, commitment and support; we

made our first big-screen event a huge success, and you have given us the confidence to pursue more projects like this one where we get to make the drama we want to and guarantee hard outcomes for those brave enough believe in us.

"I really can't wait for our next project together, you're now an essential part of our team."

To see how we can help you, let's have 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



We're not about gimmicks, gizmos or giveaways - we're about getting you noticed.

Call Keith now
on 07814 397 951

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www.highlightspr.co.uk



P.S. Free torch for every new customer (lol)

GATESHEAD TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST SCORES WITH AWARD HAT TRICK

Growing North East technology company Synergi has secured international recognition for the third year in a row for its use of advanced business process systems.

The Gateshead firm, which recently moved to larger offices on The Watermark business park, has won the 2018 Nintex Partner Award for EMEA Customer Success.

This is the third partner award Synergi has picked up in three years, which has been presented following the company's track record in rolling out the Nintex Platform's process automation capabilities to customers across the North East and nationally.

The award recognises the valuable contribution Nintex partners make in helping their customers automate workflows and generate documents to improve and transform performance and productivity.

Synergi's CTO Justin Short said: "Winning this



award highlights our excellence in delivering and supporting the technology. Our customers and their success are at the heart of everything that we do, and we are delighted that our expertise

has again been recognised."

Nintex is the world leader in intelligent process automation with more than 7,500 enterprise clients and 1,700 partners in 90 countries.

NEW BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY TO BE ROLLED OUT IN NEWCASTLE

A new ultrafast broadband solution, which offers one of the fastest connections available in the UK, is being rolled out in Newcastle by North East-based business communications and systems specialist Cellular Solutions.

G.fast Broadband is part of a new generation of ultrafast broadband solutions currently being launched in the UK. Using new technology to boost the speeds at which data can be transferred over the existing broadband network infrastructure, G.fast Broadband is capable of download speeds of up to 330Mbps.

G.fast Broadband is being rolled out on a pilot deployment scheme by Openreach and is now

available in 46 locations throughout the UK, one of which is centred around Gosforth in Newcastle. The city is the only location in the North East to currently benefit from the scheme.

Cellular Solutions has been chosen by G.fast Broadband provider Fibre 1 to be its launch partner for the scheme in Newcastle and will deliver the new solution to business customers.

Once it has been made available in a location, G.fast Broadband can be delivered to business premises using the same copper wires that were originally used for voice calls, therefore removing the need for costly and time consuming installation works.



NEW LOOK, SAME GREAT SERVICE FROM CONCEPT



Digital and creative recruitment agency Concept Personnel is continuing to thrive in its 16th year of business with the launch of a new website and brand overhaul.

The new website and brand refresh are closely aligned with the company's vision for further growth over the next five years, whilst continuing to provide exceptional service to its clients online.

Over the past year, Concept has seen significant growth within the business and now provides national coverage from its network of offices in Newcastle, Scotland and the South.

Jo Carter, Managing Director of Concept, explained:

"Our company ethos has always been the same - no-nonsense, caring, quality service! However, working right at the heart of the digital and creative industry we are aware of how important our brand is, and after 16 years it was time to refresh our image. The clean, simple lines in the new logo represents exactly what we are - simple, honest, direct and approachable, and this theme is continued through to our new website."

The new website has been designed to offer the ultimate user-friendly experience for candidates with improved navigation and responsive functionality.



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Tackling the constant Cyber Threats facing law firms

The National Cyber Security Centre has issued its first legal threat report:

£11m of client cash has been stolen in cybercrime over the last 12 months, also 60% of law firms reported an information security incident - **20% more than last year**. All sizes of firms are vulnerable, from small sole practitioners up to international corporate law firms.

But why Law Firms?

- Handle huge amounts of confidential information on clients and deals
- Process substantial amounts of funds
- Negotiate highly sensitive mergers and acquisitions

The risk they face is increasing due to:

- The introduction of GDPR
- A move to delivering legal services digitally
- An increase in the use of artificial intelligence in the sector



Protect your business by talking to our experts. Or come to one of our cyber-security events where security professionals and ethical hackers discuss upcoming issues, and how you can avoid being a victim.

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THE CYBER-THREATS FACING LAW FIRMS



The National Cyber Security Centre has issued its first legal threat report to law firms, showing that £11m of client cash has been stolen in cybercrime over the last 12 months, and that 60% of law firms reported an information security incident in the same period – an annual increase of 20%.

Handling huge amounts of confidential information on clients and deals, processing large amounts of funds, and negotiating highly sensitive mergers and acquisitions all add up to create a sector which is prime target for cyber-criminals. The risk is even greater for law firms working with clients in controversial sectors, where political or ideological groups see opportunities to access information.

The introduction of GDPR, a move to delivering legal services digitally, and the increasing use of artificial intelligence only increases the risk, and that risk is not confined to large, high profile firms either. Law firms of all sizes are vulnerable, from small sole practitioners up to international corporate law firms, and the results can be highly damaging, or even fatal. Too many organisations assume this is something that only happens to others.

The Mossack Fonseca data breach in 2016 saw the Panama-based law firm suffer a major attack and lose a massive 2.6 TB of data. This was subsequently traced back to IT security weaknesses, and led to the collapse of the

business. Cases like these are not a 'rest of the world' problem, they are happening in the UK right now.

As IT partners to many of the region's leading legal firms, our role is to help them to assess vulnerabilities and put a tailored backup, business continuity and disaster recovery strategy in place to protect not just themselves, but also their clients.

It is not a case of if an interruption will happen, it is a case of when. A considerable number of organisations are ill-prepared, and law firms are not immune.

The NCSC report details the four most common threats facing the legal sector:

Phishing. Usually done via email or text, this involves sending official-looking messages that encourage the user to click on a link. This is the most common type of attack on law firms.

Data breaches. These can come from outside and inside the organisation, and insider breaches can be accidental as well as malicious.

Ransomware. This is where a malicious piece of code is introduced into the system, encrypting data and paralysing the infrastructure so hackers can blackmail you into paying for the decryption key. Sadly, paying the ransom can often encourage hackers to see you as worth targeting again.

Supply chain compromises. Working with third party partners, with whom you share data, opens you up to risk unless you are certain they have robust security in place.

While there are measures that your IT team can put in place to protect your business on all sides, remember that cybercrime is not just an IT issue. As a serious threat to every organisation it is now a strategic risk management issue that should be discussed at boardroom level.

Cybercrime is constantly evolving and the best way to protect your business is to work with an expert IT security partner. Come along to one of our regular cyber-security events and hear from security professionals and ethical hackers about the topical issues, and how to avoid being the next victim of the cyber-criminals.

For more information call 0191 442 8300, email contact@itps.co.uk or visit www.itps.co.uk



WHAT MAKES A PERFECT BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP?

The key to a perfect partnership is confidence, communication and creating trusting relationships.

What makes a perfect business partnership? For brothers Steve and Dave O'Connell, founding directors at Advantex Network Solutions, the key is to find businesses who share the same ethics. A business with similar goals.

It's as much about reflecting on key values as it is about moving forward. Advantex launched 16 years ago with two main aims: to provide good customer service and a great place to work. Almost two decades later, this mission statement has never changed, but the business has grown significantly beyond initial plans and aspirations.

"On reflection, looking back at why Advantex have grown and developed so many strong partnerships with businesses throughout the UK, it occurred to me that those original values were key. And although the business has developed and many other key factors have played a part, it was those initial ideas that have stayed core to our business" says Steve O'Connell, Sales and Marketing Director.

In order to meet key values, trusting relationships must be formed and important partnerships made. Rockliffe Hall is one of many key partnerships for Advantex.

"Rockliffe Hall is an organisation close to our hearts," says Steve. "We've been involved since day one when Shepherd Construction Ltd were on site in the early days. We remember with fondness how the underground tunnel, which is now used by the back of house teams, was discovered in the basement. Or when the stone sarcophagus was recovered from the basement and when the builders uncovered the ornate fire place in The Orangery.

"We've watched Rockliffe come to life, grow and evolve over the years and what is so great about our partnership, which spans over a decade, is that they work on the same level as us when it comes to business ethics."

The Advantex way focuses on embracing family values in the workplace. Not just because of the two founder brothers, but because their greatest asset is their staff - much like the company values at Rockliffe Hall.

"For us, the key to a trusting relationship is a long-term partnership - whether that's with our staff or our clients," adds Dave O'Connell, Operations and Finance Director.

"We don't always get it right, but communication is key. And if the trust is there then we truly believe you can overcome any problems together. Strong relationships make strong solutions."

As both Rockliffe Hall and Advantex have evolved as businesses, a proud partnership has been formed - one which drives reinforcement, results and resolutions. Working together to find the best possible way for business to flourish in the hospitality, education, manufacturing and enterprise sectors.

The trusting relationship between Advantex and Rockliffe Hall means both businesses are able to act fast and adapt when it comes to growing with the IT and communications industry.

Investing in the fastest Internet connectivity, the latest wireless technology, installing up to date firewalls and making sure the final product attracts the right business users, is all paramount to what Advantex offer as part of this proud partnership with Rockliffe.

"For us, the Advantex way is the right way," says Dave. "It's all about ensuring every customer's experience is a success."

TIM SEWART

Clarity Informatics

Tim, tell me a bit about your background in business?

My background is in law. My job as a lawyer was to look after entrepreneurs, technology businesses, and also help investors, such as business angels, private equity and venture capitalists. Indeed, I still practice law. However, when Clarity was acquired, its new shareholders asked me to help commercialise the company, because it had previously been run on a not-for-profit basis. That's when I switched from being a lawyer to working in business. It's a difficult transition to make, because lawyers aren't typically comfortable making business decisions. So a change in my mindset was needed.

In your own words, can you describe what Clarity Informatics does?

Clarity writes clinical guidance for doctors (like a medical encyclopaedia) and provides software to the NHS. 90% of what Clarity does is in primary care, i.e. GP Practices. Clarity's products generally help doctors and nurses save time and money, so they can spend more time with patients.

How did Clarity come about?

Clarity was spun out of Newcastle University. The team behind Clarity was commissioned over 20 years ago to write medical guidance and to help ensure consistent standards and approaches to treatment across the UK. It's something our clinicians still do today. Our guidance is made available to UK doctors free of charge by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) under the brand "Clinical Knowledge Summaries". It covers the 360 most common conditions. Each topic gives the clinician advice on how to diagnose and treat the patient (including details of drugs and dosages). It is used by over 300,000 clinicians in the UK every month.

As well as your clinical guidelines, you've launched a software product that helps manage GP Practices.

How have you achieved this?

GP surgeries, like any small businesses, need to take care of HR, finance, health and safety, and also need to ensure they pass the inspections from the regulator (the CQC). Our software makes all of these "back office" functions a lot easier to run, and also allows GP practices to share information and resources. The sharing and collaboration between practices is really important, because the easier it is, the more it helps practices joining together as "federations" (essentially cooperatives). All of this sharing and collaboration through "federation" tends to increase standards and reduce costs.

This software that manages GP practices' back-office is called GPTeamNet. A couple of years ago it was a separate business, based just along the road from us in Cobalt Business Park. They had built up a customer base of around 400 GP practices, but were very North East focused so it made sense for us to join forces. Since

the acquisition, we've grown that customer base to close to 1,500 practices (20% of UK practices). To achieve this, we used our market presence with the e-portfolio to run free trials of GPTeamNet, and within six to twelve months enquiries came flooding in. We also commissioned leading sales generation company, Durham Lane, to generate interest for group purchases (e.g. federations) and create a pipeline of new opportunities.

GPTeamNet is continuing to be hugely successful for us, so acquiring and scaling up innovative and complimentary technologies is something we want to continue to do more of moving forwards.

In addition to helping practices, you've also created software which provides an online development portfolio for medical professionals, how does this work?

Doctors and nurses need to be relicensed to practice every five years, and to do so they need these portfolios, which are used as part of an annual appraisal process. You log-in and store important information, including significant events that have happened in practice, as well as any learning or courses you may have been on. The portfolio that we provide to GPs is used by over 85% of practitioners in England (around six years ago we had a 49%) and we are really proud of this.

I would attribute the increase in market share to: (1) heavily investing in the product – we have a brilliant and much bigger software development team; (2) keeping our prices low – we have never increased the price (£50 per annum); and (3) forming important partnerships with businesses and organisations that "plug-in" to our product; making it more and more useful.

What innovations are you working on at the moment?

One of the challenges in the medical profession is that there is a limited amount of quality e-learning resources out there. There are numerous medical conferences across the UK but these events require a significant time commitment, which isn't always easy for GPs to give. What e-learning there is, tends to be focused on operational or health and safety topics, such as lifting and handling. As the authors of NICE's Clinical Knowledge Summaries, Clarity is responsible for authoring a wealth of clinical best practice guidance, and it's this guidance that we'll be using to launch our new e-learning service. Introduced this month and called 'Clarity Plus', it is initially available to GPs as an upgrade to the online portfolio and delivers the first of its kind e-learning resources for doctors based on the nationally recognised best-practice guidance.

What's your vision for the company?

Clarity's mission is to make doctors and nurses lives easier by saving them time and money. We now have a range of products that are used widely throughout the NHS, particularly in primary care. I hope that we can develop and acquire new technology that we can make available to our customers, so that we keep help the NHS free up resources for patient care.





Business leaders and innovators in our region are something to be admired, and we are celebrating that by speaking to accomplished professionals from across the North East business community, providing a fascinating insight into how they got to where they are today.



This month we chat to

CATHERINE HARLAND

Media & Communications Director of DigiPro Media

Tell us a little about your background.

I wasn't interested in further education and craved getting into the workplace. I was offered an apprenticeship at The Chronicle after leaving sixth form, but decided to join the family business instead. Conroys Furniture was founded in 1959 in a second-hand shop in Stanley, which my parents grew over a number of years through sheer hard graft, resulting in a chain of stores across the North East including Metro Centre, Middlesbrough, Washington and Leeds. This is where I learned the importance of dedication and a strong work ethic, in whatever business you're in.

How did you get into PR?

My working career started on the sales floor followed by time in other departments, until I headed up the PR and marketing. This is where my love of communications was born. In those days press releases were distributed using a trusty old fax machine with no such thing as social media to communicate a brand's voice!

How did your career progress?

In 1996, I left the family business to branch out on my own. By sheer chance, I founded a chain of hair & beauty salons where I utilised my business and PR skills to build the salon's reputation and drive growth. Of course there were bumps and learning curves along the way, but what I have learned in business is to embrace challenges. It's the difficult times we learn most from.

What was your proudest moment?

I've always been passionate about fundraising. Fashion Kicks was founded in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, in memory of my Mum, where Newcastle Utd strutted the catwalk, raising £73k. The event went from strength to strength, and went on to raise nearly £1.5 million, a fantastic legacy to my Mum.

What made you set up your own PR agency?

At the time, I was writing for another monthly North East magazine and the editor encouraged me to take the plunge. So I did and C-PR Communications was born! The first year was surprisingly busy but also challenging, having to adapt to demands of the new business combined with working 60 hour weeks. As challenging as it was, I was working with such names as Specsavers, Durham County Cricket Club and Slaley Hall Hotel. I felt grateful and humbled for the opportunity to be working with great brands at such an early stage of trading.

Who is your inspiration?

Without doubt, my Mum. The most inspiring, formidable and hard working individual I have ever met. Her life was filled with much adversity, having an ill husband and four children, but she somehow managed to build a multi million pound business from scratch. Unfortunately she got ill herself at 57, but the pitman's daughter did well and I'm forever proud.

You are now part of DigiPro Media. Tell us more about this.

Firstly, this was never the plan but life sometimes gives us curveballs! My daughter was relocating back to the North East after several years working in London agencies while my son had founded DigiPro Media, a web design and branding business, several years previously. It made sense to join forces to become a digital agency providing PR, social media management, online marketing and web design.

How does PR fit into business in 2018?

Public Relations has obviously evolved dramatically over the years with the use of technology, revolutionising how PR works and has created the capacity for much further reach.

It remains an invaluable service and should be harnessed by any business. It is imperative to show your business as an industry leader, to attract interest, increase sales and to build reputation. PR is not simply about getting in the press these days with so many valuable platforms to use. The use of social media, blogs and online business platforms can all be a great way of cutting through the noise.

Are you a risk taker?

I've had my moments and I'm fortunate enough to say that the majority have been worth taking! All business owners have to take risks at various points in their career to progress, and it's the failures along the way that we learn, and ultimately, grow from.

What pleasure do you get from working within the PR industry?

Simple. Client success. We strive to give our clients' campaigns the maximum amount of exposure possible, so to see clients receiving the results they desire makes the job incredibly rewarding.

How do you see the PR industry changing?

In this day and age, with the digital landscape constantly evolving and the public growing less trusting of the media and online platforms, consumers require transparency more than ever. That's why I can see a shift towards a more honest type of communication between brands and consumers, with brands opting to better interact with their audience, on platforms new and old, to build trust through openness, integrity, and most importantly, engaging storytelling.

“
*...Proud moments
happen every day...*
”



FAMILY VALUES SURVIVE GENERATIONS

Meet Chris Johnson, Headteacher at Argyle House School, Sunderland, the only family owned and managed independent school in the North East of England. A school nestled in Ashbrooke, the leafy suburbs of Sunderland, since 1884.

In 2002, Jeff Johnson handed over the reins of Argyle House to his two sons, Chris and Neil. Jeff was a pupil at the school and in the later years he taught Maths there. He loved the school so much that he bought it in 1968 from the first family that owned it since 1884. After taking over, Chris has since steered the school into an educational establishment of repute in Sunderland and in the North East. With a degree in Environmental Science and Education from St. John's, York, he is instrumental in developing the environment in the school for children to enjoy learning and instilling in them, the core values upon which the school was built, being strong family values. As a parent, with his two sons attending the same school, he understands children and their aspirations. Always ready to listen, with an infectious smile, Chris Johnson talks to Northern Insight about what makes this school, with a heritage of 134 years, enjoyable for children and appealing for parents.

On core strengths of Argyle House.

"It's a school where children come willingly to learn. Studying and learning are two different things. The willingness to learn comes from the kind of environment that a school has. When they are happy, they are more receptive to learn. Argyle House provides such an environment. Also this is not a school with 1000 children! Class numbers are small and there is merit in this structure. This enables our teachers to focus on a child's strength, his or her interest and guide them accordingly. When a child is known individually to a teacher, this makes a tremendous difference in their development. Our teachers know each and every one of them. We never look upon a child as a student of the school. They are always looked upon as sons and daughters. When they come to school, they're coming home. A place where they are loved and respected. We're of the opinion that education must be enjoyed and it must give the child the chance to develop not just academically, but also physically, socially and emotionally too. Extra-curricular activities are crucial here. In fact, our clubs and activities are far ranging and we often have twenty running at any one time."

On what children are taught, apart from the curriculum.

"Every generation carries on good values that have been passed on by the previous generation. Without that, society is heading for troubled waters. Our children today must be taught the importance of those values, of honesty, of respect, of kindness, of being responsible citizens, of humanity and above all, the value of hardwork and the importance of being a good human being. What we lay down as a foundation today will enable our children to build their future with confidence. We stress on the importance of what we call 'The R-Principle' where we encourage our children to be resourceful, resilient, respectful, responsible, reflective and to possess the ability to reason. Our teachers take on different roles apart from teaching such as being mentor guides, a friend who listens and comforts, a dad or mam who is stern but loving as well. When a school has such an environment, happiness takes over."

On key highlights over the years.

"Proud moments happen everyday. We've attained the highest possible rating by ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) in our most recent inspection. Our facilities are updated regularly and we've increased our wider partnership links. We've also devised new curriculums with our pupils in mind, which feature extra GCSE subjects. From a student accomplishment perspective, I'm proud to have a number of children who have excelled in their sporting endeavours. Two brothers claimed gold in European Gymnastics and one child represented Great Britain in Karate."

On time away from being a Headteacher.

"Away from work, most of the time is spent with my family. I love watching my boys play football. You can find me walking the dogs and in the swimming pool, having a bit of me-time."

Any wisdom to share?

"Hardwork pays. Everyone sees and applauds the person at the top of the mountain. But it's good to reflect upon how they got there in the first place."

For more information about the school, please visit www.argylehouseschool.co.uk

SCHOOLS ARE FAILING OUR CHILDREN

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster at Durham School



In the era of Google, Wikipedia and social media, our education is stuck in a factory model better suited to the nineteenth century than the twenty-first.

In the modern world, our children don't need to be force fed facts but should learn skills such as creativity, collaboration and problem solving. Two thirds of pupils in school currently will end up doing jobs that don't exist yet, so how can a tedious diet of Gradgrindian learning possibly prepare them for the challenges of the future?

This is a ubiquitous narrative in education, used by a variety of company leaders, consultants and, most recently, politicians. Esther McVey, the Work and Pensions Secretary, was the most recent politician to quote the "jobs that don't exist yet" statistic, this time attributed to the World Economic Forum. Other sources for similar statements include the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and Oxford University. Many of you reading this may have heard the statistic from other sources when discussing issues of graduate recruitment. If so many people are saying it, surely it must be true?

Let's look at the claim in more detail. Perhaps the most surprising thing about it is that it's a claim that's not new:

The idea that our schools should remain content with equipping children with a body of knowledge

is absurd and frightening. Tomorrow's adults will be faced with problems about the nature of which we can today have no conception. They will have to cope with the jobs not yet invented.

This comment wouldn't be out of place in a tweet from an education technologist but in fact is a quote from 1966. He is right, you may be thinking; there are many jobs that exist now that wouldn't have been dreamt of 50 years ago. App developers, data managers and communication directors are examples of three job titles which would have been meaningless at that time.

Yet, fundamentally, are those jobs so different? The technology surrounding the roles may have changed but much of the skill required to carry out the jobs are not so different from what would have been required for analogous jobs in 1966. Electronic engineers needed sound knowledge of physics and maths, with an ability to apply them in 1966; IT designers need similar skills today. Bookkeepers need numeracy, an eye for detail and an ability to cross-reference different pieces of information; so do data managers. Copywriters needed literacy, skill in formal and informal writing as well as a literary flair in compiling articles; comms directors would

argue that is precisely what's required in today's PR world.

So, at the risk of sounding like a (younger) Victor Meldrew, I don't believe it. I don't believe that the jobs of tomorrow are going to require radically different skills from school-leavers and university graduates than they did 20 or 50 years ago. The titles may be different, but then they always have been. The Victorians were notorious for embellishing fairly mundane jobs with grandiose descriptions: "Delineator of the Natatorial Science" (swimming teacher) and "Tripocaptontic Perruquier" (wig maker). I dare say some of the more futuristic job titles such as "Talent Aggregator", "Financial Technologist" and "Organisational Quartermaster" (no, I am not making these up) will be rather more down to earth than they sound.

So, next time you hear the latest futurologist talking about how schools are dreadfully outdated, take it with a pinch of salt. All of the technological marvels we are witnessing now were developed by men and women who passed through the traditional educational system we would recognise. It served them well, and I have no doubt it is doing the same for today's youngsters.

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



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STUDENTS HELP HISTORIC MARKET TOWN COMPETE WITH ONLINE SHOPPING BOOM

A group of final year business students at Northumbria University recently teamed up with Morpeth & District Chamber of Trade to help retailers in the town boost sales and create a vibrant destination for local companies and the community to thrive.

Ken Brown, chair of Morpeth & District Chamber of Trade, explains: "Morpeth, like towns across the country, is increasingly competing with the internet to thrive. While the Chamber has made commendable efforts to develop Morpeth and its local trade, we feel there is room for change and improvement.

"We approached the Business Clinic at Northumbria University to tap into bright, emerging talent to see if the business leaders of tomorrow could devise a marketing and events strategy to better support trade and tourism in the town and they did not disappoint."

The Business Clinic model at Northumbria University's Newcastle Business School involves groups of business students forming a 'consultancy firm' to provide free advice to clients. Students are asked to analyse the problem they are presented, consider possible solutions and provide a detailed report and full presentation of their recommendations. The service is available to all types of businesses from SMEs and multinationals to charities and third sector organisations.

"The students have been extremely thorough in their research, meeting with local businesses and hosting focus groups with retailers, people in the local community and wider stakeholders," says Ken.

"The strategy they've produced is excellent and deliverable. It encompasses digital marketing to drive engagement between the local community, visitors and retailers. They have also devised an exciting annual events plan which plays to the town's strengths around heritage and culture and will appeal across the age groups.

"I feel we have greatly benefited from the experience. The team has really run with



(L to R) George Williams and Ken Brown, chair of Morpeth & District Chamber of Trade with Business Clinic students William Barnes, Oliver Duxbury, Joshua Boland and Rose Stocks.

the brief and come up with a very professional, comprehensive strategy designed to position Morpeth as a destination for individuals and families to come and enjoy their leisure time."

Nigel Coates, director of the Business Clinic, said: "We have been delighted to work with Morpeth & District Chamber of Trade. They are an organisation proactively tackling a very real issue for high street retailers and local communities. We are proud of our students and the professional approach they've taken. This type of experiential education is crucial in their development and helps to give them a competitive edge as they take their next career steps in the business world after graduation."

To find out more go to: www.morpethchamberoftrade.com or contact the Northumbria University Business Clinic at: www.northumbria.ac.uk/business-services/the-business-clinic

WHY I LOVE SEPTEMBER

By David Tickner, Headmaster at Newcastle School for Boys.

The current structure of the school year dates from the late nineteenth century, the introduction of compulsory education and the raising of the school leaving age. In the more agrarian economy of that time, children were involved in harvesting crops during the summer months and so the school year began in September.

Whilst such an arrangement may now be an anachronism, it is nevertheless a familiar cycle that I have enjoyed for most of my life – as a pupil, an undergraduate and as a teacher. Before teaching, I spent a few years working in finance. The tax year, I found, didn't quite have the same rhythms and appeal. September 2018 will mark my 26th start to a new school year as a teacher and seventh as a Head. During term time, schools are relentlessly busy and energetic places. The cycle of the academic year affords healthy opportunities for renewal for boys, staff and schools. Fresh starts can be particularly useful for some pupils. Teenage boys spring to mind.

Whilst the long school summer holidays – derided by some – afford teachers and pupils a valuable opportunity to recover, relax and refresh, they also provide the opportunity for reflection, review and re-evaluation.

At Newcastle School for Boys we have a strong, collective vision of our continued growth and development. Yet it's always worthwhile to pause and reflect on progress and successes, to reassess priorities and next steps, to refine and improve processes.

Having undertaken these exercises, I am always raring to go come September – if not a little before. There is even a small element of the long summer holidays that I find a little frustrating as a period of time when it's not so easy to move things on.

I enjoy the summer holidays and the space they provide to think and to plan. I enjoy spending time with my family and going places. But I'm always just as pleased to be back at a school that is also going places.



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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newcastleschool.co.uk



THE HOME SECRETARY & JESMOND TOWERS

Ammar Mirza CBE in association with Jeff Winn hosted the Home Secretary at the newly refurbished Jesmond Towers. Prominent members of the Asian business community were invited to join other guests at a very private gathering and meet with the Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP, within the delightful settings of this historic venue. A number of future private dinners are being planned for cabinet ministers to showcase the North East. Visit www.abconnexions.org for more info.





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ALL-NEW MAZDA CX-5 SUV IS PRACTICAL AND WITH PLENTY OF SPACE FOR ALL THE FAMILY



Stephen Robson, sales controller, with the Mazda CX-5 model at Jennings Mazda in Sunderland.

Motorists in the market for an SUV model are taking advantage of the all-new CX-5 at Jennings Mazda, part of Jennings Motor Group.

Launched last year, the latest stylish and practical mid-size sporty model is on display and available to test drive at the group's Stadium Way dealership based in Sunderland, and the Cargo Fleet Lane branch in Middlesbrough.

James Chorlton, general sales manager at Jennings Mazda in Sunderland, said; "The all-new Mazda CX-5, which joined the compact crossover CX-3 model just last year, is continuing to be a popular choice with customers across Wearside and Teesside.

"It offers a sporty exterior profile, and combines SUV solidity and functionality with a powerful and exhilarating driving experience, as well as being a

practical car with plenty of space for all the family."

Both the CX-5 and CX-3 models offer Mazda's SKYACTIV Technology, which delivers a unique mix of driving pleasure, balanced with outstanding environmental and safety performance, in addition to Mazda's KODO Soul of Motion design, ensuring optimal driving without compromising on safety.

Those opting for the all-new CX-5 model have 10 models featuring SE-L and Sport Nav trim levels to choose from, all are available with standard equipment including LED headlights, auto power-folding door mirrors, dual-zone climate control, DAB radio and a seven-inch colour touch-screen

display with Mazda's integrated navigation.

Other models in the Mazda range and readily available to test drive at Jennings Mazda, include the Mazda2, Mazda3, Mazda6, MX-5, MX-5 RF, as well as the limited edition MX-5 Z-Sport and MX-5 Sport Black.

Customers who purchase a vehicle at Jennings Mazda dealerships can also take advantage of a range of quality used cars, a Motability service, and a range of aftersales facilities, including service, MOT, and genuine parts and accessories. The Middlesbrough branch also offers an accident repair centre.

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Mazda, contact Sunderland on 0191 562 3399, Middlesbrough on 01642 256655, or visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk



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Customer Deposit	£4,450	Total Amount Payable	£33,149.55	Excess Mileage Charge per mile	14.9p
Amount of Credit	£26,045	Fixed Rate of Interest	2.00% p.a.	Representative APR*	3.9% APR

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OPEN HOURS: Mon-Fri 9am-7pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10.30am-4pm.

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the all-new Mazda CX-5: Urban 35.8 (7.9) - 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 50.4 (5.6) - 61.4 (4.6), Combined 44.1 (6.4) - 56.5 (5.0). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 152 - 132.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing. These are provided for comparability purposes only and may not reflect your actual driving results.

Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating dealers only on vehicles registered between 01.07.18 and 30.09.18. T&C apply. *3.9% APR Mazda Personal Contract Purchase available on all Mazda CX-5 models. Finance subject to status, 18s or over. Guarantee may be required. Mazda Financial Services RHI ISR. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Part exchange the vehicle. (ii) Pay the Optional Final Payment to own the vehicle or (iii) Return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition or mileage of the vehicle. Model shown: 2018 Mazda CX-5 150ps 2WD Sport Nav+. OTR from £30,495. Model shown features optional Soul Red Crystal Metallic paint (£800). OTR price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, first registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. *Test drives subject to applicant status and availability. Details correct at time of going to print. Not available in conjunction with any other offer unless specified.

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JARROW HALL TO HOST NORTHERN STAGE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS

Jarrow Hall has recently announced that Newcastle-based theatre company Northern Stage will be performing their touring production of *The War of the Worlds* for the first time in Jarrow on 13th October 2018.

The new critically-acclaimed production relocates H.G. Wells' iconic novel to the North East in an inventive retelling of the sci-fi classic.

Jarrow Hall is operated by Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle, which works with South Tyneside Council to ensure that the much-loved venue has a long-term future for the people of South Tyneside, the wider region and beyond.

Northern Stage is the largest producing theatre company in the North East and is regarded as one of the most important producing theatres in the UK. The company has built a reputation for fresh and relevant productions of modern classics that attract audiences of all ages.

Leigh Venus, Operations Manager at Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle, said: "This is a really exciting new relationship that recognises the importance of investing in culture at Jarrow Hall. Working together we can deliver high quality events in the heart of South Tyneside right here at Jarrow Hall, events that enable a wide range of

people from the local community and beyond to benefit from an increasingly exciting, vibrant and creative place."

Matt Runham, Senior Producer at Northern Stage, said: "Northern Stage are delighted to be performing *The War of the Worlds* at Jarrow Hall in the Autumn. This is the first time we will be taking work to Jarrow and we are hoping this is the start of a longer-term relationship."

Event tickets are available from the Bede Museum reception, over the phone on 0191 424 1585, or online via www.jarrowhall.org.uk.

FOCUSED APPROACH TO COMEDY BY SCATTERED PICTURES

A talented North East actor, presenter, writer and producer is standing up in a bid to attract more film and TV work to the area, especially in the field of comedy.

Newcastle-based actress Kim Tserkezie set up her own production company Scattered Pictures to focus on North East talent. Her dedication to the region is the focus of her work as she aims to nurture local talent, promote the area and bring quality prime-time productions to the region.

Kim explained: "I found that there were many talented people who were feeling isolated and forced to find work down south while we also had

fabulous local locations unexplored on screen. With so little TV development funding in the region, I knew the way forward was to collaborate with other established independent production companies."

Kim's commitment and foresight has paid off. She is currently writing and producing a number of screen projects with BBC Studios, Talkback, Seven Seas Films and even has commissions from leading UK broadcasters.

She continued: "We're very busy at Scattered Pictures which I feel is indicative of the interest that there is in the North East at the moment."



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SEPTEMBER SUNSHINE IN STORE AS BENIDORM OPENS UK TOUR IN NEWCASTLE

Although residents of the Solana hotel have drunk their last sangria on the small screen, North East fans of the hit ITV comedy *Benidorm* can rejoice because *Benidorm Live*, the new stage show based on the TV programme, will premiere at Newcastle Theatre Royal this month (7-15 Sep).

Six members of the TV cast will perform in the hotly anticipated new show. Swapping the poolside for the stage after a quick spruce at the Blow 'n' Go! will be everyone's favourites Jake Canuso (local lothario barman Mateo), Janine Duvitski (middle aged swinger Jacqueline), Adam Gillen (holidaying teenager Liam), Sherrie Hewson (Solana manageress Joyce Temple-Savage), Shelley Longworth (loud mouthed lassie Sam) and Tony Maudsley (flamboyantly camp hairdresser Kenneth).

The show is co-produced by Newcastle's very own Michael Harrison, the brainbox behind the theatre's annual pantomime and West End hits *The Bodyguard*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Annie*.

Writer Derren Litten said: "I've loved ten years of writing *Benidorm* but despite a successful writing career, I'm first and foremost a performer so have always been secretly frustrated I couldn't hear the audience's laughter. This national tour of *Benidorm Live* will make a long-lasting dream come true."

Last year ITV's smash-hit comedy celebrated a decade of hilarity, having followed the ensemble cast of holiday makers and staff for nine series since the first episode in 2007. Season 10 was broadcast earlier this year and the final ever episode aired in May 2018.

Critically acclaimed, *Benidorm* has received two National Television Awards, a TV Quick Award and nominations at the British Comedy Awards and BAFTAs.

RECORD OF THE MONTH – PAUL MCCARTNEY 'EGYPT STATION'

The music legend returns with his first album of new material since 2013's *NEW*. Sharing a title with one of McCartney's own paintings, *Egypt Station* takes the form of a travelogue, bookended by the instrumentals 'Station I' and 'Station II'. The album was preceded by a double A-side single featuring plaintive ballad 'I Don't Know' (one of his best in recent times) and raucous toe-tapper 'Come On To Me' which is certain to be a favourite in live performance. Other highlights include 'Happy With You' – an acoustic meditation on contentment and 'Despite Repeated Warnings' an epic 7 minute, multi-part closer which harks back to some of his early recordings. Now 76, age is but a number for Macca.



WHAT'S ON THIS SEPTEMBER?

Grandmaster Flash

September 6

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661

www.sagegateshead.com

Wicked

September 6-29

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022

www.atgtickets.com

Benidorm Live

September 7-15

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121

www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Jurassic Park in Concert

September 12

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661

www.sagegateshead.com

Treasure Island

September 12-15

The People's Theatre T: (0191) 265 5020

www.peopletheatre.co.uk

Two Pints

September 12 -23

Live Theatre T: (0191) 232 1232

www.live.org.uk

Europe

September 17

O2 Academy Newcastle T: (0844) 477 2000

www.academymusicgroup.com

Kylie Minogue

September 18

MetroRadio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666

www.metroradioarena.co.uk

Calendar Girls: The Musical

September 18-29

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121

www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Early Doors LIVE

September 25

City Hall Newcastle T: (0844) 8112 121

www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Arctic Monkeys

September 27-28

MetroRadio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666

www.metroradioarena.co.uk



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THE FULL FIVE STAR EXPERIENCE

By Michael Grahamslaw



Since my Wife Lisa and I don't really get out much (ha ha), I decided to cap off a stunning Summer of mini-breaks with a visit to Seaham Hall.

Admittedly, this wasn't our first time – we'd checked in earlier in the year but were too hampered by work and family constraints to really savour the experience. With this in mind, we booked in again to really escape from the pressures of modern life. I'm so glad we did.

As one of the region's top hotels, Seaham offers the true five-star experience, combining classical elegance with contemporary luxury. The hotel offers tastefully-appointed guest suites, an award-winning serenity spa and fine dining – all from its enviable cliff-top location.

Dating back to 1791, the restored Georgian country house was originally the stately pile of Ralph & Judith Milbanke – County Durham gentry whose only daughter married the romantic poet, Lord Byron, at the property in 1815.

Since then, it has welcomed many notable visitors including rock royalty Brian May who last year posed for an Instagram photo with the hotel's signature vortex whirlpool. What can I say? I'm Queen's biggest fanboy!

On arrival, the hotel's winding driveway builds a real sense of expectation. The grounds are nicely secluded and possess that real exclusive feel.

Service is incredibly attentive from arrival to check-out and undisputedly five-star – valet parking and luggage is naturally all taken care of.

Following a cheery welcome, we checked out our guest room which was actually more of a mini-flat. Individually designed, rooms are characterised by a boutique charm; ours was decked out marvellously in shades of mauve and grey.

We also found all requisite mod cons including a Flat Screen TV, complimentary WIFI and a Nespresso coffee machine. The real centrepiece however was a free-standing bathtub sitting proudly in the middle



of a marbled bathroom.

As I kicked back for a perusal of the papers, Lisa was already headed for the spa – I can't say I blame her.

If – like Lisa – you're really into a pamper, then Seaham Hall is the place for you. The Serenity Spa draws influence from Far Eastern healing and wellness rituals, creating a calming space which nurtures body & mind. Facilities include a 20m swimming pool, salt sauna, plunge pools, an Indian steam room and outdoor hot tubs. The newly-opened Zen Garden with its infinity hydrotherapy pool set in luscious green gardens is also well worth checking out.

In addition, the spa offers a range of treatments geared toward revitalisation. Lisa took full advantage, enjoying a full aromatherapy facial before reconvening with yours truly for a light bite in Ozone – the spa's in-house, Pan-Asian restaurant.

Following this, we enjoyed a stroll around the hotel grounds of which there are 37 acres before returning

to our suite for some further relaxation.

Food & drink is a key consideration at Seaham Hall Hotel and for our evening meal, we dined regally at the hotel's flagship restaurant – The Dining Room. Its ever-changing menu showcases the very best of British cooking and champions ingredients fresh and seasonal.

Glittering chandeliers and Georgian windows create a grand décor yet despite its opulence, the restaurant is not stuffy. A nice mix of residents and visitors, it possessed a buoyant atmosphere on a near-full Thursday night.

Lisa kicked off with the Severn & Wye smoked salmon paired with pickled cucumber and buttermilk bread. I chose the scorched day boat mackerel – a lovely, smoky tranche with turnip and salted gooseberries.

We followed up with the lamb saddle, smoked aubergine and miso and the dry-aged fillet steak with slow-cooked onions and a watercress salad. Cooked over charcoal embers, this possessed a delicious, light char.

Even our favourite desserts – salted caramel tart and the artisan cheeseboard – couldn't quite tempt us and we returned to our suite totally replete.

The following morning, I rose early and was – unbelievably – the first one in the gym. Lisa cashed in the extra zeds before bucking the trend and ordering breakfast to the room – a selection of smoked salmon, pastries, fresh fruit, coffee and orange juice.

"This feels like the Thomas Crown affair" we joked in light of our elegant surroundings, though I can't recall McQueen/Dunaway walloping the Danishes with quite such gusto!

We headed for home in high spirits; Seaham Hall had been everything we'd expected and remains one of the region's top destination retreats.

For more information, visit www.seaham-hall.co.uk

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ALEX NELSON

National Rail Bishop Auckland Ltd

Alex Nelson ran Chester-le-Track for 18 years with railway station offices at Chester-le-Street and Eaglescliffe station. The increasing move to on-line bookings by apps and laptops prompted a move to transfer the station operations to Northern Railway and Grand Central respectively, and concentrate on the online booking through a new company, National Rail Bishop Auckland Ltd and the website www.nationalrail.com

Here he discusses his favourite aspects of life in the North East...

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

I was born in Greater London in a village near the top of the North Downs called Biggin Hill, home of a wartime RAF fighter station. I went to school in south London, and moved to study geography at University College, Durham in 1980. On graduation I was recruited by the National Bus Company as a trainee in Norfolk, and was posted to what was then the Northern General Transport Company in Gateshead, rebranding as Go-Ahead Northern, in 1985.

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

It's a tremendous privilege to live here, and I do work several days a month in London with a charitable foundation which I chair. There I seem to have this secret life as a railwayman in the north, and here I have a secret life in London giving money away to charities UK-wide. I try to act as an ambassador for the North East even though I am a Londoner, not an adopted Geordie! I would paraphrase from a map of the Durham palatinate on my home staircase: I am a southerner "locally situated in County Durham".

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

I enjoyed working with my team at Chester-le-Track for 18 years, excellent people, but now I work alone and have colleagues in other businesses. I like my connections with various business clubs and connections in the Rotary Club in Chester-le-Street and at University College in

Durham. I like the fact there is always something going on, from exhibitions to theatre and brilliant events like Kynren in Bishop Auckland, where my new business is based, which are attracting new visitors to the region. And the horse racing is good too.

Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?

I like to show off my home town of Chester-le-Street, where the Lindisfarne Gospels were first translated into English around 970, or invite guests to the Senior Common Room or for lunch at Durham Castle. I would recommend Best Western Beamish Hall. I also use the new Indigo hotel in Durham which has been brilliantly restored after standing empty, formerly the County Hall and University HQ.

Where do you like to eat out in the region?

No favourite regular restaurants, but I do like the Northumberland Arms at Felton, and the Commissioner's Quay in Blyth. Crinnions in Lanchester, Old Mill at Knitsley, the Stanley Jefferson in Bishop Auckland (where Stan Laurel was NOT born) to name just a few: we really are spoiled for choice in the North East.

Where do you like to unwind within the North East?

In my garden, a haven within a County Durham pit village with spa pool and summer house, all planned and specified by my wife. I often sit out even after sunset, or get out on the C2C route 7 which runs through Pelton on my mountain bike. I can get to Sunderland and back in an evening.

Are the people really friendlier?

Yes, I think they are, but with training over several years, other regions are catching up. Some of the customer service in London is really good nowadays, and that wasn't the case a decade ago. It's not only about being friendly, but efficient and competent.

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

You mean apart from the eastward view from an East Coast mainline train from Durham to Berwick? From Durham station overlooking the Castle and Cathedral, and the Friary chapel in Alnmouth looking out beyond the garden to the sweep of Alnmouth Bay towards Amble.

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

Yes, better actually. The weather is more benign than other parts of the country, transport is good (not saying it couldn't be improved, like the express Tyne Tees rail link via Chester-le-Street), and not so riven with congestion as other regions, and the quality of business and financial advice available is as good as you'll find anywhere, often superior.

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

I lived and worked in Norwich 1983-5 but it was not long enough to call it home. I prefer to live in the north east and from knowing nobody when I first arrived, now many of my networks and contacts and family are here. I have no intention of moving away.

OUT & ABOUT - PETERBOROUGH



There are far more people booking rail tickets to Peterborough than actually ever go there, since for adherents to split ticketing, Peterborough is the place to rebook on a journey from the North East to London.

As long as the train that you are on actually stops there, which many (but by no means all) do, you can have two tickets instead of one through ticket from the north east to London, and save money on the full fare. But, if you can, book in advance and get a through ticket on a specific train at generally the cheapest fare. Either way, nationalrail.com can find you the best deal.

Peterborough is also the point for changing for places in East Anglia like Norwich and Ipswich avoiding the capital, and Stansted Airport too. We have Lord Exeter to thank for Peterborough's current pre-eminence as a regional hub as he strongly objected to the railway running through Stamford, which was the route of the Great North Road, now the A1. Stamford's loss was Peterborough's gain after the railway opened in 1850 and Peterborough now has a population expected to pass 200,000 this year. Its pedestrianised city centre, cathedral, lido and museum are worth visiting. Although it has had city status since 1541, its major growth started in 1967 when it was designated a New Town and the Peterborough Development Corporation oversaw the building of satellite communities around the outskirts.

The Cathedral Church of Saints Peter, Paul and Andrew was founded as a monastery in 655 and rebuilt in its present form between 1118 and 1238. It has been the seat of the Bishop of Peterborough since the diocese was created in 1541, when the last abbot was made the first bishop. Peterborough Cathedral is one of the most intact large Norman



buildings in England and is renowned for its imposing and unique early English Gothic west front with its three enormous arches.

The general layout of Peterborough is attributed to Martin de Vecti who, as abbot from 1133 to 1155, rebuilt the settlement on dry limestone to

the west of the monastery, rather than the often-flooded marshlands to the east. Abbot Martin was responsible for laying out the market place and the wharf beside the river. Peterborough's 17th-century Guildhall, pictured, was built in 1671 by John Lovin. It stands on columns, providing an open ground floor for the butter and poultry markets which used to be held there.

The city's museum has a collection of some 227,000 objects, including local archaeology and social history, from the products of the Roman pottery industry to Britain's oldest known murder victim. Jurassic fossils feature with the manuscripts of John Clare, the "peasant poet". The Nene Valley Railway, a heritage railway, is alongside an interesting but rather faded attraction called Railworld which explains the development of railways past and future. It was a bit down-at-heel last time I visited but their new website suggests things have improved recently.

The Lido opened in 1936, a striking building with elements of art deco design, lies adjacent to the embankment of the River Nene, south of the city centre. Grade II listed in 1992, it is open from late May over the summer, closing during periods of inclement weather. Unfortunately you'll only be able to admire it from the park outside now as the season ends, I am told, on 2 September. But the riverside is attractive and there is a good Chinese restaurant on a riverboat nearby, a good place to unwind having enjoyed the delights of this interesting city.

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A DISCUSSION PANEL AND FORUM

Working as a cohesive group together, men and women can address the balance in the boardroom and bring about positive change.

Linda Hitman CEO of Exclusive Business has brought together a panel of experts from a wide variety of business sectors, public and private, all of whom are driving the initiative to bring more women into senior and board level positions.

The event is an opportunity for businesses seeking to generate greater diversity in the boardroom to gain insight into how to achieve this and introduce best practice. It is also for those seeking to make the move to a senior role or boardroom position that need support, advice and guidance to take them to this next step in their career.

This event is the first in a series that will present the argument from all sides and offer impartial and constructive advice, driving the North East agenda to be leaders in changing mind-sets.



Linda Hitman

Price £25.00 inclusive VAT
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NEWCASTLE RESTAURANT TO CLOSE FOR NEW WINE BAR

One of Newcastle's most popular restaurants is set to close its doors and reopen as a modern wine bar and café.

Chef and restaurateur Terry Laybourne has announced the closure of his popular Italian restaurant Caffè Vivo. The restaurant has recently closed its doors for refurbishment for several weeks before reopening as a new wine bar and café.

During the last decade, Caffè Vivo, part of Terry's successful 21 Hospitality Group, has won a string of awards which includes being recognised as a 'Local Gem' in last year's UK Good Food Guide. Most recently, Caffè Vivo also featured in OpenTable's Top 10 Best Healthy Restaurants in Newcastle and Northumberland.

Terry explained: "After 10 great years we believe it's about time to allow Caffè Vivo a well-earned retirement. Nobody can stand still in food and hospitality. We're always looking to freshen things up and we think this change reflects a growing shift in dining and drinking. We've enjoyed an explosion in craft beers this last five years or more and now there's a big shift within the wine sector with new craft wines coming from emerging small vineyards."

The new venture, to be called St Vincent, will be an informal, relaxed modern wine bar that will offer a huge range of wines from small independent producers, classic cocktails, craft beer, vermouths and Amaro, served alongside good food on 'small plates'. Breakfast, brunch and evening menus will be offered.



CELEBRATE OKTOBERFEST IN STYLE AT ANTLER

One of Newcastle's newest bars is bringing a famous Bavarian festival to the North East this month. Beer, traditional food, music and even karaoke will be on offer to Antler visitors looking to celebrate Oktoberfest from 22 Sep - 30 Oct.

The restaurant, at Newcastle's 55 Degrees North, will be serving authentic Bavarian dishes from 12pm onwards every day. There will also be a number of drinks offers to make the most of, from classic cocktails to beer served in traditional steins.

On every Friday and Saturday during Oktoberfest, Antler will host music and entertainment on stage from 2pm and eating competitions for those with a strong stomach.

There will also be a VIP option available for groups of four or more, where for £60 a head, visitors can reserve a table and enjoy bottomless beer, a selection of Bavarian sharing platters and free use of the karaoke room.

THE COAST'S CRAZY FRED RECEIVES A TWO STAR AWARD

Whitley Bay-based Crazy Fred's Chilli Emporium has scooped itself a Two Star accolade at the annual Great Taste Awards.

The award has been given for Crazy Fred's Lime and Coconut Chutney, one of the company's bestsellers. Launched at the North East Chilli Festival in July 2013, sales have doubled against the previous two bestsellers.

Owner of Crazy Fred's, Fred Pole, said: "I have previously received a couple of One Star awards from the Great Taste Awards but due to the reaction of the customers I was hoping for more for the Lime and Coconut Chutney. I am delighted to have received a Two Star award."

The Great Taste Awards are organised by the Guild of Fine Food and are the acknowledged benchmark for fine food and drink.

Comments from the judges for Crazy Fred's included: "An interesting and mouth-watering product. We are very impressed by the balance of all the ingredients."



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Emirates Riverside will host an unforgettable night of entertainment on Saturday 29 September as former stars of the smash hit musical Mamma Mia take to the stage to perform ABBA's sensational back catalogue at one of the most iconic outdoor venues in the UK.

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The Bluebell Inn



THE BLUEBELL RINGS THE CHANGES

Jack Grahamslaw meets James Fitzakerly

Hairdresser to the stars, bar manager, qualified personal trainer, Sandyford's undisputed cruiserweight champion, family man – James Fitzakerly wears many hats.

In addition to working full-time as a hairdresser, James plays an active role in managing the Bluebell pub in Jesmond Vale.

The area is in his blood. Having lived in Sandyford for over 20 years, James has drank in the pub for all of his adult life. His kids also attend local schools. James' previous ventures include J3 Salon and The Sandyford Salon and both were based in the area.

What is it about the area that makes James so at home?

He said: "I think it's the real sense of community spirit. I moved here when I was 18 years old and lived literally 100 yards away from the pub. I've always drank there and have enjoyed the sense of community which is missing in so many local pubs."

James is now tying together his three long-held passions; hairdressing, fitness and wellbeing, with the added benefit of all being one site, his "spiritual home".

James has recently supervised the building of a new entertainment centre which will double as a "secret salon" and bespoke fitness space. The development is set to become a real community hub; a one-stop-shop where visitors can gather together to exercise, eat, drink and enjoy a range of premium hairdressing/beauty treatments.

James explains, "For a lot of customers, time is a much larger limiting factor than money. With the set-up that we have planned out, people can come in, benefit from a session of personal training, have their hair cut, washed, and also experience a culinary treat. We're also providing fitness food, freshly packed for you to bring to work and enjoy at your leisure."

"Previously, hairdressing clients dashed off to their fitness appointments and treated both separately. The whole ethos we are trying to promote is offering everything on the one site to help people deal with modern-day hectic lifestyles. You can drop in and be back to work within the hour!"

James has worked in the hairdressing industry for over 20 years. As a young man, his ambition to master his craft led him to California, where he

ended up working with the American Hairdresser of the Year – Dusty Simington – for three years.

"I initially concluded from my early study of hairdressing that Beverley Hills was the heart of the industry. I headed over with a big suitcase and a suit and just started knocking about the top salons, asking if I could stand in the background and watch! Things rapidly progressed from there."

Since returning to the North East, James has managed a string of salons alongside working as a freelance operator, winning national awards and retaining a highly loyal client base in the process.

The new salon will be co-managed by his wife Jayne, returning to work after the birth of their third son, Frankie, in January. The couple, who met through hairdressing, have created a chic salon environment, complete with leather sofas, backwashers and the latest styling equipment.

Appointments will be available on a members-only basis, with an "invitation" policy in place.

Fitness classes will also be running on a daily basis. James has partnered up with Jack Isaacs, an award-winning personal trainer with experience within the Newcastle fitness scene. Those interested can get in touch with either James or Jack using the contact details below.

Both James and Jack will personally run a combo of group fitness classes and bespoke physical training for individuals. A major influence for the more hard-core classes will be Jack's previous CrossFit experience, and almost all of the planned classes will draw upon his extensive knowledge from working in multiple high-class fitness facilities.

The emphasis is on "fun-based fitness" – high-intensity, explosive sessions which also make use of the local outdoor woodland. Sessions are planned to include warm-up exercises including short runs, functional drills like tyre flipping, sledgehammers, calisthenics, gymnastic-type activities that develop strength and endurance, competitive group activities and much more.

"Certain classes will be styled to take advantage of fun, outdoors environments. Think 'Bear Grylls training' Jack says.

They will also offer a bespoke "Mama Fitz" class, a mother and baby focused class where mothers perform exercises with their baby. Designed to provide new mothers with a great chance to exercise and socialise – as well as providing great fun for the babies – classes will take place at 09:15 and are currently scheduled for Tuesdays & Thursdays every week.

There are also plans for an on-site "Fitness Tuck Shop" featuring all leading protein shakes and high-protein fruit smoothies to aid post-session recovery, meal replacement bars and more.

Clearly, all of this makes for a packed daily programme of events. A typical day might include PT sessions from 7am followed by Mama Fitz before the secret salon kicks in mid-morning, finishing up with more fitness classes in the evening until 8.30pm.

James explains further "Members will also benefit from a discount scheme across all three businesses. For example, members of our fitness classes will receive discounts in the salon and in the pub itself. Our aim is to help loyal customers make greater savings."

The pub specialises in serving hearty pub grub and a wide selection of beverages to a mix of locals, families, professionals and students. With a new chef recently recruited and extra investments in the kitchen, there are exciting plans to further develop the wholesome menu, which - together with several other recent changes to the pub - forecast a refreshing renovation of the pub's identity.

As James says: "This is the New 'Bell, not the Old Bluebell."

We asked James, what makes a good local pub?

"I think excellent customer service, good banter, and a friendly atmosphere. People want you to remember their name, what they're drinking and how to pour it. I think just being friendly and inviting more than anything!"

James would like to extend thanks to all those who have supported him in the transitional process, particularly Michelle and the U Salon team.



James & Jack

For more information, visit www.the-blue-bell.com or email James or Jack on jamesfitzakerly@googlemail.com or Jackisaacs57@gmail.com



A TRUE TASTE OF THE PUNJAB

By Jack Grahamslaw

One venue which has really captured the interest in recent times is Little India in South Gosforth. Occupying the former Bistro Neri site, this diminutive restaurant is big on charm with a friendly, family-owned vibe and the food to boot.

Its menu boasts a winning combination of traditional classics and Punjabi specialities which makes it the perfect choice for casual local diners or discerning curry connoisseurs.

Little India is well placed to enjoy some fine nearby hostelries so we lamped down a few post-work beers before our meal. On a balmy Summer's eve, its doors were swung right open affording a bright and airy atmosphere.

Son, Ziggy and his mother, Rehila really do go above and beyond and were on hand to ensure the warmest of welcomes.

Since opening in February, Little India has become a firm local favourite and was nearly full on our visit - supplemented by a steady stream of takeaway punters.

The small restaurant has a communal, convivial feel which make it easy to feel at home. Polished tabletops, wood chairs and red leather seating create a simple décor whilst a funky, Indian wall mural brings a splash of colour. Various other Indian trinkets lend authenticity whilst there's also a fully-stocked bar featuring a neat selection of beers, wines and spirits.

We kicked off with a couple of Cobras and over poppadoms & pickles, surveyed a menu which is a little bit different. All of our old favourites were present but a host of other dishes draw heavily from the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. Of course, this is a region with a distinct culinary heritage known for its rich, spicy and buttery flavours and association with the tandoor.

My pal kicked off with the Papdi Chaat - a cold Indian

street food snack. This featured crispy, whole wheat pastry loaded with diced potatoes, chickpeas and onions drizzled in an emulsion of sweet yoghurt, spiced chutney and tamarind.

I chose the Chingri Tikka; plump king prawns delicately marinated with gram flour, chilli & garlic and cooked in the tandoor.

Main course offered similar variety. I chose the Murgh Handi - something of a speciality dish which originates from the chef's home village of Dharmyal. A deeply flavoursome, saucy dish, this features diced chicken swimming in a medium hot sauce, served in a sizzling korai. Singing with homemade spices, this is a real joy for the tastebuds.

Signposted on the menu as "Only for the Brave", my friend - who can't resist a challenge - tucked into the Chicken Tikka Madras a true classic, done well here and revved up with a barrage of hot spices.

To accompany we chose a fluffy vegetable pilau and some Masala chips which showcased more delicate spicing.

Naan bread is a real signature of the restaurant. Suspended from hanging skewers, these are perfect for tearing & sharing which really heightens the social experience. One between two - or even three - is advised as even seasoned trowers like us struggled with the portion sizes.

This can be your typically beery night (it usually is for us) but Little India also offers a host of unique dishes cooked with trademark Punjabi passion and flair. A quirky gem of a restaurant serving authentic food with a smile.



For more information, visit their website littleindiagosforth.com



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On top of the world! The Sill team celebrate the Centre's first anniversary from the roof top (foreground L to R) Tony Gates, Northumberland National Park Authority Chief Executive with Chairman Glen Sanderson.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE DISCOVERY CENTRE CELEBRATES A NEW MILESTONE

Northumberland National Park Authority celebrated the first anniversary of the award-winning Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre with a summer of fun-filled events.

Since The Sill opened its doors to the public, the Centre has rapidly become one of the region's leading visitor attractions, welcoming over 170,000 visitors in just 12 months and providing an iconic gateway for people to learn about and explore Northumberland National Park.

Glen Sanderson, Northumberland National Park Authority Chairman, said: "We are delighted with the success of The Sill and the fantastic level of support it has received from the public.

"The response from visitors has been very positive. Prior to opening we could never have imagined more than doubling our original visitor numbers. I'd like to congratulate the team at the National Park Authority and our fantastic partners for their hard work and dedication in helping to make this a truly magnificent first year for The Sill.

"We are thrilled the Centre is fulfilling its purpose of connecting people with our wonderful county and we look forward to welcoming more visitors through our jam-packed events and activities programme."

Named after the nearby Great Whin Sill, The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre is the result of an innovative partnership between Northumberland National Park Authority, YHA (England & Wales), and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) through a £7.8 million grant made possible by National Lottery players.

In May, the Centre was presented with a RIBA North East Award from the Royal Institute of British

Architects for architectural excellence. The Sill offers exhibition, learning and event spaces, a café, business hub, YHA accommodation and a shop packed with local produce, arts and crafts. The building also features a world-first; fully accessible Whin Sill Grassland roof which provides a perfect spot for people to take in the iconic views of Hadrian's Wall. The Sill also works with schools, community organisations and businesses to provide educational workshops, activity days and other opportunities.

To celebrate its first anniversary, the National Park Authority teamed up with a host of local partners to deliver a range of special events and activities designed to suit all ages and abilities.

Tony Gates, Chief Executive at Northumberland National Park Authority, explains: "As the UK's first dedicated National Landscape Discovery Centre, The Sill is designed to excite, inspire and enable people of all ages to understand and explore the landscapes, history, culture and heritage of Northumberland.

"What has been particularly pleasing is to see three generations of the same family visit, exploring together and sharing their landscape stories. Our visitors range from school groups and university students learning in our classrooms to four generations of one family enjoying our accessible roof walk together, proving The Sill is providing a perfect gateway to engage people with our unique landscape. It has even been providing further inspiration to many well-seasoned landscape explorers.

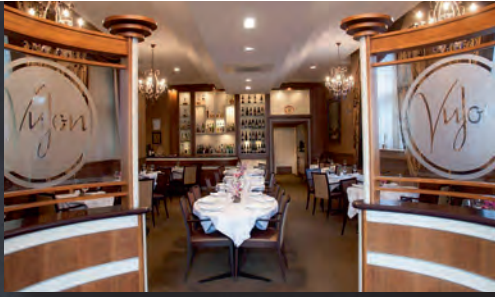
"As part of our first anniversary celebrations we wanted to share the magic and encourage visitors to return to the National Park or to join us for the first time. Whether you're seeking adventure or something more chilled, we have activities for everyone."

Visitors can immerse themselves in virtual reality at The Sill's state-of-the-art 'Digital Landscapes' exhibition which uses pioneering interactive technologies to bring treasures of the National Park to life, making its wild and beautiful landscapes accessible to all.

Running until 30 September, Digital Landscapes is an innovative exhibition and events programme that showcases how digital technology can be used to gain a deeper understanding and enjoyment of landscape and the natural world. The exhibition demonstrates the benefits that new technologies such as 3D modelling, drone surveys and digital mapping have had on tourism, leisure, land management and conservation.

The Digital Landscapes exhibition is supplemented by a series of exciting public events from Minecraft on the Wall using a Raspberry Pi to discover how Roman architects constructed Hadrian's Wall to guided walks and bike rides. There are also nature hunts, hidden history tours, stargazing, mammal monitoring and action packed family shows combining storytelling, theatre, comedy and music.

To book an event or activity, go to www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/whats-on or to find out more about The Sill go to www.thesill.org.uk.



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DON'T PASS ON EL PASO

By Michael Grahamslaw

El Paso brings a flavour of Latin America to Jesmond's dining scene.

The restaurant – which occupies the former Scalini's site – draws inspiration from the street food of Mexico, Spain and South America, capturing the bold colours, aromas and tongue-tingling flavours which characterise the cuisine.

Its menu comprises a stylish offering of tapas, tacos, fajitas, burgers and burritos, freshly cooked with trademark Latin American vim and vigour.

My wife Lisa and I took full advantage on a scorching late Summer day, enjoying a few looseners on the venue's outdoor terrace before retiring inside for a late lunch.

The dining area is very atmospheric, possessing a great social vibe with a mix of families, couples and group parties seemingly all enjoying the new addition.

Since the Scalini's days, the décor has been comprehensively transformed and looks better than ever.

Much like the food, the dining area is big on colour with funky skull patterns creating a day-of-the-dead chic.

El Paso aims to provide a truly authentic experience so its menu is prefaced by a glossary of Latin American terms. We're talking 'Pibil' – strong,



citrus flavoured, slow-roast pork, 'Esabeche' – an acidic Latin American marinade and 'Mole' – foodie parlance for chilli and chocolate sauce.

Being our first time at the restaurant, we looked to our server for inspiration. Hoping for the full sharing experience, he recommended for us a medley of tapas alongside a portion of fajitas which is quickly becoming a firm favourite.

Whilst we sipped on a good red wine, dishes came thick and fast. We enjoyed; tempura king prawns with salsa, charred pineapple and chilli jam, Latino rib-eye steak with chimchurri and fiery Latino croquettes with black pudding and chorizo. Then

came, Mexican Cerviche – Latino sea bass to you and me – and a grand helping of that old favourite, Patatas Bravas.

Alongside this, we sampled the sizzling, signature El Paso fajitas which were cooked to order for this chilli monster.

Tasty food doesn't necessarily mean unhealthy food however. Our server – who was very well clued up – explained that the black beans found in many of the dishes are a great, natural source of protein and complex carbs whilst their homemade salsas – made with fresh fruits and chillis – are loaded with essential vitamins. I think I've found the diet for me!

In addition, El Paso serve a number of vegetarian and vegan options whilst mineral-rich corn tortillas (arguably as good as the real thing) make for a great Gluten-free alternative.

Admittedly, I'd had my reservations about El Paso. Scalini's was something of an institution and a tough act to follow. The Malhotra Group – who are updating the New Northumbria Hotel – have got this bang on though. El Paso captures the zip and zing of Latin American cooking and is set to become a firm favourite in the months ahead. Arriba!

For more information, visit their website elpasojesmond.co.uk



SLALEY HALL SUMMER SOIRÉE

Slaley Hall hosted an exclusive summer soirée in its hotel grounds on Thursday 19th July. Hosted in the outdoor pagoda found in the stunning Ornamental Gardens, guests enjoyed a setting with a difference including Durham Gin cocktails, canapés and live entertainment with the opportunity to meet the team behind luxury bespoke menswear brand Duke Ata.





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ALL ROADS LEADS TO ANTLER

Visitors heading into one of Newcastle's newest bars would be forgiven for thinking they've been transported to the ski slopes, rather than eating and drinking a stone's throw away from the city's bustling centre.

Situated at Newcastle's 55 Degrees North at the former Fat Buddha site, alpine-themed bar and restaurant Antler and its outdoor seating area – the largest in the city and open year-round – is hard to miss, complete with ski gondola seating and the restaurant's very own outdoor pizza oven.

It's the perfect location for a quick drink, a night out (there's even a private karaoke room) lunch or just somewhere to meet up with friends.

Those choosing to visit Antler are greeted by wood panelled walls, roaring fire features and cosy seating areas – all inspired by the world's greatest skill lodges.

And it isn't just the décor that stays true to the theme, with a menu packed full of dishes paying homage to the countries that inspired the idea in the first place, as well as breakfast, burgers and even Sunday lunches.

Diners can try dishes like Bratwurst, either plain or with ketchup or mustard, one of the many schnitzel dishes, or the traditional Sauerbraten – slow cooked marinated beef served with mashed potato and braised red cabbage.

Or, for those dining with several friends, one of

Antler's impressive sharing platters served on a snowboard might be the answer.

But the food is only half the visit, with Antler having teamed up with internationally-renowned cocktail bars Mahiki to offer the ultimate cocktail experience and serving fresh, tank Czech Krušovice beer – the only bar in the city to do so.

As well as a range of spirits, wines and the usual cocktails guests might expect to find on the menu, like the Pornstar Martini and the Classic Mojito, the bar also offers a number of cocktails with a special twist.

For those who like their drinks with a little something extra, try the Mahiki Colada, served in a frozen pineapple, Doctor's Orders which smokes as it is served or What's My Name? complete with white chocolate foam.

Antler also offers a selection of specialist drinks fitting with the theme, including the Avalanche, The Yeti and Sex on the Snowbank – an alpine twist on the holiday favourite.

And although Antler has moved into the former Fat Buddha site, the original restaurant is still open to the public, having relocated to the upper floor.

The Fat Buddha kitchen serves a range of authentic

Asian cuisine, with head chef Walter Pang bringing his own signature dishes to the city, having trained in Japan and previously worked at London's famed Nobu restaurant.

Again cocktails are very much on the menu – this time with a distinctly oriental twist.

Think the classic Singapore Sling or unique offerings such as Ginger Ninja, Zen Garden and Blushing Geisha.

Or how about an imaginative take on a mojito with Asian pear and passion fruit versions also on offer.

Gary Hutchinson of Chrysalis Leisure which owns Antler and the Fat Buddha, believes the restaurants have a very special cocktail offering.

"We've put together two very distinct menus which offer classics and some bespoke drinks which absolutely reflect our venues," he said.

"And we're now also offering masterclasses so groups can get together and not only enjoy drinking the cocktails but they can make them too."

Gary believes the sessions will also be popular with anyone planning a festive night out and with that in mind, both venues have also just released their Christmas party schedule.

For more information on Antler visit www.antlernewcastle.co.uk, call 0191 261 1066 or email enquiries@antlernewcastle.co.uk.

More information on the Fat Buddha can be found at www.fatbuddhancl.com or via info@fatbuddhancl.com. Telephone bookings can also be made via the same number as Antler.



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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE QUALITY BUSINESS WITH CLARION HOTELS

The well-known Quality Hotel in Boldon has announced that it will be changing to a Clarion Hotel with immediate effect. Still under the wing of the Choice Hotels brand, Clarion Hotels tend to be more destination-based venues, with a higher corporate following than that of the Quality brand, which attracts more of the leisure industry.

Not only will the change allow the hotel to compete for much more of the region's corporate business, the Clarion Hotel will bring seven brand new executive rooms, perfect for those travelling to the North East for corporate and business events looking to wow their clients.

The 83-bedroom hotel is set to offer both their leisure and corporate clients more break-out space within the hotel with the addition of brand new restaurant Carter & Finch. Already a popular eatery in their sister hotel, The George Washington located in Washington, the stand-alone restaurant will serve delicious, authentic Italian food to their diners in Boldon.

The Clarion hotel will still be keeping the same four-star rating offered whilst trading under the Choice umbrella, so whilst it may be losing its name - it certainly won't be losing its quality.

If you're travelling to the North East or visiting the South Tyneside area, the Clarion Hotel is the ideal place to meet your clients, rest your head and fill your stomach.



Nicole Vanzie, General Manager

Clarion Hotel 0191 519 1999 www.choicehotels.com/clarion

CONTINUED SUCCESS FOR THE TYNE THEATRE



September 2018 marks over three and a half years since the Tyne Theatre & Opera House became an independent venue, a period in which the theatre has gone from strength to strength.

The team are working hard to restore and protect the Grade I listed, Victorian theatre and keep its wonderful heritage alive for future generations. The theatre has implemented a comprehensive refurbishment plan with funds raised by Tyne Theatre Productions and generous donations. Over 350 seats in the auditorium have now been completely refurbished, several of the ladies toilet facilities have been upgraded, and the bistro bar has been fully redecorated. There is still much to be completed, but thanks to public support, restoration work can continue.

Last year's 150th birthday celebrations – a year in which 80,000 customers visited – reaffirmed the venue as one of the region's top entertainment destinations and the momentum has continued this year with a packed schedule of events. Under new management, the Tyne Theatre & Opera House continues to expand with a stellar line-up of music, dance, drama and comedy.

A packed autumn programme welcomes British legends Brian Blessed and Michael Palin, music from the likes of Alexander O'Neal, Paul Young and The Feeling, and children's shows Guess How Much I Love You and Stick Man. The venue also remains one of Newcastle's top places for live stand-up comedy with, Joe Lycett, Dylan Moran and much-loved North East comedienne, Sarah Millican all set to appear.

The year is set to end on a high note as the theatre stages its annual pantomime with Cinderella set to be another magical show. 2017's Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs marked a brand new partnership with Enchanted Entertainment and proved a runaway success with 22,000 people in attendance across December.

This year's show welcomes a star-studded cast including singing legend, Maureen Nolan as Fairy Godmother, Jamie Lambert from Britain's Got Talent winners Collabro as Prince Charming, X Factor finalist Lola Saunders as Cinderella and returning crowd favourite Charlie Richmond as Buttons.

tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk

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NE1 NEWCASTLE MOTOR SHOW

What an incredible summer we've had in Newcastle this year. NE1 has put its stamp on the city and Newcastle on the map with some of the biggest events the city has ever seen.

The NE1 Newcastle Motor Show kick started nine days of back-to-back NE1 events. The two-day motoring festival brought the city to life with over £10 million worth of cars exhibited on the streets of Newcastle – the world's best cars in the world's best city! The event closed with the Grand Depart on Sunday 4th August and the city awoke the next day to the 16th NE1 Newcastle Restaurant Week.

Both events are fast becoming synonymous with Newcastle – when people think of Newcastle they think of the NE1 Motor Show and NE1 Newcastle Restaurant Week. More participants and visitors are attracted to the city each time the events are held, adding incredible vibrancy to the city centre and delivering a major economic boost to businesses in and around the city.

The NE1 Newcastle Motor Show, the only event in the yearly calendar to close Grey Street, dominated the city this year and attracted record numbers of participants and visitors. For the first time, Blackett Street was added to the carnival of cars and was fully pedestrianised for the duration of the event. This changed the landscape in the heart of the city, providing an additional 1,000 square feet of exhibition space in the centre of the Motor Show.

It is still early days of post-event analysis, and the full facts and figures have yet to be compiled, but feedback from dealers, exhibitors and the public all suggest that we've beaten all records with this year's event.

Footfall on Saturday is estimated to be up by at least 24% on the previous year with an extra 14,000 visitors, and an extra 10,000 visitors on Sunday, increasing footfall by 16.5%. 50% more private exhibitors attended with extra exhibition space on both Blackett Street and Shakespeare Street.

Although the event was held a month later than usual this summer it is clear that whatever weekend is chosen the show delivers a bumper weekend for the city.

People come from across the city, the region and further afield to enjoy the whole weekend and we know that some families have even started organising their holidays around it – as well as extending the time they spend in the city to enjoy the event.

This year, the Motor Show running straight into NE1



Ben Whitfield

Newcastle Restaurant Week transformed Newcastle at what would otherwise have been a quiet week in the summertime calendar.

Retailers, restaurateurs and businesses all benefit from the increased footfall and Newcastle becomes a magnet for visitors.

We are proud of the events and the platform we've created – the Motor Show in particular offers a really unique opportunity for the city to deliver the biggest car show in the North of England – from Edinburgh to Manchester there is nothing city-centre based on a similar scale. The event is growing exponentially and the opportunities are limitless. When we first launched four years ago we had four dealers at the top of Grey Street and 70 cars – look at where we are now.

In terms of footprint growth we couldn't even put a percentage on it – the event has more than quadrupled in size and has started to register on a national scale with the return of Paul Swift's stunt driving displays and the Mercedes AMG simulator for the second year running. This year's star attraction, the Bloodhound SSC, the supersonic racing car aiming to break the world land speed record, drew in and wowed huge crowds. We even worked with world famous motoring illustrator, Guy Allen, known for his commissions with Porsche, Goodwood and Top Gear, to design the illustration for this year's NE1 Newcastle Motor Show programme.

At NE1 we continue to have great ambitions for the NE1 Newcastle Motor Show and recognise that the event's potential is boundless. We are continually looking for opportunities to grow the event and its audiences. The fact that it guarantees a bumper weekend for the city and its businesses and has extended its reach and impact is reason enough for NE1 to continue to explore opportunities to grow, develop and expand the event.

Adding more areas of the city is just one of the ways we are considering expanding the event street by street. We're also seeking inspiration from other car shows in other cities to examine their successful formulas to determine how and where the NE1 Newcastle Motor Show could develop and expand. Events closer to home like the Great North Run also provide inspiration – starting as a small half marathon it has grown into a world renowned event attracting international participants, hundreds of thousands of spectators and BBC televised coverage across the weekend.

We know we can improve on every single element of the Motor Show event and this is a great position to be in. It is already a great day out for the family –, bringing people into the city and encouraging them to spend. But we recognise that not only can we finesse the format, we can revolutionise it and there are so many other areas to explore.

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£99.50 per adult
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Enjoy the festive decorations and warm atmosphere of Horton Grange this Christmas with some delicious food too! Available between 1st December and 23rd December, excluding Sundays.

Lunch - 2 Courses - £19.50 | 3 Courses - £23.50
Dinner - 2 Courses - £24.50 | 3 Courses - £32.50

CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHTS

Join in the festive spirit at Horton Grange with delicious food and fabulous entertainment from our resident disco letting you dance the night away with friends, family or colleagues!

Spaces still available on Friday 7th, 14th, 21st December & Saturday 15th December.

£34.50 per person

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Bring in the New Year at Horton Grange Country House Hotel with a Fabulous Party. Enjoy a Glass of Prosecco on arrival with Canapes, a 5-course dinner followed by Tea and Coffee. Charge your glasses for the Midnight Bells, followed by celebratory fireworks and a late Bar & Disco until 1am.

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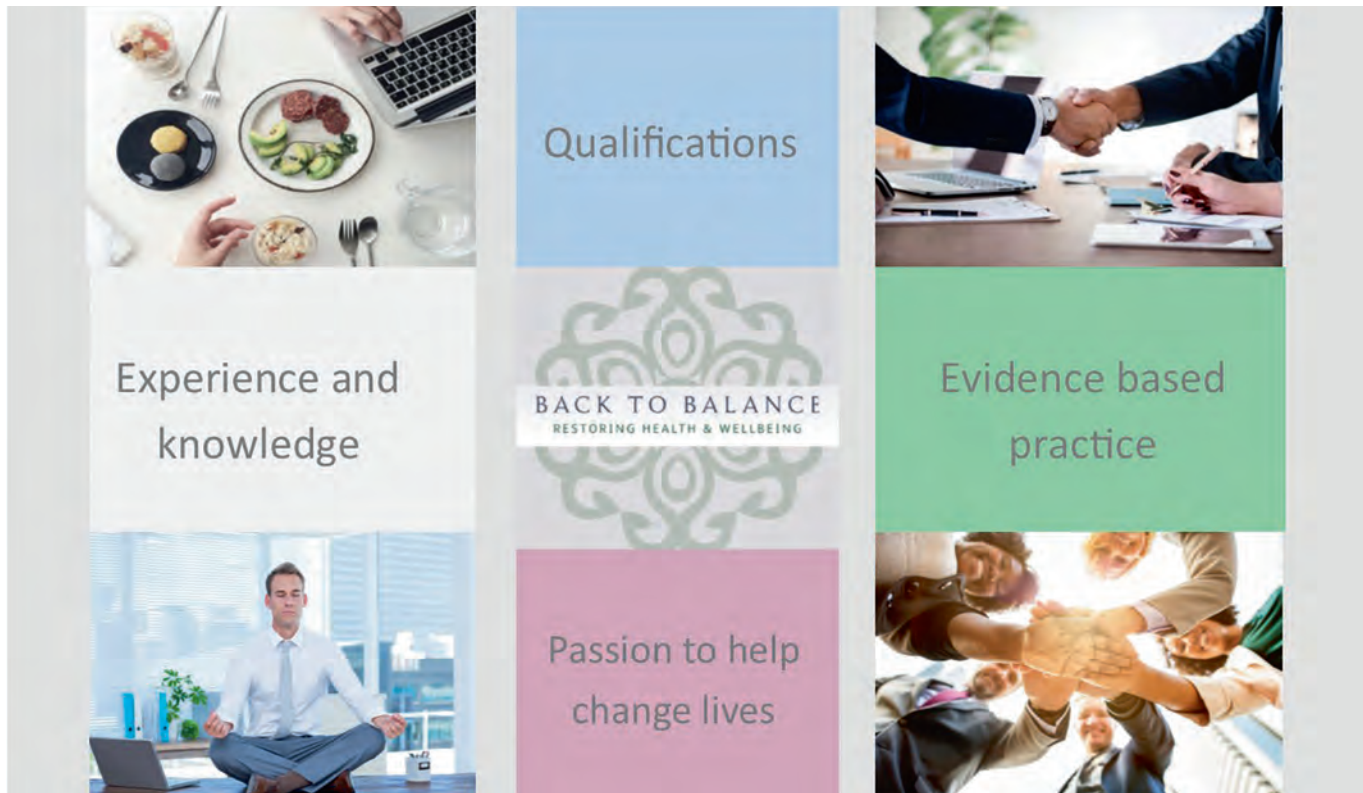
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AUTHENTIC WELLNESS

By Claire Hawes co-director, osteopath.

In the past few articles we have explored the relationship between wellness in the workplace and benefits which are tangible and evidence based. So, the question now lies: why not try wellness and see what the benefits are for you and your team?

In the past few articles we have explored the relationship between wellness in the workplace and benefits which are tangible and evidence based. So, the question now lies: why not try wellness and see what the benefits are for you and your team?

But how do you obtain the best practitioners and therapists to deliver an ideology which you are dipping your toe into the water with for the first time and are slightly unsure whether it's right for your business?

There are a number of points you might consider:

- What are the credentials of the company you are going to work with; for example, is the team properly qualified and experienced to deliver a wellness programme?
- Is the company you are going to work with offering a tailored and measurable approach to your team's wellness programme so that you get evidence the interventions are proving positive in outcome?
- Is your wellness company happy to sit and discuss what you require and then tailor the programme to the outcomes and needs identified in that meeting?

Wellness programmes for companies are certainly not a one size fits all deal, and the options available to your team should include everything from

individual therapy options, team wellness days where employees can learn about mental health, physical health and promoting balance in all aspects of their life – and a variety of options in between.

As a professional in the wellness field, there has been a noticeable increase in people offering wellness advice and purporting to be able to coach you towards better health and wellbeing – this is great on one hand because there is an ever increasing awareness of the value we can offer, but this also means there is a lot of people who are suddenly offering advice about lifestyle and health who may not be as qualified as you think they are.

As is always the case with professions which are not regulated, there will always be 'online' courses which allow people to become 'experts' in specific fields overnight. However, we ask you – if you were to be having an operation, would you do your research first and discover what qualifications and experience that surgeon had before going ahead? We would ask you to do the same with your health and wellbeing when it comes to choosing wellness. Experience, qualifications and affiliation to a professional regulatory body should be a key part of your research when deciding whether to go ahead with a company.

For those of you who may question the comparability of having an operation with wellness

interventions – then think about this; trained and experienced practitioners and therapist are all able to recognise when there might be something sinister or abnormal from a systemic illness or mental health point of view, if this is your first port of call as so often is with our clients, then poor ability to diagnose or recognise signs and symptoms may result in delay for treatment for you. This may be a very small fraction of cases we see, but all the same, it shows that who you see and when can determine the later outcomes of potentially serious complications.

At Back to Balance, we are proud to offer practitioners and therapists who are trained, fully qualified and experienced in what they offer. They are regulated where required by law and voluntarily otherwise, as well as fully insured. Authentic wellness comes from those who show a passion and desire to help people improve their health and wellbeing, whilst ensuring that their practice is safe and within their means and capability, knowing when to refer to a colleague or doctor when their scope of practice is limited.

Nicky Robertson and Claire Hawes are co-directors at Back to Balance, where tailored and varied corporate wellness packages are delivered with true professionalism and authenticity.

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COLLINGWOOD INSURANCE BEESWING LADIES DAY

Saturday 28 July

Over 15,000 guests descended upon Newcastle Racecourse for the annual Ladies Day in July. Renowned for delivering glamour and entertainment to the North East, once again the event did not disappoint.

Not to be deterred by the changeable weather, the crowd embraced the occasion and very much dressed to impress. In the Best Dressed Lady competition, the honours went the way of Catherine Murrell, from Newcastle. Catherine walked away with thousands of pounds worth of prizes in recognition of her outstanding handmade outfit.

Competitive racing action and a fantastic DJ set after racing from Marvin Humes, all made for a truly memorable occasion.





THE RESULTS ARE IN YOUR HANDS



It's one thing to make the decision to change your lifestyle and re ignite the feel good factor and achieve the body shape you desire, its another, to know you are doing the correct things to achieve this.

Most people have no idea how or where to start, with their food. Here are just a few ideas to kick start you into a healthier few months and help you form new habits.

- Make a positive decision to avoid any soda drinks eg coke, lemonade or energy drinks. These are laden with sugar and are dangerous for your health, never mind your waistline.
- Go through your cupboards and put all biscuits, cakes etc into a bag and get them out the house, this will stop temptation. Rather than throw them away, why not donate them to a good cause?
- Change your lunches. Stay away from eating sandwiches and crisps at lunchtime. Try taking a healthier option such as lean meat/fish and salad in to work. If you want to make changes, you need to focus on better organisation. Removing bread and snacks at lunchtime will consistently cut the amount of calories you are eating per day, therefore could have a big impact on your weight over the next 3 months.
- Buying, rather than making a salad

at lunchtime will mean it's often accompanied with a sauce. Although you may think you are eating healthily the sauce may increase the calories to more than your original sandwich and crisps so be aware.

- Increase your portion sizes. You may raise your eyebrows at this but as long as the food is natural and healthy, it will keep you fuller for longer, therefore stop you reaching for unhealthy snacks during the day.
- If you are in a habit of snacking after your evening meal, eat half your meal as normal then eat the rest later, this should stop you from snacking.
- Keep drinking plenty of water, this will keep you feeling full and hydrated plus helps with your metabolism rate.
- Leaving yourself constantly hungry by eating minimal amounts of food for days thinking your weight will drop off, is wishful thinking. In the end you will feel awful and your metabolism will probably slow down. Ironically you will end up storing more fat in the long run. Being consistent works, quick fixes don't!

David's summing up

Stay positive, be patient and keep strong, remember the results are in your own hands.

www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk

ALL ABOUT YOU NAMED IN REGION'S BEST

All About You – Urban Retreat has been named as a finalist in the North East's Boutique Salon of the Year category at the Professional Beauty Regional Awards 2018.

Having wowed the judges, the salon that is owned by Elaine Beattie and is located in Grey Street Hotel on Grey Street in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has been named in a list of the best salons in the North East.

Having only been launched just over a year ago, this is a huge accolade for the team and is part of the jigsaw of the growth plan for the salon that now employs two people already.

Commenting on the announcement, Elaine said: "We work so hard every day to deliver the exceptional service all our clients deserve; and so, to have been recognised for this is absolutely amazing. We only use the best products and our team is all qualified to the highest standard, so to now have been acknowledged for that makes all the hard work worth it!"

All About You is a hidden gem in the city centre and is the perfect environment to relax with friends, enjoying a glass of fizz and a whole host of treatments. The treatments are personalised and include facials, massages, manicures, pedicures and a range of body treatments. All products are from high end leading brands such as ELEMIS, Jessica, Delilah and Lycon.

The Professional Beauty Regional Awards is the most prestigious and established awards scheme for the



beauty, spa, nails and aesthetics markets, recognising those who make a real difference to the industry and encouraging their development.

Speaking of the Awards, Mark Moloney, managing director of Professional Beauty said: "The beauty industry is often one of the unsung heroes of the British economy – with many not realising that it employs over 300,000 individuals and generates £7bn in revenue. Through these awards we aim to champion the very best within our sector; those who have trained the hardest, developed the customer experience and those whose passion for beauty extends into everything they do.

"By holding the Regional Awards, we are able to seek

out the sometimes-lesser known salons and spas that are exceptional at that they do. For the thousands of men and women who visit a salon and spa each year, it is because of these therapists that they experience the wonderful treatments which make them feel a million dollars, and as such, these businesses should be recognised for their expertise."

The winners of the Regional Awards will be announced on 21st October 2018 during a gala dinner at the Principal Hotel in Manchester. The event gathers together the best spas and salons in the country, to network and celebrate excellence.

For further details on the awards visit www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/RegionalAwards.

More information on All About You and to book a consultation, please visit www.allaboutyougsh.co.uk



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It's an absolute truth that where the Kardashians go, millions will follow, so when Kylie Jenner removed the fillers from her over-inflated lips it opened the flood gates for a return to a more natural look.

And among the worldwide followers who slavishly hang on to every word and action of the Kardashian family is a doctor who is equally delighted in the move away from obvious enhancements.

Dr Raph Mohammed is the man behind Dr Raphael Aesthetics which has just opened its first clinic in Newcastle on Gosforth High Street.

With impeccable credentials and years of experience both in general medicine and in facial aesthetics, he now divides his time between the North East and his clinics in both Liverpool and Dublin.

Dr Raph's mantra is "subtlety is beauty" – with a firm belief that facial aesthetics should be discreet but can still achieve a fantastic result.

He's open about the fact that if he doesn't think a treatment is right for a patient, he will advise against it.

"For me aesthetic treatments are not about creating artificial looking faces, it's about subtle beauty and getting a natural result," he said.

Dr Raph, worked for many years as a GP set up community dermatology services on behalf of Gateshead PBC and worked with the

Newcastle RVI dermatology department, before moving into the field of aesthetics.

His use of state-of-the-art techniques and impressive results - which includes everything from full facial rejuvenation to "liquid rhinoplasty" – altering nose shape without the need for surgery – has made him the go-to doctor for both celebrities and the general public.

At the same time he has opted for treatments that use a cannula rather than a needle, which means there is often less bruising and less swelling.

The fact that the products he uses are geared towards refining and recontouring, reshaping and enhancing means that the clinic already has patients of both sexes and from their 20s to their 70s.

Dr Raph has also become the go-to practitioner for lips, so much so that he has also ran masterclasses for other aesthetic doctors and nurses both nationally and internationally.

"We can make a huge difference without the need for very obvious changes which can make someone virtually unrecognisable," he said.

"We pride ourselves on our integrity and ensuring that everything we do is right for the patient."

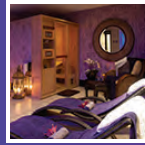
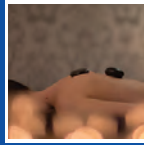


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COMMENT WITH... Barry Speker

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The tale of Boris and the Burka has so dominated the press and the political parties, that the central issue was totally lost. Those wanting to use this as a stick to beat Boris out of his Prime Ministerial ambitions were opposed by protectors of free speech in a democratic society and those like Rowan Atkinson who wish to safeguard humour and satire ; and Boris had surprising allies such as Taj Hargey, the Oxford Imam and scholar. Professor Hargey robustly defended Boris and attacked those with an obsession with multiculturalism. He wrote 'The burka is a fifth column. One day they will wake up to an Islamic Republic of Britain and before this happens I'll be out of here'. Now if Boris had written that, the calls for him to be hung, drawn and quartered would be even more intense.

In a poll 60% of people said Boris was not being racist and one must credit that they may actually have read his offending column in the Telegraph in which he specifically argued against a ban on the burka, as has been introduced in Norway. No doubt he could not resist injecting some humour in the piece, but that does not make him a racist. As Blackadder said, all jokes about religion will cause offence.

What if Boris had written: "A Muslim woman knocked on my door last night. I didn't open it. I just talked through the letter box to see how she likes it" or compared a burqa to a bin-liner? Both jokes were made by comedian Shazia Mirza, a Muslim woman writing in 2006 in a column in the New Statesman.

Much of the ignorant outcry was reminiscent of the protest marches in Iran and elsewhere calling for the Fatwa death of Salman Rushdie over his book Satanic Verses, which none of the protesters had seen or read. Such is the uninformed 'politically correct' clamour about Boris and the Burka.

If you are in London, take the opportunity to visit the Sky Garden, on the 35th and 36th floors of 20 Fenchurch Street in the City, near the Gherkin and beside Monument Tube Station. The building is nick-named the Walkie Talkie.

There are the most amazing panoramic views of London in all directions. Unlike the Shard, entry is free but a time slot must be booked online in advance. There are two bars and two restaurants up there as well as London's highest garden. A

particular thrill for those with vertigo.

All Premier Football 'Clubs' and their fans were in fever pitch awaiting the invigorating 2018 summer transfer window. Even in Newcastle there were the inevitable optimists, ignoring experience.

The highest spenders were Liverpool at £167.9m (including £67m for goalkeeper Alisson Becker), Chelsea £128.6m (net £87.3m) including £71.6m for goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga - a good name for a goalie! - and newly promoted Fulham paying out £102m.

In the transaction table Newcastle were 18th, paying out £17m but after recouping £45.7m this showed a net spend of -£28.7m, the lowest in the entire league.

Owner Mike Ashley has strongly defended his record at Newcastle United in response to the ill-conceived petition by local MP Chi Onwurah. How ironic and coincidental was the announcement that Ashley had purchased his big player - the 169 year old retail chain House of Fraser out of bankruptcy for £90m (much better value than an unheard of goalkeeper and defender).

The motivation must be getting a high-profile name at a bargain price. In 2006 House of Fraser was sold to the Icelandic Baugur for £351m and in 2014 to the Chinese Group Nanjing Cenbest for £155m. His stated ambition is to make H of F the 'Harrods of the High Street'. Will there be a merger with Debenhams in which Sports Direct already has a 30% stake?

Ashley has the experience from his successes at Sports Direct and his involvement in other chains - as well as his 'achievement' in getting Newcastle United to 10th in the Premier League. As a shrewd businessman he will see no benefit in profligate spending on over-priced and unpredictable footballers and their avaricious agents. Will he be more influenced and intimidated by the shop unions and employees than by the football fans and Ms Onwurah? Unlikely.

Yes, I have renewed my tickets for another frustrating season!

An enjoyable summer evening was held by the President of the Newcastle Law Society at the Riverside Stadium. An interesting feature arranged by President Alison Hall was a display of Birds of Prey. A subtle comment on the legal profession?

“
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”



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