

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

AUGUST 2018

ISSUE 38

NORTHERN INSIGHT - YOUR EYE ON THE REGION

AUGUST 2018



AFFORDABLE GLAMOUR
IN THE HEART OF NEWCASTLE

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issue 38



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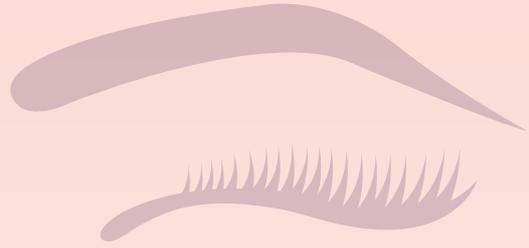
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FOREWORD

Welcome to a record breaking August edition of Northern Insight.
Our cover star is Marco Pierre White Steakhouse and Grill who are firmly established as one of Newcastle's top destination restaurants and situated within the superb Hotel Indigo.

For Business Lunch we take a visit to the historic market town of Morpeth to revisit an old favourite, Gianni.

As ever we cover a host of top social events including the recent Northumberland Plate festival and the World Cup themed Mediaworks Golf Day.

Look out also for a number of terrific profiles articles on some of the region's movers and shakers.

We hope you find it a suitable accompaniment to those long late Summer nights.

Thank you for your continued support.
Till next month.



Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher



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Gianni's Morpeth



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SARAH SAILS DIANE INTO HER DREAM JOB

Finding the right person for the right job has always been the trademark of recruitment specialist Sara Eke but her latest success stems from her own love of the sea and boats.

Based from Berwick to Teesside, Sara Eke Recruitment specialises in handling vacancies for permanent and interim positions in various professions including office support, marketing, human resources, customer service and management. When she's not recruiting staff, Sara enjoys sailing onboard the boat she shares with her husband Brian. With Sara being a regular visitor to Amble Marina, she was asked by owner Karl

Brunton to help him find the ideal candidate for his latest vacancy.

Finding someone who could do a variety of tasks including bookkeeping, reception duties, selling in the marina shop and tying up visiting vessels was a challenge that Sara undertook at full steam ahead.

Sara explained: "When I was asked to find a multi-skilled candidate to work at Amble Marina I realised that there wouldn't be many people who could be so adaptable and flexible in the hours they would be required to work, and who also had the practical and customer service skills needed."

That's when Sara used her 30 years' experience in the recruitment business to her advantage by contacting potential candidates who she knew would fit the role. One such candidate was Diane Darby from Killingworth who Sara felt had the breadth of experience and flexible approach for the varied and important role.

Indeed, Diane was an excellent choice. As a child growing up in Whitley Bay, her father would take her out to sea in his fishing boat and she never lost that love of all things nautical. Diane was shortlisted by Sara and interviewed by Karl who then offered her the job.

NEW STRATEGIC BUSINESS SERVICE LAUNCHED

North East companies are set to benefit from a new strategic service that is intended to help them successfully scale-up operations and boost international market penetration.

James Thwaites, former head of group marketing at high growth instrumentation and electrical engineering specialist CMR Group, has launched Newcastle-based Omni Strategic Ltd.

During his six years with CMR, James was a key member of the company's OEM Engine Business Line scale-up team, helping them to build global revenue whilst supporting group operations.

Building on this experience, James' new venture will provide executive-level corporate support to local industrial,

technology and engineering businesses. This will include specialist advice on business growth, investor readiness, market research, innovation and software automation.

Omni Strategic has already appointed John Gatto as an associate partner in the United States. John is located in America's new oil and gas centre in the region of Pittsburgh, PA. Omni is also looking to expand into Belgium.

James said: "I'm passionate about helping regional businesses drive profits, achieve efficiencies and win new sales. My personal target is to work with 10 businesses over the next two years to help them achieve more than £30 million in new revenues."



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WHITLEY BAY CLINIC HAS THE BACK OF GODFREY SYRETT WORKFORCE

Godfrey Syrett, which designs and manufactures commercial furniture solutions, has joined forces with physiotherapy practice Whitley Bay Clinic to provide physiotherapy services to its 220 staff based in Killingworth and Durham.

Godfrey Syrett is committed to the welfare of its workforce and has recognised the benefits of offering physiotherapy to staff as a proactive, preventative treatment. Staff can now access physio sessions free of charge, as part of a wider package of welfare benefits offered by Godfrey Syrett which also includes specific staff training to help prevent repetitive strain injuries.



PASSION FOR CARS PAINTS A NEW CAREER ROAD

Whitley Bay pals Simon Greaves and Greg Alderson met more than a decade ago when taking their children to nursery. A friendship blossomed around their mutual interest in cars and now they are turning their hobby into a full-scale business.

The pair now own RS Performance Paint Work on West Chirton industrial estate. Together they run the operational side of the paint shop as well as marketing, customer service and business strategy. They have employed an experienced sprayer and business is growing thanks to their reputation and the proximity of the nearby Cobalt Business Park.



PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF FOR DAVID AS HE TAKES SKILLBUILD TITLE

27-year-old slating and tiling apprentice David Crank has been crowned the North East regional SkillBuild Champion 2018.

Representing his employer Hodgson Sayers, David competed against students at Newcastle College to win the regional title. To celebrate his hard work, David was presented with a Paslode nail gun which will assist his learning.

David joined Hodgson Sayers in 2014 where he was initially employed as a site labourer and continually enquired about becoming an apprentice. Due to his persistence and performance on-site, he was accepted onto the apprenticeship programme.



FROM RUNNING A MILE TO RUNNING A BUSINESS

Advice 4 Business owner Linda Lowther, who was once a championship runner in her youth, is now using her business acumen and life experience to help a Northumberland business which encourages women to take up running.

At the Entrepreneurs Forum event 'If We Can You Can', Linda was drawn to entrepreneur Kim Scott who has started a running club for ladies who feel uncomfortable running alone on the streets. The business model struck a chord with Linda and she now supports Kim as a business coach.

FROM HOPELESSNESS TO HAPPINESS

Successful Morpeth businesswoman Emma Weston-Jones is hoping her own against-the-odds story will give hope and inspiration to others.

Life for single mum Emma has not always been a bed of roses. As an adopted child of strict parents, she struggled for years to feel accepted, suffering from a lack of self-esteem. Now, however, Emma's festive flag business Emma Bunting has received global exposure as a prop supplier for the film Paddington 2.

Emma has decided to offer her skills as a life coach with her new business Blue Space, whilst also supporting charity Children North East to help young people who are suffering.



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HIGH TIMES AT HOTEL INDIGO NEWCASTLE

Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar & Grill is firmly established as one of Newcastle's top destination restaurants, bringing an easy elegance and affordable glamour. The venue – which is situated within Hotel Indigo – boasts a stylish offering of British & French bistro classics, stunning seafood, premium cocktails and signature steaks.

Now, following the culinary expertise of Head Chef, Paul Amer, the restaurant is offering diners diversity with a brand new menu.

Curated by Paul, the new menu hones Marco's world famous cooking techniques to create a mix of childhood favourites and modern delicacies. Much like Marco, Paul champions the belief that the freshest ingredients make the finest dishes and ensure for that superior taste. New dishes sit alongside firm favourites and a seafood-laden table d'hôte menu. Fussiness is eschewed and instead, classic dishes are simply cooked with an emphasis on bold, honest flavours.

Take the new, seared sea scallops with black pudding, crisp pancetta and cauliflower puree an epic dish possessing a real depth of flavour. Also new is the French-inflected, confit duck à la Parisienne with béarnaise sauce, pommes frites, salade verte and a luxuriant truffle dressing – très bien!

For those favouring a more informal touch, MPW Newcastle have also updated their steakhouse burger selection which now features 'The French', 'The American' and 'The Alex James Burger' – a unique collaboration with the Blur bassist and artisan, award-winning British cheesemaker.

Guest feedback has been paramount in shaping the new menu with one key consideration being an increasing demand for vegetarian and vegan dishes. One example is the velvet artichoke with wild mushrooms in a Provençale sauce.

Marco Pierre White also remains a popular spot for afternoon tea serving a selection of finger-cut sandwiches, buttery scones and decadent pastries in either the restaurant or the adjacent Grainger lounge. New for 2018, the "Summer Cocktail Afternoon Tea" is bringing rays of sunshine with an inventive cocktail menu perfectly suited to the warmer weather. See the 'Gin Summer Cup' with gin, Pimms, lemon and sugar or the exotic 'Tropicolada' frozen cocktail with rum, Malibu, pineapple and coconut.

In addition, Hotel Indigo also cater for larger parties with a semi-private area available for up to 40 guests. This chic events space is perfect for special occasions or corporate functions.

MPW Newcastle is a venue shaking things up for the better offering much for the returning diner with its vibrant new menu. Of course, all of this is bolstered by a commitment to top customer service – their team really do go above and beyond. I'm sure that brooding fellow cast on the walls would be proud.



ITPS AND CELLULAR SOLUTIONS SUMMER GOLF DAY

Managed IT Solutions and Services providers ITPS joined forces with Business Communications company Cellular Solutions to host a day to remember at Close House Golf Club this summer. Both companies invited clients and partners to enjoy a charity golf day in aid of Changing Lives and The Percy Hedley Foundation at the French themed event in honour of the Ryder Cup held in Paris later this year.

An on-course gin station was provided by Lakes Distillery who sponsored the event, and prizes were kindly donated by hybrid cloud data services company NetApp.







DIVINE INSPIRATION

How following in the footsteps of pilgrims proved a guidebook to success.

It's not often that our campaigns call for us to transport olives, coffee and religious artefacts over a thousand miles, from the hills of Italy to the hustle and bustle of the City of London. But when the Umbrian Tourist Board, Sviluppumbria, and publisher Cicerone, commissioned us to publicise the launch of 'The Way of St Francis' - we knew that our campaign, just like the guidebook, would need to convey the charm, character and appeal of the Umbrian region.

So how hard can it be to promote a new walking guidebook following in the footsteps of St Francis as he walked through the stunning countryside of Italy, journeying from Florence, to Assisi and Rome? Well before we'd even taken our first steps, we'd hit a huge snag.

With plans already afoot to hold a launch event in the renowned Charing Cross branch of UK famous book shop Foyles, it became apparent that many of the journalists we aimed to target were not based in London at all. Secondly, the author of the guide, the Reverend Sandy Brown, was only available for a couple of days. Lo and behold, an influential travel show, the World Travel Market, was also being held on the same date, which we knew might affect attending numbers. So, our challenge was simple; to promote a media event to media who might not be able to go.

Unique challenges like this call for unique thinking. Luckily, unique thinkers are not that unique at Karol. Karol team member Jenny Dawson who led the

project, commented: "We immediately saw that we needed to devise a campaign that, first of all, would make the event as irresistible as the truffles and wines of Umbria itself. But we also needed a promotional campaign that would leave a lasting impression, so as to provide us with publicity opportunities regardless of attendance at the event.

"We searched for what made Umbria such a unique region, beyond The Way of St. Francis itself; we spoke to the team at Sviluppumbria, to really get under the skin of what made their region stand out."

Immediately, we recognised the sensory appeal of the Umbrian region, and saw that our campaign could play on the senses by transporting you to Umbria. If we couldn't bring Mohammed to the mountain, why not bring the mountain to Mohammed - or, in this case, if the journalists couldn't get to Umbria, why not bring Umbria to them?

To create a wow factor, we decided that our campaign activity was to be spearheaded with 100 rustic, tactile, boxed invitations sent out in the post. They'd contain representations of the very best of the region, to give the recipients just a flavour of what Umbria has to offer.

It didn't take long for the key ingredients to reveal themselves. In fact we had made some hard choices about items to leave out. In the end, the boxes would contain rich green olive leaves, stones from Umbria and scented coffee beans with a personalised message, hand written on coffee stained parchment paper.

Luckily this left plenty of authentic food and drink from the region to serve at the launch. We also created bespoke goody bags for guests, which included speciality Italian goods, a signed guidebook and a blessed Tau (T-shaped cross) from the region, to leave an impression well beyond the event.

Says Jenny: "Because of the challenges we faced, we knew that trying to entice journalists to London would not be enough. So, alongside the event we partnered with both the Press Association and National Council for the Training of Journalists to offer trainee journalists an amazing opportunity - to win a trip to Umbria as a travel correspondent. Needless to say, the uptake was high!

"But we also worked closely with journalists, including those not able to attend the event, to develop packages of content that worked for them. In fact, 12 months after the event, the coverage was still rolling in!"

Say's Karol Marketing MD, Stefan Lepkowski: "Jenny and her team should be rightly proud of the results they delivered, with over 3 million opportunities to see and hear generated in media outlets including, The Telegraph, BBC Newsnight, National Geographic Traveler, BBC Radio 4, The Sunday Times and Wanderlust. The two Chartered Institute of Public Relations Awards they scooped for their work is testament to their creativity and dedication.

"Most importantly, I think we raised the bar for event and tourism PR - and we got to taste test quite a lot of nice wine too!"

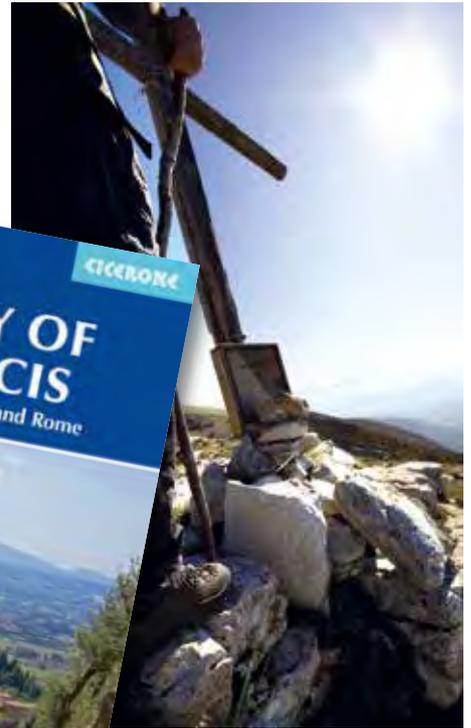
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OUR JOURNEY THROUGH UMBRIA...

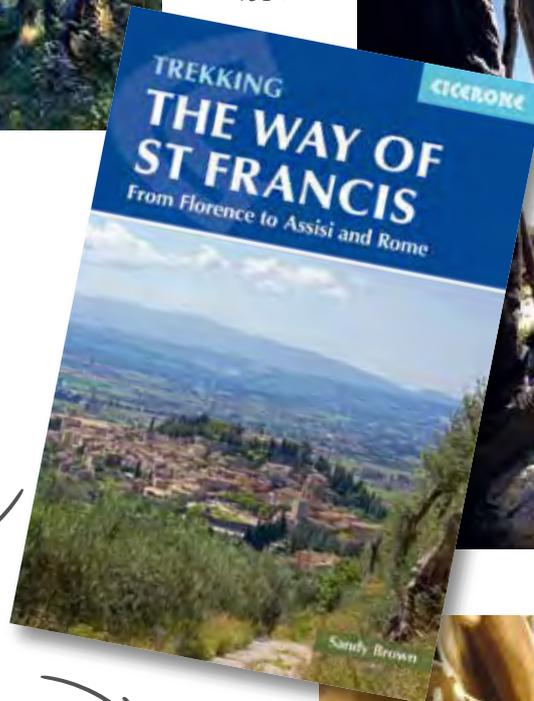
1. Olive trees growing outside of the hill town of Assisi provided inspiration...



2. ...as well as the landscape of the famous walking trail following in the footsteps of St Francis



3. The book itself



4. Coffee beans, olive leaves and Umbrian stones conveyed the character and rustic charm of Umbria

5. A ceramic Cross of Tau from Assisi, the symbol of St Francis



6. Hessian goody bags at the launch event filled with speciality chocolates and wine from the region



7. Just some of the media outlets we engaged whilst generating over 3 million opportunities to see!



8. our CIPR PRide Awards!

COMMENT WITH... Barry Speker

barry.speker@sintons.co.uk



“

The Great North Exhibition is a great success and we should all support it. It highlights much that is good about the city and the area.

”



Recent figures from the Solicitors Regulation Authority show that female lawyers now make up 47% of the legal profession. In addition women now make up half of all judges under 50, while more than half of all magistrates are women.

The figures may be misleading because of course lay magistrates are unpaid. Penelope Gibbs, director of the Transform Justice charity describes the magistracy as 'old, white and middle class' but this may be the result of the recruitment process. Contrary to criticisms, diversity and equality are clearly increasing in both the judiciary and in magistrates.

As to the BBC, they are still battling against claims of inequality with the latest announcement that the likes of Gary Lineker (£1.75m) John Humphrys, Chris Evans (£1.66m) and Graham Norton (£609k) are still paid very significantly more than their female counterparts. This has led to some of the latter resigning whilst some presenters have moved on to avoid cuts in pay. Are further savings needed to pay the BBC damages to Sir Cliff?

Wimbledon led the way many years ago ago by equalising the prize money for men and women (despite the argument that men's matches are 5 sets as opposed to 3). This year the BBC was able to counter the charge of male bias because almost 80% of the Wimbledon highlights coverage was devoted to women's matches. This was partly due to the massive coverage of Serena Williams who irritatingly had the temerity to fail to mark up a record championship win - as well as to Roger Federer losing his quarter-final, and Andy Murray deciding not to play at all.

This meant no British heroes. There was a call for that status to be accorded to the Southgate Surprises. The unfancied English football team surpassed all expectations and predictions by reaching the semi-finals of the World Cup. Despite the (mainly Scottish) critics moaning that England did not beat any good teams, they achieved more than the likes of Germany, Spain, Portugal and Brazil.

In the process, they livened up the nation (England that is) and restored respectability to the flag of St George, so long in disrepute having been adopted by far right extremists. In the end, football was not 'coming home' but we all had the unashamed pleasure of supporting England.

How very British or English for the self-effacing and modest manager to oppose the idea of a parade to celebrate his team's achievement (on coming 4th). We can celebrate that Gareth Southgate produced a team which sang the national anthem with gusto, refrained from play-acting and cheating and showed sportsmanship in victory and defeat. Memories of Kipling and how to treat triumph and disaster! It was far more heart warming than Boris and his threat that the country will be a colony of Europe.

What courage shown by the young Thai footballers and their coach in surviving their ordeal. They showed such strength of character

and family values throughout. In the event they do not want to be considered as heroes and paid a tearful tribute to the Thai navy Seal diver Saman Kunan who died during the rescue. And a credit to the divers involved who said they were just doing a job for which they were trained. Hollywood has something different in mind.

I was one of those lucky enough to see Colin Aitchison and his band play in the North East during their annual British tour from Ned Kelly's Last Stand jazz club in Kowloon. What a fantastic group! Venues ranged from the Mouth of The Tyne, to Cullercoats and the Edinburgh Festival. I have not yet been able to take up Colin's invitation to make a guest appearance. Maybe next year.

Another musical highlight was Eric Burdon aged 77 appearing at the City Hall. He was not accompanied by any other surviving Animals but by an accomplished backing combo who enabled him to work his way through the old classics including House of the Rising Sun and We Gotta Get Outa This Place. Would he have expected 50 years ago that he would still be performing these songs in his late 70s - and that we would still be singing along?

A highlight was the encore - the Blydon Races - in Eric's Californian drawl, admitting he only knows the chorus.

The Great North Exhibition is a great success and we should all support it. It highlights much that is good about the city and the area. My birthday included a visit to Stephenson's Rocket at the Discovery Museum. Something special. A train running on time.

Summer seems to have been something of a silly season. Theresa May had enough to worry about with keeping her own cabinet in line to press on with the thankless task of securing a good Brexit deal with 27 European countries, despite repeated resignations and stabs in the back.

Then arrives President Trump who, before meeting her, rubbishes her Brexit tactics and says she has it all wrong. It transpires that he advised that he would have done it differently but the PM rejected his advice - which was 'I would sue the bastards'. He did stress however that we still have the most special of special relationships and said the Queen was beautiful and very clever; and that his late mother was devoted to her.

After a round at Turnberry he jetted off to Moscow to meet his soulmate President Putin, saying the meeting would be easier than with NATO. He upset the US security agencies by appearing to reject the results of their investigations that Russia had interfered with the last Presidential election because he said Putin denied it. When challenged afterwards about toadying up to Putin, the President said that he regretted that his comment was 'mis-spoken' and he meant the opposite of what he said - sort of Fake News? He is now being accused of treason. Melania's expression unchanged. Time to have another meeting with North Korea?

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EXCITING SEASON AHEAD FOR NEWCASTLE FALCONS



Newcastle Falcons' home ground, Kingston Park Stadium

Newcastle Falcons are flying into the start of the 2018-19 campaign after their best season in 20 years.

A host of top-class signings have been added to the core of the squad which saw the Falcons recording their highest league finish since they last won the Premiership title back in 1998, Newcastle retaining the best of their existing talent as they look to kick on from a breakthrough year.

Taking the helm once again after agreeing a new three-year deal to remain with the club is former England captain Dean Richards, whose stewardship during 2017-18 saw him claiming the Premiership's Director of Rugby of the Season Award.

The Falcons' Gallagher Premiership mission gets underway on Sunday September 2 when champions Saracens visit Kingston Park Stadium, the venue at which Newcastle went unbeaten for five and a half months last season during a hot streak which lasted from November until the final home game of the season in May.

For the first time in 14 years the club will play in Europe's elite club competition, the Heineken Champions Cup - a fitting accomplishment in the season that Newcastle's St James' Park hosts the European club finals on the weekend of May 10-11, 2019.

A mouth-watering draw sees the Falcons pooled with French giants Toulon and Montpellier, and

there is the added bonus of home-and-away clashes against their nearest professional rugby neighbours, Edinburgh.

The Falcons only missed out on a European final last season when they were defeated by Gloucester in the semi-finals of the European Challenge Cup, the 2017-18 campaign delivering a trio of major semi-finals as they also reached the last four in the Premiership and Anglo-Welsh Cup.

It was a campaign which saw home crowds increasing by even more rapid rates, thanks in no small part to the all-time club record attendance of 30,174 for the club's first ever game at St James' Park. Even removing that game from the statistics there was still an average home attendance increase of 12% on the previous season, Kingston Park's sold-out signs going up for the first time in more than nine years as the Falcons' nest was full to its 10,100 capacity on two separate occasions.

The elusive running of Vereniki Goneva saw the Fijian wizard win Premiership Player of the Season and sitting joint top of the try-scorer charts, while Samoan wing partner Sinoti Sinoti claimed the Premiership's Try of the Season award for his dazzling solo effort against finalists Exeter Chiefs.

Both players have committed their futures to the Falcons with newly-extended deals, Goneva

spending the summer helping a rapidly-improving Fiji team to their fourth successive Pacific Nations Cup title. Club-mate Mark Wilson featured for England during their June tour to South Africa, while centre Chris Harris continued his emergence as part of the Scotland squad which claimed the notable scalp of Argentina away from home.

All of which continues to increase Newcastle Falcons' momentum going into the 2018-19 season, their prospects enhanced by an ambitious recruitment process which has seen the arrival of Samoa and Leicester prop Logovi'i Mulipola, Fiji No 8 Nemani Nagusa, Leicester hooker George McGuigan and highly-rated London Irish centre Johnny Williams.

Augmenting the new faces are a host of England Under-18s stars who have been promoted from the Falcons' prolific academy, with Morgan Passman, Will Montgomery, Cameron Nordli-Kelemeti, Tom Marshall, Josh Hodge and Rob Farrar all handed full-time contracts.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the region's only representatives enter the campaign with great expectations.

A stable core with added impetus from outside – Newcastle Falcons' rise shows all the signs of continuing during 2018-19.



Premiership Player of the Season, Vereniki Goneva

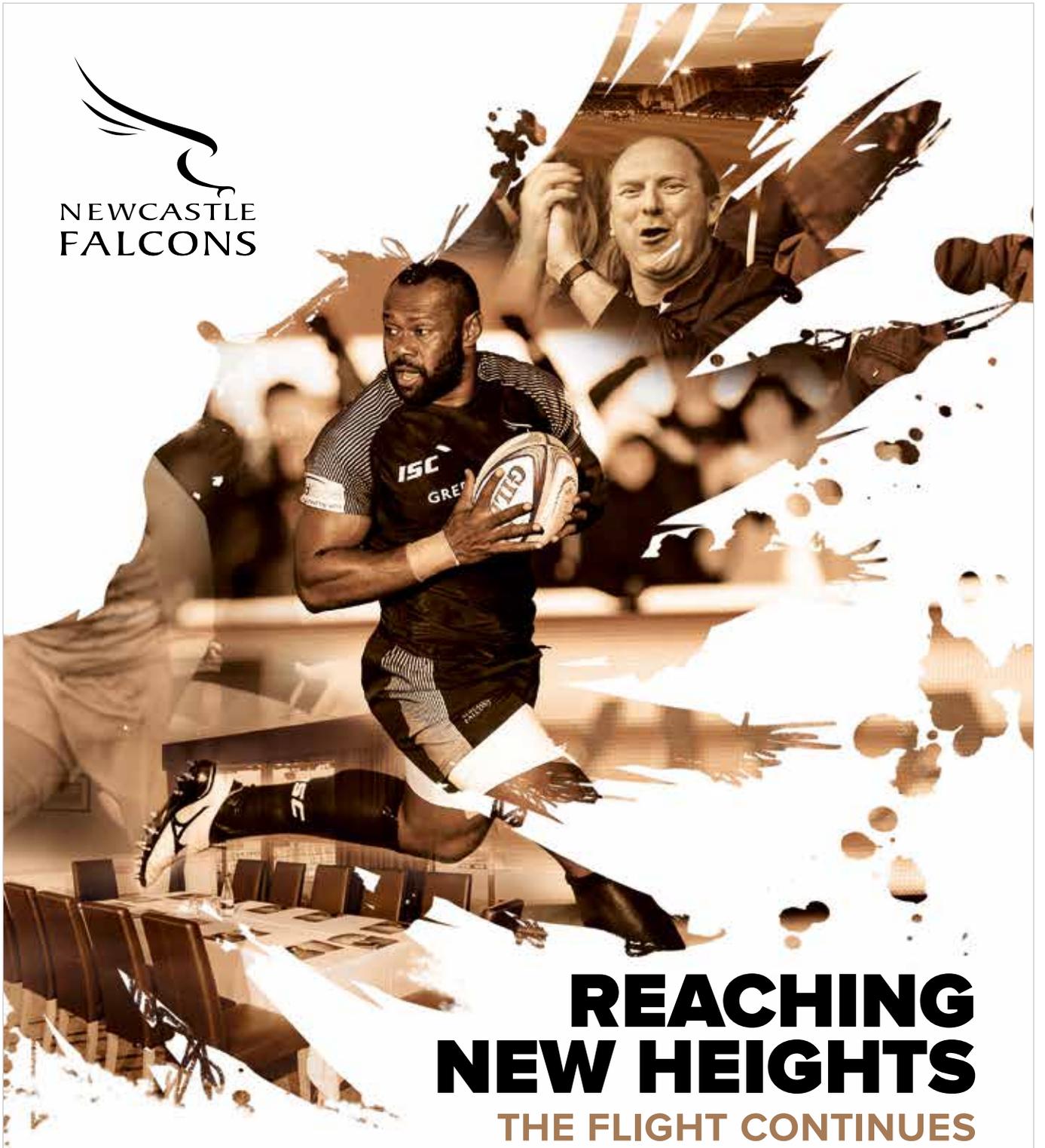


Sonatane Takulua lines up a kick at goal



Newcastle and England back rower Mark Wilson

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REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

THE FLIGHT CONTINUES

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Matthew Flinders Head of Marketing RMT, and Gary Morton MD of Lok Developments

£10M INVESTMENT TO TRANSFORM EAGLE STAR HOUSE INTO BESPOKE APARTMENTS

Lok Developments Also Applying To Add Further Floors To Landmark Office Building.

A 10 million pound investment is set to turn a landmark Newcastle office building into dozens of new residential apartments - and the developer is hoping to send it higher in the North East sky.

Lok Developments has acquired Eagle Star House in Gosforth, the former North East home of the DVLA, and is converting the nine-storey building into 54 residential units, including studio flats and one and two-bedroom apartments.

Work has now begun on the building's refurbishment, which is being led by Newcastle-headquartered Kapex Construction, and apartments in the first phase of the development are expected to be ready for viewing before the end of the year.

Lok Developments is also applying for planning permission to build further storeys on top of Eagle Star House, and if its plans are approved, it will invest an additional five million pounds in creating additional apartments and duplex penthouses with views stretching to both the coast and the Cheviots.

A decision on the planning application is expected in the autumn, and if the second phase wins

approval from Newcastle City Council, the ground floor of Eagle Star House will be converted into residential accommodation along with major landscaping and enhancements planned for the public realm surrounding the building and within the existing car park.

The Lok Developments management team has worked with Gosforth-based RMT Accountants and Business Advisors on all aspects of the acquisition and is now continuing to look for development projects and sites around the region.

More than 50 people are expected to be employed on the project, with Kapex Construction committing to using a range of local contractors and consultants alongside its own expert personnel.

Gary Morton, managing director of Lok Developments, says: "Eagle Star House is a real Gosforth landmark that many people will have visited over the years and it's exciting for us to now have the chance to shape its future development.

"It's in an incredibly prominent position that's very close to transport links that will take you quickly into and out of the city centre, and sits alongside every amenity that anyone could ask for, so we're

expecting the Eagle Star House scheme to prove extremely popular.

"Our bespoke ideas for creating new rooftop apartments will add an extra dimension to Eagle Star House, and we're hopeful that our creative ideas will give us the opportunity to further increase our investment in the project.

"The RMT team is made up of highly-skilled individuals with an incredibly impressive way of doing business and their expertise has been a great help in moving forward."

Matthew Flinders, head of marketing and business development at RMT Accountants, adds: "This is a fantastic project that will give a longstanding Gosforth landmark a new lease of sustainable life.

"The team behind it is fully committed to creating an outstanding new residential development and we're proud to be part of helping them realising their plans.

"We are now working closely with Gary and his team to acquire North East sites to bring further exciting residential and commercial developments forward."



WARD HADAWAY REAPPOINTED TO MAJOR NHS LEGAL PANEL

Ward Hadaway's award-winning healthcare team has been reappointed to the NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) legal services framework for the second time. The Top 100 law firm, which has offices in Newcastle, Leeds and Manchester, was reappointed to the framework following a competitive tender process.

The appointment means that Ward Hadaway can deliver services to NHS Trusts and other organisations that are part of the NHS SBS

framework across the country. Ward Hadaway will now give advice on NHS governance, primary care services, healthcare law, employment, property, contract and commercial law projects.

The firm was given the highest ranking in nine out of 11 of the categories in terms of the quality of its submission. The appointment will initially be for two years with an option to extend for a further two years.



YOUNG CYCLIST RIDES INTO A NEW FUTURE

A rising star of the cycling world who rides for the team established by legendary cyclist Dame Sarah Storey has taken a job with one of the team's sponsors.

Anna Kay, the youngest member of Storey Racing at only 19, has joined Leathers the Accountants in a part-time admin and marketing role, which gives her the flexibility to work around her demanding training and racing schedule.

Leathers, one of the North's leading accountants with offices in Newcastle and Durham, is one of the sponsors of Storey Racing. The 12-rider team, established last year by Dame Sarah, was founded to offer the very best in racing opportunities and mentoring to its cyclists.

The fast-growing accountancy firm have raised tens of thousands of pounds through taking part in challenges.



NEWLY APPOINTED ROLE GIVES NEW MOMENTUM

Ian Kelly has joined Tees Valley based accountancy practice Davies Tracey to drive further growth after a year of expansion for the firm.

Renowned taxation specialist Ian has been appointed as tax partner, with a remit to head up Davies Tracey's tax department and grow the range of taxation services the team offers.

Managing Director Craig Davies said: "This is a major appointment for us given Ian's wealth of experience, from starting a career with the Inland Revenue before entering private practice. We are delighted to welcome him to the team."

Ian is a specialist in HMRC investigations, expatriate and non-residential taxation, and also has expertise in high net worth and complex clients. He will be involved in delivering sustained practice growth for Davies Tracey.



LAW FIRM'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS RAISE THOUSANDS FOR CHARITY

Staff at commercial law firm Watson Burton have spent the last year fundraising and hosting staff events to raise more than £4,000 for children being supported by Make-A-Wish.

The Newcastle-headquartered firm nominates a charity each year which will benefit from the fundraising efforts of its staff.

Make-A-Wish UK is a registered charity formed to grant magical wishes to children and young people aged between 3 and 17 who are fighting life-threatening conditions. Volunteers are at the heart of the organisation and their kind support has enabled more than 12,000 life-changing wishes to be granted.

Chris Graham, Partner at Watson Burton, said: "I'm proud that the firm has pulled together to raise such a large amount that will support the charity. It has been a very humbling experience for us all."

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Dr Emma Black

“THE NORTH LOOKS OUTWARDS” SAYS CARNEY AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

Dr Emma Black, managing director of Cascade Cash Management, had the pleasure of attending The Great Exhibition of the North business event featuring the Bank of England Governor. Here she sums the event up and the impact on the region.

“Bank of England Governor, Mark Carney, praised the North of England for its “proud tradition of innovation and openness” during his keynote speech delivered at the highly coveted Great Exhibition of the North on July 5th. Drawing upon the parallels between the “first wave of globalisation”, Carney laid the way for the great opportunities present today at the onset of the 4th Industrial Revolution where “the customer... will reign supreme”.

“Quoting recent economic data, Carney depicted a healthy UK economy, with a notable bounce-back in Household Spending set against a backdrop of a persistently strong labour market where the rate of unemployment has reached record lows. Despite this uplift, inflation is expected to remain high in the near term due to higher energy prices, but importantly, the effects of the devaluation of sterling in the aftermath of the vote to leave the European Union (EU) are starting to wane.

“Unlike the UK’s strength amidst high uncertainty, the global economy has been mixed. The US economy has remained strong but countries in emerging markets alongside those in the EU have suffered from a slight slowdown. With this in mind, Carney warned that the first wave of trade tariffs enacted by the US economy has signalled the “growing possibility that trade uncertainty could crystallise the longstanding risks of a snap back in long-term interest rates, increased risk aversion and

a general tightening in global financial conditions.”

“Of interest to most in the room was Carney’s view over interest rates and whether a rate rise could be reasonable to expect over the coming year. Savings rates have been broadly rising over the last three months in anticipation of a further increase to the UK’s official Bank Rate, currently set at 0.50%. Personal savers can earn 1.70% Gross/AER on a 95-day notice account, up by 0.20% since earlier in the year, while fixed term bonds are now offering 2.05% Gross/AER on a 1 year term, up by 0.15% since the start of the year. Corporate and Charity savers are also seeing increases in interest rates, albeit these are very slight in comparison to the increases seen in Personal rates.

“With reference to an increase of 1% less than referendum projections in 2016, Carney stressed the continued need for a careful balance to be struck between returning inflation to target and the support to jobs and activity given through a looser monetary policy. Expectations for a rate rise are presently based on predictions that a “smooth transition” will be achieved during the UK’s exit from the EU. While this is the objective of Prime Minister May and her cabinet, recent resignations cast doubt over the ability for this to be realistically achieved.

“Nevertheless, in such a scenario whereby the UK does smoothly exit the EU, Carney outlined that “an ongoing tightening of monetary policy over

the next few years would be appropriate to return inflation” to its 2.0% target. While a large increase is not expected to occur, it seems reasonable to think, particularly following the increases already seen in headline interest rates offered by the market, that Bank Rate likely move up by ten to twenty basis points over the course of the year ahead.

“Here at Cascade we will continue to monitor our cash dataset, the largest in the UK market, and shall keep our clients abreast of the best rates available within their chosen parameters. Should you wish to learn how we can help you, do give us a call and we’ll be happy to discuss your options.”

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

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

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

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

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LEVENVALE CEMENTS ITS FUTURE

Levenvale Cost and Commercial Management Ltd (CCM) has expanded its business capacity and cemented its future with a new investment that will enable the company to grow.

Owner of Levenvale CCM, Kerry Fawcett, took quick action to strengthen her growing business following a visit to Commerce House in Middlesbrough to meet with HR Alchemy, who are situated within the building.

Kerry, who is a qualified quantity surveyor, was so impressed with the professional facilities and luxury offering that she knew it was the right address for her own company, which specialises in bidding and tender management, cost management and quantity surveying.

With 15 years experience in a range of industries including construction, rail, subsea installations and nuclear power, Kerry's company portfolio

is growing in leaps and bounds. So much so, the company's focus is now on expanding the team. She said:

"In the next three years, I am committed to growing a small team of specialist quantity surveyors, cost managers and bid writers. Being located at Commerce House allows for that growth to happen and it is an address that my client base will find impressive.

"Levenvale CCM's skills allow other SME's to grow by using our services, and we also offer solutions for companies that need to outsource on either an ad hoc or retainer basis. We can help with portal management and work within most industries,

with a particular specialism in the construction and engineering fields. Being right by the train station will help with reaching my clients and vice versa."

Kerry who is originally from Doncaster moved to the area eight years ago to work as a quantity surveyor at the local power station. She is now married and lives in Elwick.

Commerce House is in the heart of TS1 in Middlesbrough's city centre. Having had £1.2m poured into a luxury renovation, the building has launched a vibrant business community offering office space, hot desking, meeting facilities and virtual tenancy.

More information is on www.commerce-house.co.uk

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NORTH EAST ACCOUNTANCY AWARDS

The 12th North East Accountancy Awards sponsored by Nigel Wright Recruitment gathered together the best of the North East finance community to share their successes and achievements of the past year in a night of great celebration.

Organised by Echo Events & Association Management, the evening celebrated a range of talented teams and individuals, with awards for Accounting Technician of the Year through to Finance Director of the Year illustrating excellence at both ends of the career spectrum. For a full list of winners and finalists as well as photos from the evening visit www.accountancyawards.co.uk





ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST IHT

Chris Black, a Divisional Director at Brewin Dolphin in Newcastle, reflects on the contentious issue of inheritance tax and examines possible ways to limit your exposure.

IHT is a contentious issue in the UK and around the world. People tend to be either strongly for it or vehemently opposed. That means any tinkering with the system will anger at least one of these two groups.

Those in favour of taxing the deceased say it's a good way to spread wealth, taking it from rich estates and re-distributing via government spending. As a tax on capital, not income, it doesn't exert pressure on hard-working families like income tax does, for example.

The anti-IHT camp argues it's a levy on money that has already been taxed; why should people have to pay again? Parents, they say, should be free to pass on assets to their children without the government helping itself to a slice.

"The arguments for and against IHT depend on a few variables, like where you stand politically and where you think government revenues should come from," explains Chris Black, a chartered financial planner at Brewin Dolphin in Newcastle.

Chris points out that, though IHT raises a comparatively small amount of tax in the UK, the money would still have to be collected from somewhere after a ban. Would a £5bn increase in income tax be preferable?

So rather than banning inheritance tax, successive UK governments have tinkered around the edges to



make it fairer and clearer. But subtle changes have in some cases muddied the water and complex planning measures are needed to minimise the impact on people's estates.

Most allowances and reliefs have been static since the early 1980s including the £3,000 annual exemption for gifts as well as a £5,000 relief on gifts in consideration of a marriage or – more recently – a civil partnership.

The nil-rate band climbed in successive years until it hit £325,000 in 2009 and has been frozen ever since. But the introduction of an exemption on family homes has counteracted this fiscal tightening. Married homeowners may be able to pass on £1 million-worth of cash and assets to children, compared with £650,000 just a few years ago.

A seven-year tapering of tax liabilities on gifts, which reduces tax owed to zero at the end of the term, complicates matters further and makes foresight and preparation all the more important.

But aside from these changes, there are a few areas people should examine if they want to limit their exposure to IHT. One is gifting, which is tax-free between spouses and civil partners. You can also give any amount of money or property to an heir without paying tax, providing you live for seven years after the transaction is made.

You can put cash and assets into a trust which can become after 7 years, tax-exempt but from which you and your heirs can benefit, and leaving 10% of your estate to charity will reduce your IHT bill from 40% to 36%. Taking out a valuable life insurance policy could help surviving relatives pay costs after your death. Again, this could be paid into a trust.

Inheritance tax will never be universally popular, particularly not among those faced with the prospect of paying it. But with a little preparation you can ensure that the taxman doesn't become your 'favourite child' and that the great majority of what you earn throughout life is passed on to your intended beneficiaries in death.

To discuss this further (or any aspect of financial planning or investments including pensions, savings, income protection or investment portfolios) you can call Chris Black on 0191 279 7793 or email chris.black@brewin.co.uk

The value of investments can fall and you may get back less than you invested. Any tax advantages mentioned are based on current legislation and personal circumstances which are subject to change. This information is for illustrative purposes only and is not intended as investment advice. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Brewin Dolphin Ltd.

CASE STUDIES

Below is a selection of some of the clients we have helped recently



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

The last month has been extremely busy for new enquiries and applications, and flies in the face of some of the negative press about the state of the housing market nationally.

All of the following mortgage offers were successfully received from mainstream lenders at prime rates during the month, could we help you?

Self-employed – a husband and wife with 2 years accounts but the 1st year's income was very low. We were able to use their income from the 2nd year of trading only which was much greater than year 1, plus 100% of income received from a part-time job. They had looked elsewhere and been declined, and were very happy to receive the keys for their first home.

Interest only into retirement – we helped a couple in their 70's who were looking to move home but wanted an interest only mortgage until age 80 as the monthly payments on a repayment loan were too high. Their sole source of income was retirement income.

Help to Buy repayment – our client wanted to own her home outright and repay the Help to Buy equity loan back to the Government. She needed 90% loan to value as the value of her property

hadn't risen greatly and we were able to secure this for her at best buy rates.

Retain existing home and buy a new residential home – our client wanted to retain their existing home and raise capital against this to fund the deposit on a new purchase. It was made more complicated by the fact that one of the applicants worked overseas and was paid in US Dollars. We arranged a let to buy mortgage on their current home and a residential mortgage on their new purchase.

First time buyers – our clients are self employed and one of them is a non-UK passport holder. We secured a 95% mortgage with a local Building Society.

Newly self employed dentist – our client became self-employed in September 2017 and is receiving a gifted deposit from his parents. Most banks require 3 years trading history, but we have managed to secure a mortgage based on less than one years self employed income.

This is a snapshot of the enquiries that we have received with positive outcomes for our clients. We offer local, face to face, independent mortgage advice and can advise on the best solutions for you.

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.

MG FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS DISPELS MORTGAGE MYTHS

MG Financial Solutions Ltd is a team of mortgage and protection advice experts that this year expects to hit over £50m of successful applications for clients.

Martin Graham, who heads up the team, has joined with Northern Insight to dispel the myths surrounding mortgages for those that are not in 'conventional' full time employment. He said: "Our team has recently been enjoying exceptional success with sole trader, self employed and director level applications, where finances are positioned a little differently to getting a regular, monthly salary from full time employment.

"Many people who work like this think that they will struggle to get a mortgage, need a bigger deposit or will not receive a favourable rate. However, we are proving every day to our clients that with the right support from a qualified mortgage advisor, there is no reason for this to be the case.

"As a general rule of thumb it is worth remembering that lenders will generally require two years worth of financial accounts, evidence of income and a good track record.

"If you have this all in hand then the process of dealing with a mortgage advisor to achieve your mortgage will be a lot smoother than most anticipate. There are no restrictions to lenders and you will be offered the same rates and level of deposit as everyone else.

"But what about if you haven't been in business for two years yet? We are demonstrating regularly that this doesn't rule you out. What you do need



Martin Graham

is actually quite simple. You must have financial records for one year, and proof from your accountant that you are a stable business.

"A good mortgage advisor will put a case to the underwriters of why they view you to be a solid borrower. This will include things like experience in the field of your business – a track record in your industry is necessary, so if it is a new venture plus

a new industry for you, you may need to wait. However, as an example if you are a tradesperson who has been an electrician for 15 years and has gone out on your own in the last 18 months, then your case is strong.

"The best advice I can give to my clients is to make sure all your bills get paid on time in the run up to your application and ensure you get all your credit in order. Tidy up your finances, then there is less for the underwriters to consider."

MG Financial Solutions recently secured a mortgage for Antonia Brindle, a self employed PR and marketing consultant who owns Get Brindled. Although Antonia had been self-employed for well over a decade, she has recently changed her company into limited status, with one year of figures. She said: "The team at MG Financial Solutions is great. The mortgage application was a little bit complicated as my partner gets paid on a rota basis with enhancements, so it wasn't just my income we thought we would have to prove. Martin sorted it all out; got us a great rate and we actually managed to borrow more money for less a month than we had been offered by going direct to a lender. I wholly recommend this service!"

Situated in Cobalt, North Tyneside, the MG Financial Solutions team of four has over 30 years combined experience. MG Financial Solutions is directly authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority, which means the team can search the whole of the mortgage market to give advice on the most suitable mortgage for individual circumstances.

More information on their services is available by visiting www.mgfinancialsolutions.co.uk or by calling 0191 259 4616



HARLANDS; YOUR PERFECT BUSINESS PARTNER

Let's face it, for many firms...small or large...and a lot of private individuals, the most contact you or your company has with an accountant, is when you need to fill in your tax return, find out what the damage is and settle your Corporation Tax bill.

For many accountancy practices, that is precisely what you get.

Thankfully, Harlands Accountants aren't like that. Okay, they'll do the standard stuff, but a quick chat with their MD, Glyn Davison, soon lets you know that he's not satisfied with Harlands 'just' being another other accountancy practice.

"We like to get to know our clients, work alongside them, and help them realise their potential," said Glyn. "Too often we find firms who are happy to keep on doing what they know they're good at, but thanks to our latest techniques and software, we can help them forecast how things could develop and allow them to look into the future and see where the potential for growth lies and how they can seriously improve their GVA."

Glyn has seen huge developments in the world of accountancy. His love of working with figures began at Greencroft School in Stanley where, by coincidence, Harlands HQ is now based. He then studied accountancy A' levels at Derwentside College and, when faced with the decision of either going to university or learning his trade 'on the job', he chose the latter and joined Harlands in 1992.

Over the past 26 years he continually added to his accountancy qualifications and has risen through the company to the top. He now leads a team of 26 who handle the financial affairs of over 300 clients. Some of them are the region's leading companies. Harlands is also opening offices in London where it has already secured national clients. Around 20 per cent of Harlands business is now outside of the North East.

"Cloud accounting, Skype and the arrival of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is changing the face of accountancy," added Glyn. "It doesn't matter what the size of a company is, it needs to embrace the latest technology otherwise they will be left behind. Here at Harlands we are developing systems which allows us to show how any advice and help given by us really does improve a company's GVA (gross added value). Our aim is to be able to show that, as an accountancy practice, we have the best record of any accountancy in the UK when it comes to improving the GVA of our clients. When we tell clients that we can help with their GVA, we want to be able to prove it."

One thing is for certain, Glyn is leading a change

by constantly evolving the role and perception of an accountant in the way Harlands works. It's obvious that the role of an accountancy practice is changing from being traditional to being creative; to being business advisors and help with the thought processes going on within a particular company and help generate new ideas.

"Thanks to AI, we can now show predictive information which allows firms to study future possible trading patterns. We can have real-time information flows. All of these new techniques allow companies to be super-efficient, cost effective and to keep pace with the 21st Century world. Here at Harlands we are at the forefront of these techniques. We have brought in a new team of people to work with firms. Granted, some firms are very wary of developing their business but, as the old saying goes, if you're standing still, you're actually going backwards. Harlands gives them all of the information they need to make positive changes."

Think that Harlands Accountants is just another accountancy practice? Think again. You don't know what you're missing.

There's only two things certain in life: taxes and death.
So why pay more than you have to?



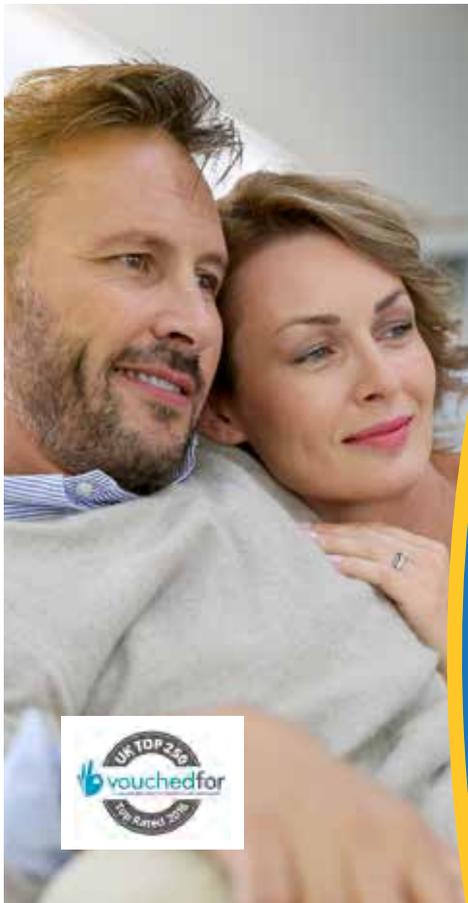
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SHINE SOME LIGHT ON YOUR R&D COSTS



Joe Routledge

Did you know that if you or any of your staff are involved in research and development (R&D), then a chunk of their salary becomes tax deductible? The Government has put aside a pot which, at the last count, had hefty £6billion sitting in it.

Why is the Government doing this? Simple; they see any form of research and development as being critical for any firm...small or large...and will eventually benefit the country as a whole. They understand that for every £1 that the HMRC pays out in R&D tax credits they see a return of approximately £2.50 from future R&D projects. In other words the Government see's a clear return on their investment with a scheme that helps create innovation and ultimately jobs in the UK market.

Were you aware of that?

It would appear that either a lot of firms are totally oblivious to this potential saving, or they are not making full use of it.

And that's where Lumo Tax, comes in. "we know we aren't first to the party with offering companies our services in processing their R&D tax credit claim, what we do bring is a confidence with 13 year's experience and 100% success rate with successful claims. We will not only succeed in processing your claim but will also ensure that the claim that we submit will be the maximum that the client is entitled to".

"A lot of firms in this region are involved in R&D relating to the Food and Drink industry, Technology, Engineering, Chemicals, Virtual Reality, Oil and Gas, Augmented Reality etc, but they are not maximising their potential claims", said Joe Routledge, the Business Development Manager at Lumo Tax. "We work alongside firms and analyse precisely what is going on, who is contributing to the project, and how we can help the company claim exactly what they are due. In some cases we're working on, this can amount to tens of thousands of pounds in tax credits that the company was unaware they were entitled to.

One thing is clear; Joe and his team need to be in at the start of projects or certainly at the very early stage. He can then help companies predict precisely what they can claim which, in turn, allows them to budget accordingly. However, if you are reading this and are already getting a sinking feeling that you've missed out on potential tax benefits, don't panic because all is not lost.

"The good news is that if we arrive when a project is well and truly underway, we can actually work retrospectively and go back as far as two financial

years," added Joe. "We can then figure out whether the company has been missing out on any claims. The Government is very supportive of any R&D work at companies and are trying to help. Taxation is very complex and it easy for benefits to be overlooked...which is where we come in."

Joe has worked at a variety of companies and seen precisely what goes on. He's worked with Sage and a host of IT companies, and seen that R&D is critical to their futures. He's also fully aware of the expense that R&D requires and how, yes, sometimes it can be a gamble.

"Companies need help; they need to be able to have the confidence to take a gamble and put time and effort...and money...into R&D, and that's why it is so important that they make full use of any benefits which are available to them. Here at Lumo Tax, we make sure that they get value for money."

And why Lumo Tax? Well, just think of luminous, or the Lumiere Festival which comes to Durham. Lumo Tax help you shed some light on your potential tax benefits.

www.lumo.tax



TAIT WALKER HELPS THE NAKED DELI GET INVESTMENT OF £2.5 MILLION

Foresight Group has invested £2.5 million of growth capital into The Naked Deli Limited, a clean-eating restaurant chain based across a number of sites in Newcastle.

Our Corporate Finance team introduced The Naked Deli to Foresight and the management team were advised by Muckle LLP. The Naked Deli will use the investment to bolster systems and infrastructure, and to continue the rollout of additional sites around the UK.

Launched in 2014, The Naked Deli operates a number of sites in Newcastle, offering a health-conscious and clean-eating dining experience, with a tasty range of gluten and dairy-free, vegan

and paleo dishes. The first site opened in Heaton, and, after a strong social media campaign, the site reached full capacity in the first week.

As part of Foresight's investment, The Naked Deli has boosted its team with the appointment of John Upton as Chairman. He has joined from LEON where he was Managing Director and, prior to LEON, a member of the senior team at McDonald's UK. Upton adds significant sector and roll-out expertise and experience.

Chris McCourt, associate partner at Tait Walker Corporate Finance, commented: "It is a pleasure to have been able to help the founders of The Naked Deli raise the finance that will enable them to fulfil their ambition to scale up the business. With the support of Foresight and experience of John Upton I have no doubt The Naked Deli will go from strength to strength, and we look forward to continuing to work with the team."



L-R: Michael Dickens, Emma Neal, Michael Vassallo and Ben Jones of Maven.

MAVEN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE PROGRAMME FOR FINANCE DURHAM

Transforming the financial landscape for companies across County Durham.

Celebrating an outstanding first year, Maven's access to finance programme for Finance Durham has supported over 100 of the County's best and brightest businesses

Crowned one of the UK's most innovative cities in 2018, Durham is home to a growing hub of dynamic, high-growth businesses. Now with access to an exciting funding opportunity, the £20 million Finance Durham Fund, established by Durham County Council and managed by Maven Capital Partners to provide a pioneering platform for growth for local businesses.

In line with Durham County Council's economic growth strategy to help enterprises in County Durham start, grow and compete more effectively, Maven has established a comprehensive access to finance programme enabling businesses to develop the appropriate strategy and governance to enable them to effectively secure and use investments.

Launching a series of Venture Investment Clinics last year, Maven provides 1-2-1 support sessions enabling companies to identify and access the most suitable type of finance to meet their funding needs. Run by Maven's local investment team, led by Michael Vassallo, the clinics have supported over 100 local companies to provide entrepreneurs with the right knowledge and know-how to take their next steps towards growth. With over 30 clinics held across a variety of locations, Maven ensure the widest range of businesses can access, use and benefit from the clinics to improve their financial

awareness and confidence, meaning more County Durham businesses are investor ready, fuelling economic growth within the County.

Now with a bespoke, online business support directory available via the Finance Durham website, Maven can also connect businesses to local, knowledgeable sources of advice and assistance to outline the alternative sources of funding and support available to help them achieve their growth plans.

Working with over 20 local support partners to deliver investor readiness training to companies raising finance across a range of sectors, Maven has partnered with support organisations including: Dynamo, one of the leading North East IT organisations, the County Durham Engineering and Manufacturing Network (CDEM), and the Innovation Super Network, in collaboration with FinanceCamp and VentureFest, working to improve the quality of investment proposals across the County.

Michael Vassallo, Investment Director of Maven, said, "At Maven, we understand the importance of proactively providing local support, our investment team has considerable in-depth knowledge of the local SME market, allied to our national resource, we are well-equipped to deliver comprehensive investor readiness training tailored to the individual growth needs of businesses based in County Durham."

Sarah Slaven, Business Development Director of Business Durham, added, "We are delighted with the impact the Finance Durham access to finance programme has had on business confidence in the County so far. Business Durham are working in partnership with Maven to help deliver on some of the investor readiness initiatives and we look forward to supporting more local businesses on their growth journeys."

Maven completed the Fund's seventh investment last month into intranet software specialists Orchidsoft as part of a £2.7 million deal. Funding will allow the business to open a training centre in the heart of Durham, expand the roll-out of its innovative cloud-based intranet software solution, Oak, and double number of employees to more than 100. The co-investment deal between Maven's Investor Partners network and the Finance Durham Fund is a great example of Maven's client funds working alongside the Council's innovative fund to provide a local business with a substantial funding package to enable it to grow globally.

The Finance Durham Fund can provide the financial resources to back business growth for ambitious companies. 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 to discuss your business and its plans.

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





John Forth

WILL MAKING TAX DIGITAL MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER?

The UK Government's initiative, Making Tax Digital (MTD), represents the most fundamental change to the UK tax system for decades. The aim of MTD is to make it easier for jurisdictions to work together to exchange information whilst making it difficult for individuals and businesses to evade tax.

What are the key drivers for MTD?

Here in the UK, the two key drivers are addressing the tax loss to the Treasury as a result of errors (an estimated £9m was lost in £2014-15) and cost reduction (dealing with tax queries digitally rather than via phone, email/correspondence or meetings). MTD will reduce errors by ensuring that source data flows automatically through to the VAT return with minimal scope for adjustments to be made and recent studies have confirmed that a digital solution to deal with tax queries will generate significant savings.

How will MTD be introduced?

MTD will cover all mainstream taxes in due course, with VAT being the first tax to be digitalised. All businesses mandatorily required to be registered for VAT (turning over in excess of £85,000) will be impacted, including charities, public bodies, partnerships and sole traders.

What changes will businesses need to make?

For all VAT returns beginning on or after 1 April 2019, businesses will need to implement changes to the way they record and submit VAT accounting information to HMRC. MTD compatible software will be required, needing an application programme interface (API) in place to create a digital link between the business's and HMRC's accounting systems. This API will enable the business to submit the mandatory VAT return information and HMRC to raise queries on it.

Where a business prepares its VAT return using a number of different accounting systems, eg where a VAT group is in place or an acquisition has been made, those accounting systems must be digitally linked via an API link in order to be MTD compliant.

Will the information required be the same as before?

Under MTD, businesses will also need to record certain supplementary data, including a record of outputs split between supplies at different VAT rates. It will also be necessary to identify and record VAT that is not recoverable at the point that purchase

invoices are input onto the system, representing a significant change for organisations that are VAT adverse and who would ordinarily expense irrecoverable VAT without recording it separately. This will prove particularly difficult in identifying the VAT restriction on residual expenditure where this is not typically known until the end of the VAT accounting period. HMRC is aware of this issue and as the business will not know the recovery rate on residual costs until the period end, it is expected that concessions will be made on this point, details of which are yet to be announced.

Whilst this supplementary data must be recorded digitally it does not have to be submitted to HMRC. Ultimately if all HMRC receives is the mandatory VAT return information, it is no better off than under the existing system and the ambitious objectives for MTD are unlikely to be achieved. It is recognised that many businesses will be reluctant to submit more data than is required. However, those businesses who chose to voluntarily submit the supplementary data will be less likely to receive a VAT inspection if no issues are identified from a review of the supplementary data. Whether a business chooses to submit the supplementary data will be determined by their confidence in the quality and robustness of their data.

It is thought, however, that at some point HMRC will make this supplementary data mandatory.

How will adjustments be dealt with under MTD?

The intention of MTD is to reduce errors being made and to facilitate the flow of source data through to the VAT return with minimum opportunity for figures to be adjusted or amended. However, it is practically impossible for many businesses and organisations to prepare their VAT return without carrying out adjustments of some sort, many of which are dealt with on spreadsheets. HMRC has recognised this and agreed that where adjustments are made on spreadsheets it is only this adjustment that needs to be digitally linked to the accounting records. It remains to be seen whether HMRC will allow VAT returns to be completed using spreadsheets only.

When does MTD come into force?

Whilst the MTD changes will be effective for the first return falling on or after 1 April 2019 HMRC has announced that there will be a 'soft landing' up until 1 April 2020. Businesses will have to have the API link between their accounting records and HMRC's accounting records in place from 1 April 2019 but they will not be penalised for failing to record information on MTD compatible software until 1 April 2020. However, businesses will still need to ensure that their systems and processes are fully MTD compliant ahead of this deadline, with adaptation of existing systems or investment in new IT requiring testing. The 1 April 2020 deadline may still prove challenging for those organisations who delay in addressing the changes they will need to make.

Many software providers have developed or are in the process of developing API links which are being made available to their clients who are using supported software. Where businesses are using older legacy systems that are not supported, it should be possible to source API's from third party software providers. If not, the only option will be to invest in new MTD compatible software, which for some smaller businesses, may be their first experience of using accounting software. As a result the additional cost burden of MTD will be felt most by smaller businesses as in proportionate terms they will have to invest more in order to become MTD compliant.

The MTD pilot programme

With effect from 1 April 2018, for those businesses having access to an API, it has been possible to volunteer to be part of a HMRC's MTD pilot programme. This has however been limited to relatively small numbers and only available initially to straightforward businesses who were fully taxable and not involved in any international trade. This pilot will be extended in due course and larger more complex international businesses will be able to apply to become part of the pilot enabling them to test their MTD software prior to the go live date of 1 April 2019.

How will MTD change how HMRC interacts with businesses?

Perhaps the most significant change MTD will bring will be how HMRC interacts with businesses in the future. Due to HMRC's resource constraints, many businesses can go a considerable period of time without having a visit from a VAT officer. Going forward, it is likely that queries will be raised and communicated to the business via the API link on a regular basis, so businesses may have a series of ongoing enquiries open at any point in time. HMRC has been utilising desktop reviews, using analytical software to identify anomalies and raise queries in relation to VAT returns submitted. The advent of MTD is likely to see HMRC

investing more resource in carrying out desk-based reviews. Having more data to review will provide HMRC with an opportunity to close the tax gap and identify additional errors. MTD will also enable HMRC to focus its limited resource on those organisations and businesses who are deemed to be less compliant.

So what does this mean?

In summary, MTD will be good news for those businesses with robust systems and confidence in the quality of their data as it will mean less attention from HMRC and less time and cost spent dealing with enquiries raised. Not so good, however, for businesses with inadequate systems and controls in place.

The RSM logo consists of a stylized graphic of three horizontal bars of varying lengths, followed by the letters 'RSM' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The logo is positioned centrally at the bottom of the page, overlaid on a dark, geometric architectural structure that frames the lower portion of the image.

RSM

For further information on how to plan for the introduction of MTD, please contact John Forth, VAT partner at john.forth@rsmuk.com or your usual RSM contact or visit www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/making-tax-digital.



Stephen Hall, Deloitte with Phil Kite from Team Tyne Innovation.

TEAM TYNE INNOVATION & THE WORLD’S TOUGHEST ROW

Deloitte is supporting Team Tyne Innovation’s participation in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, a 3,000 mile race known as the world’s toughest row. Stephen Hall, office senior partner at Deloitte, explains why Deloitte got involved and how you can help.

The North East has a rich heritage in innovation. There are many examples of great innovators from our region, including George Stephenson, William Armstrong, Joseph Swan and Charles Parsons.

To that distinguished list we need to add Harry Clasper. Harry’s work in the mid-1800s led to the design of the modern day Olympic rowing boats that are still in use today.

Harry’s exploits as a competitive rower saw him compete on the Tyne in front of crowds of more than 100,000 people. Harry became a professional rower and, alongside his brothers, won the champion fours in London, beating the Thames crews and becoming world champions.

He was also a boat builder, and as a rowing innovator he introduced the modern racing shell with outboard rigger, as well as spoon-shaped blades.

Harry would have appreciated the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge – the ultimate for any competitive rower. It tests an individual’s physical and mental strengths to the limit.

It takes a certain kind of person to keep going when faced with blisters, salt rash, sharks and sleep

deprivation. That is probably why more people have been into space, or climbed Everest, than have successfully crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a rowing boat.

By taking part in the Challenge, Team Tyne Innovation is seeking to demonstrate that the tradition of innovation in the North East is alive and kicking.

Setting off in December from La Gomera in the Canary Islands, the team of four amateur rowers, led by former Reece Group CEO Phil Kite, will work in pairs (two on, two off) to row across the Atlantic for 3,000 miles, ending in Antigua in the Caribbean.

In taking on this extraordinary yet somewhat daunting challenge, the team want to highlight North East innovation. That is why they are looking for pioneering products and services from local businesses, colleges and universities that will improve the speed of the boat, enhance crew performance, offer greater protection from the elements, generate energy for subsystems and improve communication.

When I was approached by Team Tyne Innovation to lend Deloitte’s support, it wasn’t just the idea of crossing the Atlantic and raising money for three

fantastic local charities that sparked my interest. It was the team’s desire to demonstrate that the North East remains a hotbed for innovation.

Innovation is a pivotal lever in today’s global environment, and it is a top priority for Deloitte. In order to transform the way we serve clients, develop our people and lead our industry, we are investing more time, resources, and money than ever before.

I’m delighted Deloitte is there to support Team Tyne Innovation in this small way. And what a great time to do it, with the Great Exhibition of the North taking place over the summer.

Three great local charities – Daft as a Brush, The Stroke Association and St Oswald’s Hospice – will benefit from Team Tyne Innovation’s involvement in the Challenge, so that’s a fantastic reason for other businesses to show their support.

And the team is on the lookout for more products, from grab lines and navigation lights to safety clothing and satellite phones, which will enable the crew to complete the crossing in the fastest possible time.

Can you help?

To find out more about Team Tyne Innovation, the Challenge and how to get involved, please visit: www.teamtyneinnovation.com

DIVIDEND INSURANCE: PART THREE

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

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

John had just been released from the Home for Battered Husbands and had returned to work. He saw Jack in the boardroom sitting with his head in his hands.

"What's the matter, Jack?" he asked.

Jack slowly looked up. "I have been talking with our solicitors, Billem and Hard, and Mr. Billem says Mildred has a case."

"Oh dear," said John.

"We haven't got the money to buy her out and the bank won't lend it to us as we already have an overdraft and our financial performance has dropped significantly since George's death," continued Jack.

"What are we going to do?" asked John.

"Well, as I see it, we have limited choices. We could reinstate the dividends, but our profits have dropped like a stone. We could try and reason with Mildred and perhaps arrange to buy her out over a number of years. Alternatively, we could just call in the receiver and wind up the business."

"If we did call in the receiver, we could then use our



pensions to borrow money to buy-back the machines and start again," said John.

Jack stepped back in amazement. "What a cracking idea. I think that last bang on the head from Janet has done you the world of good."

"It really hurt." John winced as he recalled the impact.

"Where will that leave Mildred?" John asked.

Jack twirled the end of his waxed moustache. "Up the proverbial creek without a paddle." A demonic laugh followed.

After several months Jack and John were able to buy back their machines and start again but they

had lost their customer base and struggled to get back to a viable business. Poor Mildred had to downsize her home and take a part time job at the local supermarket to make ends meet, and feed her puppies.

And all because the directors did not follow the advice from the chap at Rutherford Hughes and put in place shareholder protection and key man insurance!

If they had, the bank loan would have been cleared and Jack and John would have had the funds to buy-out Mildred. And they all would have lived happily ever after.

The end.

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

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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

NICK BRAUN

Director and Independent
Financial Planner at
Novus Wealth Management.

Did you always envisage a career in wealth management?

I didn't initially, when I was younger I wanted to be a PE Teacher. I was always very athletic at school, but looking back I'm pleased I went down a different avenue and left sport as a hobby. I started working for Legal and General in Brighton, specifically in pensions, and my career has snowballed from there.

What does your current position involve?

My role is very varied, and I spend my time both providing advice to our clients and juggling the managerial aspects of running the company. Both involve building rapport, understanding challenges and acting as a trusted advisor to clients and colleagues, helping to find practical solutions.

What is your proudest business achievement?

My proudest moment is without doubt my involvement in the establishment of Novus Wealth Management back in 2015. The management buy-out process, in which my fellow business partners Jon and Ben and I were heavily involved, seems a distant memory but that is testament to how quickly the business has grown, and the fast-paced industry in which we work. Feedback from our clients has also been excellent, which is extremely rewarding.

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

Treat everyone equally and without any preconceptions. If you deal with people in a friendly, professional and non-judgemental manner it can generally only lead to positive outcomes.

How do you like to unwind?

Between running a business and spending time with my wife and two young children, spare moments are a rare commodity. When I do get time to unwind, I like head to the golf course - even during my off-time everything is about numbers!



What advice would you give to someone starting out?

In any industry it is important to take the time to gain a good understanding of every aspect of the business. It's the only way to truly appreciate what it takes to succeed in your profession and I feel that you get so much in return. It is not always an option but working your way through the ranks offers a solid grounding in business and helps you to understand processes, while building essential life skills, such as empathy.

What are the biggest challenges facing your industry?

One of the biggest challenges is the constant shifting of goal posts. Seemingly continual changes in government legislation means we are always learning and updating our knowledge to offer the best advice to our clients. It's the reason they trust us to manage their finances.

What is the biggest difference between working for an independent firm as opposed to a tied agent?

I think the biggest difference is in the truly

independent and unbiased advice we can offer. Many companies use the words flexibility and independence but, in reality, they are 'tied agents' and can only advise on certain products which can be limiting. If I could give one recommendation to anyone looking for advice around financial planning, it would be to check if your adviser is tied or not. When we say independent we truly mean it.

There are no restrictions on the advice we offer, and we can operate across the whole of the market with no barriers. There aren't many independent advisory firms around of our size and I'm proud of how unique we are in the region and beyond.

What is the best thing about working in the North East?

It's a cliché but the best part of working in the North East is undoubtedly the people. If, like me, you come from outside the region you can truly appreciate the culture that exists here. You always know where you stand, and generally people have an open, friendly and honest attitude which is incredibly refreshing.

DIDN'T WE DO WELL!

Congratulations were in order for Wellway Accountants after director, Richard Thompson being shortlisted for the North East Accountancy Awards last month.

Although Richard was pipped to the post in the category for Finance Director of the Year, he told us that he was extremely honoured to have been nominated and secondly shortlisted.

The North East Accountancy Awards have been up and running for the past 12 years and have recognised some phenomenal contenders within the finance, accounting and tax field in the north east.

"I am extremely proud to be nominated by my colleague Beth Kennett and being shortlisted alongside two other finalists was very flattering.

After applying and taking part in an interview in April, Richard was left speechless at the news of his achievement.

"When Beth told me, I had made the final I was speechless, I really couldn't believe it. I just do what I do because I enjoy it. Myself and the team are always striving and working hard to provide our clients with the best service possible, but to be recognised for these achievements is a great feeling."



Richard Thompson

Wellway Accountants are based in Morpeth, Northumberland and can be contacted by calling 01670 514 433. www.wellway.uk.com

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MAKING TAX DIGITAL (MTD) FOR VAT: THE CLOCK IS TICKING!



With less than a year to go until the introduction of HMRC's Making Tax Digital for VAT scheme, businesses must be aware of the significant changes to the way they will be required to submit their VAT returns from next spring.

UNW VAT Partner Mark Hetherington outlines some of the steps businesses should take to ensure they are fully compliant with new rules to avoid potential penalties from HMRC.

The welcome decision to delay, or in some cases even shelve completely, certain elements of the wider roll-out of MTD was made in January 2017 after a report by the Treasury Select Committee highlighted several concerns by business owners and agents alike. The introduction of MTD for most taxes was delayed until April 2020 at the earliest, with VAT the only short-term exception.

As it has been compulsory for VAT returns to be submitted quarterly online since 2010, HMRC probably views it as the natural first step to introducing MTD across all taxes. Any company operating with a taxable turnover above the current VAT threshold (£85,000 per annum) will be required to keep digital records for VAT purposes from April 2019. HMRC has recently rolled out

pilots, with participation from a wide range of companies and organisations, to ensure everything is in place for the eventual transition.

The information businesses must provide as part of MTD will be far more extensive than before and taxpayers will therefore be required to operate 'functional compatible software'. This will enable them to maintain digital records and file relevant VAT information electronically. It would be wise to look to implement this software now to ensure new processes are well established and any problems that may arise are addressed well ahead of schedule.

The new software will require businesses to:

- Keep financial records in a digital format
- Submit VAT returns to HMRC using an automated platform
- Receive receipt of information from HMRC electronically

Speaking of his surprise that MTD for VAT purposes is being kept exempt from the delays, Mark Hetherington says: "With the advent of Brexit and the introduction of new procedures for dealing with a massive increase in import and export declarations, it is surprising that HMRC is still choosing to go ahead with MTD for VAT in Spring 2019. Despite wishful thinking there is no sign (yet) of HMRC changing tack.

"Software houses now face a race against the clock to ensure they have systems compatible with MTD for VAT and able to 'talk to' HMRC's VAT portal.

"The majority of UNW clients already have manual processes in place for dealing with VAT returns, be it simple adjustments for low scale charges through to more complex matters involving partial exemption and VAT Group consolidation – I worry that the new pieces of software will either not be able to handle these matters or instead be cost prohibitive."

If you would like to be kept informed of the developments of MTD for VAT, you can contact a member of our Accounting Services or VAT teams at www.unw.co.uk

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YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

DEBORAH GRAHAM

Partner, Ryecroft Glenton

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

I grew up in Surrey, trained as a Chartered Accountant in London and after spells working in Norfolk and Cumbria relocated to the North East about seventeen years ago and have been here ever since. (my husband is from Newcastle)

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

The North East has a strong business environment and I think is one of the best places outside London to do business. We are in a strong position to create jobs, encourage entrepreneurs and build on the great business successes we currently have in the region. There has been a big rise in digital companies in the region over recent years and also a lot of innovation. We need to ensure business are helped in scaling up and hopefully businesses will continue to choose the North East.

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

It offers a great quality of life, with the coast, the countryside and the city all being on our doorstep, it does not take long to get anywhere and there really is something for everyone. There are also great rail connections to London and an international airport.

Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?

To be honest I am finding an increasing number of clients are foregoing the formality of a boardroom meeting and are preferring a coffee shop, with As you Like It, Café Nero and The Clock Tower Café (in Hoults Yard) being particular favourites. The same applies to meetings with professional contacts. The more relaxed settings seem to stimulate leading discussions which help in delivering financial and strategic advice.

Where do you like to eat out in the region?

There are so many good places to eat it is hard to choose, but probably Peace and Loaf in Jesmond is my favourite.

Where do you like to unwind within the North East?

I love the sea and so enjoy going to the coast. The Northumberland coastline is spectacular and there are some great walks.

Are the people really friendlier?

I can honestly say that they are, they have a great sense of humour and actually smile when they pass you in the street or when you are on the metro (which never happens in London!)

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

The view of all the bridges as you look along the Quayside, from the Millennium Bridge through to the Tyne Bridge and beyond.

The view of Newcastle from the top of the Baltic is also pretty good.

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

I think the North East has so much more to offer than people from other parts of the country realise. There is great shopping, a wide variety of excellent places to eat, numerous galleries and museums, historic architecture - need I say more!

There are good transport links which makes it much easier to do business both within the region and outside it. There are so many opportunities in the region.

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

I have worked in London, where the pace of life is very quick and there is little time to take in your surroundings, Norfolk and Cumbria, which are the opposite of London and Newcastle just offers that balance in between. It offers the best of both worlds and people who have not worked here don't realise just how much it has to offer.



NEW APPOINTMENTS SIGNAL FURTHER GROWTH FOR NORTH EAST ACCOUNTANCY FIRM

North East accountancy practice Tait Walker has welcomed 10 new recruits as it announces 10 further opportunities to join its award-winning team.

Forming part of Tait Walker's strategic growth plans, the ongoing recruitment drive follows the significant expansion of its Gosforth head office in 2017, which saw the firm increase its space by more than 9,000 square feet, and the opening of its Durham office in October 2017.

Amongst the new additions are Hollie Thompson, Glen Thompson, Trevor Martin and Sam Moore who all join the firm's tax department, which now employs 40 people, as part of the wider 160-strong business. Further new recruits are, Sam Sutcliffe who joins as IT support assistant and Matthew Chapman as wealth support executive. Michaela Bowes, Claire Metcalfe, Joseph Moran and Amardeep Kaur have all joined the firm's business services department.

NEW PARTNER APPOINTED AT DAVIES TRACEY



Ian Kelly has joined Tees Valley based accountancy practice Davies Tracey to drive further growth after a year of expansion for the firm.

Well-known taxation specialist, Ian has been appointed as Tax Partner, with a remit to head up the Davies Tracey tax department and grow the range of taxation services its team offers to a wide range of clients.

Ian is a specialist in HMRC investigations, expatriate and non-residential taxation, and also has expertise in high net worth and complex clients. He will be involved in delivering sustained practice growth for Davies Tracey, and his role as Secretary of the Wolters Kluwer Northern User Group will also bring a new impetus and dimension to the future of the practice.

Davies Tracey is one of the largest independent accountants in the Tees Valley, and Ian is their 6th new appointment in the last year after the firm, established in 2002 by Craig Davies and Ian Tracey, celebrated its 15th anniversary.



NORTH EAST LAW FIRM ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNER

Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF) has promoted property litigation specialist James Godden to the role of Partner.

The promotion will see James, who has risen through the ranks at GBLF, combine his management of the firm's property litigation department, with ambitious plans to expand the current property litigation offering, whilst at the same time assisting with the wider development of the firm's client base across all areas of the business.

The new role will see James 33, step up from position of fee-earner to a proactive management role, working alongside managing partner Kathryn Taylor and the other Partners at GBLF.

James, who is currently lobbying for leasehold reform, said: "I've enjoyed climbing the career ladder throughout my time so far at GBLF, it's a great feeling to have my long-standing commitment to the business recognised with this promotion."

LITCHFIELD ANNOUNCES DUAL APPOINTMENT

Award-winning architectural practice, Howarth Litchfield, has announced it has recently welcomed two new arrivals to its highly experienced team.

Adding further depth to its existing in-house resource, interior designer Julie Cairns has joined as an associate and Nicola Chapman has taken up the newly created role of business manager.

Julie, who has 25-years' experience, has worked on projects across the UK as well as overseas, and is well regarded for her ability and flair, working on behalf of clients to create stylish interiors and innovative, comfortable places to live, work and socialise.

Nicola Chapman also brings with her a wealth of experience in business development co-ordination, including valuable bid preparation skills, gained from her 21-years with a national contractor. Furthermore, having spent time working within civil engineering, she also possesses knowledge of the wider aspects of construction.

Working in a dual role, Nicola has also taken up the role of studio manager.



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ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM IS READY TO CELEBRATE THE REGION'S BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES



Freddy Hoult
North East Entrepreneurial Awards, 2017
Lifetime Achievement winner.

The achievements of the region's most inspirational entrepreneurs and business figures will be celebrated by the Entrepreneurs' Forum next month at the 2018 North East Entrepreneurial Awards.

Designed to showcase the outstanding success stories involving some of the region's most talented and innovative businesspeople, with the announcement of the award shortlist anticipation is already building towards September's glittering black-tie ceremony at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead hotel.

The North East is home to many thriving businesses, which is why it is important that we recognise the achievements of those entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and delivering economic prosperity across the region.

The Entrepreneurial Awards are always inundated with a high calibre of entries and this year has been no exception. It is shaping up to be another successful evening and the ideal platform to celebrate this fantastic region and the impact our respected and promising entrepreneurs are having on it.

The 15th annual awards, which are held in partnership with the North East LEP, are made up of five categories, which are supported by Malhotra Group, Ward Hadaway and NBS.

Those vying for the honour of being named Entrepreneur of the Year are Stewart Grierson (UpNorth Engineering Services), Lee Hartley (Fairstone Group) and Lianne Walker (Walker Filtration).

Last year the accolade went to Newcastle-based financial services entrepreneur David Harrison, managing partner of True Potential, who admitted being "humbled" by the honour.

The nominees for Emerging Talent, recognising those who have built up a business of outstanding potential, include Jordan McCabe (Aztec Diamond Equestrian), Mike O'Brien (Opencast Software) and Eve and Simon Whitaker (Master Debonair).

Those in contention for the Scale-up Award, recognising individuals whose company has returned more than 20% profit in annualised growth, are Julie Blackie (Pink Boutique), Kevin Brown (Pacifica Group), Steven Rawlingson (Samuel Knight International) and John Savage (Flame Heating Group).

The Mentor of the Year and Lifetime Achievement categories remain a secret until the night itself, when the Entrepreneurs' Forum Board makes its final decision.

Last year's Lifetime Achievement was presented to respected businessman Freddy Hoult, who built up Hoult's Removals into one of the country's leading removals firms. Chosen for his positive contribution to both community and the region's economy, he joined such previous high-profile recipients as Sir Peter Vardy, Sir John Hall, John Fenwick and Anne Preston.

As well as providing an inspirational and entertaining evening, The North East Entrepreneurial Awards also benefits worthy causes across the region. This year the Entrepreneurs' Forum is supporting mental health charity, MIND.

Over the last five years, the event has raised more than £25,000 and it is expected that this year donations will see this total pass the £30,000 mark. The money generated has supported both regional and international projects, ranging from helping 3,200 children through Children North East to funding solar lamps for communities in Southern Tanzania with COCO.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum is committed to helping excellent local causes and the annual awards have proven to be a very popular way for Forum members to give their support to the chosen charities.

The 2018 awards ceremony, on Friday, 28th September, will be hosted by British explorer and environmentalist Benedict Allen, who is famous for immersing himself in the cultures of indigenous peoples whilst on expedition.

No stranger to self-reliance and determination, he is the only known person to have crossed the Amazon Basin at its widest point as well as successfully completing a 1,000 mile solo navigation of the Gobi Desert.

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

BLOWING THE WHISTLE

A successful claim under the whistleblowing legislation can result in unlimited compensation, compensation for injury to feelings and, importantly, there is not a length of service requirement.

There has been some doubt in the past as to what would constitute a disclosure with the tribunals and courts being asked to decide whether grievances, solicitors' letters and a series of emails amount to a disclosure. However, at the heart of this issue is whether the worker has disclosed "information". The Court of Appeal has now provided some welcomed clarity in the case of *Kilraine v London Borough of Wandsworth* [2018] EWCA Civ 1436.

Who is protected?

Before we consider what constitutes a disclosure, it's worth remembering that whistleblowing protection extends to a broad category of individuals including employees, workers (that category falling between employee and self-employed status which is so prevalent in the gig economy), and the following:

- Homeworkers;
- Non-employees undergoing training or work experience as part of a training course;
- Self-employed doctors and dentists in the NHS;
- Agency workers;
- Police officers; and
- Student nurses and student midwives.

What disclosures are covered?

A worker will be protected if they make a qualifying disclosure. This then becomes a protected disclosure if, broadly speaking, it is made to the right person (usually the employer).

A qualifying disclosure is any disclosure of information which, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following has taken place, is taking place or is likely to take place:

- a criminal offence;
- a breach of any legal obligation;
- a miscarriages of justice;
- the health and safety of any individual being endangered;
- environmental damage; or
- the deliberate concealing of information about any of the above.

Importantly, whether the worker has a reasonable



belief is a subjective test; they do not have to prove that the information disclosed is true or that it falls within one of the above categories.

Since 25 June 2013, a worker must also reasonably believe (at the time of making the disclosure) that it is in the public interest.

What constitutes "information"?

In a 2010 case the Employment Appeal Tribunal appeared to suggest that there was a distinction between a worker making allegations and disclosing information with the former not amounting to a qualifying disclosure.

The Court of Appeal has now clarified that what is key is the disclosure of facts. This may be done as part of an allegation and "allegations" and "information" are not mutually exclusive. What matters is that there is sufficient factual content and specificity for it to tend to show one or more of the categories. The context in which a statement is made will also be relevant and could transform a statement

that lacks sufficient information into a disclosure. For example, a statement that an employer is breaching health and safety requirements would not ordinarily amount to a qualifying disclosure, but would do so if accompanied by the worker pointing at cables constituting a trip hazard.

Accordingly, managers need to be aware of considering fully the facts and information being disclosed taking into account the whole circumstances and not considering statements in isolation.

What should employers do?

Employers should ensure they have a whistleblowing policy in place which is easily-accessible. Staff should also be trained on how to make a disclosure and, crucially, managers should be trained on how to both recognise and deal with a disclosure. Above all, a worker should not be subjected to a detriment for making a disclosure. Where a disclosure is made in the context of a grievance or disciplinary issue, it is worth taking advice.

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



Sarah Pittendrigh 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...

SARAH PITTENDRIGH

Simply Bows and Chair Covers

Tell me about your background in business?

I have always worked in marketing, sales and brand management, including for such iconic brands as Phileas Fogg, Land Rover and Jaguar.

Before establishing Simply Bows & Chair Covers, I was a director of a national corporate events company, which delivered Blue Chip events around the UK.

However, when the recession hit in 2008, one of our major clients faltered and other businesses began cutting expenditure as part of the downturn. The business closed and that's when I found myself unemployed, bankrupt and a single mum.

I was also trying to stop my home in south Northumberland from being repossessed, but fortunately I made sufficient turnover during the first year of Simply Bows & Chair Covers to start repaying the mortgage.

Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, what was the inspiration for your business?

Whilst organising corporate events, one of the things that struck me was the lack of availability and poor quality of the linen available. I also remembered my brother, who got married a few months earlier, had real problems obtaining good quality table linen and chair covers for his wedding breakfast.

That was my inspiration. I spotted a gap in the market for specialist event linen and chair décor with a creative edge and believed it was a fantastic opportunity to set up a successful business.

Describe what is Simply Bows & Chair Covers?

We provide bespoke chair decor, chair hire, table linen and luxury chair accessories, supported by exceptional quality service, for weddings, private dining and corporate events.

Tell me about how your company has progressed?

I sat down and wrote a detailed business plan that allowed me to secure grant funding from Business Link, which was a huge support. This was the cash injection that allowed me to get started.

Using my previous contacts and links with hotels, I had some samples manufactured and targeted the luxury market, visiting all the key hotels in the North East, including Close House, Rockcliffe Hall and Doxford Hall to pitch my idea.

I created a website, attended wedding fairs and, together with personal recommendations, news of the brand quickly spread. The business really sold itself because what we were offering was so unique and unrivalled.

In my first year, the business took 88 wedding bookings, turning over £79,000. After 18 months I was able to employ another person and from that point the whole thing just grew and grew.

I then began to receive enquiries nationally and really didn't want to start turning business away. It was then I decided to design my own franchise model and returned to Business Link where I was able to secure another grant towards the process. I now have 10 franchises stretching from Dundee to Wales.

What is your proudest moment with Simply Bows & Chair Covers?

There are several moments which stand out. Receiving my very first order was very memorable, the first hotel who took us on as preferred supplier and selling my first franchise.

It's great to know someone believes in what you are doing and the service you provide and, in the case of franchisees, that someone is prepared to pay for a stake in your business and wants to replicate it.

I was really proud to be awarded Most Promising UK Business in 2012 at the finals of the British Chamber of Commerce Chamber Award at the Guildhall in London after progressing through from the local and regional heats.

Then in 2015 I was named the Natwest Everywoman Aphrodite Female Entrepreneur of the Year. Receiving national recognition is a real affirmation of all my hard work and was a platform to create further interest in the brand and from potential franchisees.

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

When I first began the franchising process, I interviewed a couple who were only interested in copying my business model. I only realised later that I should have got them to sign a confidentiality agreement. It was a lesson learnt and I now ensure everything is watertight as brand protection is really vital.

What is Simply Bows & Chair Covers' USP?

We believe in a high level of customer service and delivering a quality product. I always vowed never to be a jack of all trades. We are specialists and we only work with specialists to provide a highest quality service.

What is the most important part of your business?

Weddings make up the vast majority of our business as people want the very best on such a special and memorable day. One of our franchisees in Lancashire provides a service for 350 weddings a year.

We have worked on Hollyoaks star Gary Lucy's wedding at the five-star Mandarin Oriental in London, which was featured on the front page of OK! Magazine, together with a number of high-profile celebrity and charity events. We have even worked with Granada Television dressing sets for Coronation Street on-screen weddings.

Do you live by a certain motto?

We never ever over promise and under deliver. I would rather under promise and over deliver. If you can't do something, tell the client rather than deliver a poor service and stick to what you are good at. That's important.

What are your future plans?

I continue to mentor my franchisees, supporting them and the brand. Personally I have several other projects on the go, including property development.

Last year saw the completion of five luxury barn conversions on my husband's farm, which generated a turnover of £2.2million. I worked with the architect and project managed the development as well as handling sales enquiries and viewings.

I have now secured planning permission to build three luxury bungalows on another site and will again project manage with particular emphasis on design.

In addition, I'm passionate about using my experience and knowledge in business, sales, development and marketing. I've set up a business consultancy to offer a range of mentoring services to individuals and businesses who can benefit from my expertise. I'm also available to undertake non-executive director positions. It really is important to me, sharing hindsight. When I was unemployed and on my own, the Entrepreneurs' Forum was incredibly supportive.

After first establishing the business I won a Business Growth Award and received ten sessions of free business mentoring. It was so helpful to brainstorm my ideas.

I've been bankrupt, unemployed and started a business from scratch so I've been through all the different processes and have much to offer. It's important to me to be able to share my success.

Have you achieved a perfect work life balance?

Mums with kids are still capable of starting a business and doing amazing things. Setting up my own business was the best thing I ever did.

My son is 19 now and when I set up the company he was just nine. Before that point I had little time to spend with him and I thought it was wrong. It was very important that my business model was flexible to work around his needs.

He's now an equestrian professional. It's been wonderful for me to have been able to support him along the way and give him the time in a way I couldn't if I wasn't working for myself. He has certainly benefitted and I've been able to share in some important milestones in his life.

Anyone setting up in business faces the same challenges. It doesn't matter who you are, the difficulties and the opportunities are the same.

NEW DRAMA FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN TACKLES MENTAL HEALTH

A leading voice in mental health counselling has spearheaded a unique project to raise awareness of the growing rise in the damaging psychological impact on children and parents as a result of financial stress.

North East Counselling Services (NECS) has teamed up with community charity, Edberts House in Felling to deliver a pioneering drama which was shown to three schools in the Gateshead area thanks to funding from the governments's Illegal Money Lending Team, (IMLT),

The drama is based on two years of collaborative work between NECS and Edberts House which directly links to the challenges children and young people experience in the north east. Edberts House is a charity, formed almost ten years ago which aims to build happier, healthier, friendlier communities. The partnership with NECS and the IMLT has enabled the drama to be produced which is hoped will bring many positive outcomes.

The drama is written by North East scriptwriter Laura Lindow. Laura is an exceptional writer for young people and knows how to tackle difficult subjects in an accessible way. The play is as funny as it is moving, and will resonate with young minds. The piece is directed by Paula Penman and performed by Lewis Jobson and Sam Bell.

An estimated 310,000 households nationally are borrowing from illegal money lenders; these criminals charge exorbitant rates of interest to trap people into



a spiral of debt. The pressure they exert can destroy lives and push victims to the brink of suicide due to the extreme misery they cause. Loan sharks operate illegally and as the debts can't legally be enforced many lenders will resort to the most extreme and callous methods to enforce repayment.

Financial pressures on the family are one of the key stress factors leading to poor mental health. The added complications associated with parents using loan sharks and money lenders has contributed to high stress levels found on their children.

NECS Chief Executive Officer, Marjorie Hunter said, "Financial stress is a major cause of poor mental health and our findings show that many young people hear their parents talking about their problems which then exposes the whole family to severe anxiety and stress. The drama we've commissioned will bring

to life real issues and help the children to not only understand the issues but point them in the right direction for professional help."

Tony Quigley, Head of the Illegal Money Lending Team, said: "We want people to know that they are not alone and we can help them. Dramas such as this one in Gateshead will help us reach those families affected by these criminals.

"We would urge anyone who is involved with a loan shark to call us in confidence on 0300 555 2222. For more information and to report a loan shark online, visit www.stoploansharks.co.uk"

The play was delivered to children from three schools in Gateshead: Bede Primary, St Wilfrid's Primary and Brandling Primary at the Gateshead International Stadium on 25 June.

www.stoploansharks.co.uk

WHITEHOUSE FARM CELEBRATES 21 YEARS OF 'FARMTASTIC' FUN!

Almost one thousand partygoers from across the region joined in the 21st Birthday celebrations at Whitehouse Farm Centre, near Morpeth in July.

The Farm, which is best known and loved as one of the region's top visitor attractions, hosted a two-day birthday party spectacular that was jam-packed with fun and games for the whole family.

Whitehouse Farm's mascot, Nelson the Pig, led the festivities as visitors of all ages took part in his birthday fun fair, party games and fairground rides in the glorious summer sunshine.

Partygoer Jane Melling and her family are regular visitors to the Farm, she said: "Well done on this weekend's 21st Birthday Celebrations. I've always loved the Farm and its special events and this event was no exception. The magic shows were so funny; all the kids were totally loving it and laughing.

"The Circus skills were brilliant and have inspired my kids to try more of them. There was so much more going on with face painting, party games, fairground rides and stilt walkers and not forgetting the amazing cake! We had a fabulous day."

Other activities included the Farm's first family fun game show, which was based on popular TV programmes involving categories called 'The Dice is Right', 'Family Misfortunes' and 'Whose Pie is it Anyway'. The Farm's very own Magic Steve was also on-hand both days with his dazzling magic shows and guests were awed by stilt walkers who taught tricks in a series of circus skills workshops.

Party goers also tucked into delicious birthday cake and got hands-on feeding and grooming the animals.

Dawn Peters, Events Coordinator at Whitehouse Farm Centre, said: "Wow! We have had a fantastic 21st birthday and I would like to thank all our friends both old and new who came along to help us celebrate this fantastic milestone in our history. We have had a truly wonderful and very memorable weekend."

The Farm team get ready to cut the cake with help from gravity defying circus performers. (L-R) Magic Steve, Dawn Peters, Whitehouse Farm Event Coordinator, Nelson the Farm mascot and Karen Lovatt, Operations Director at Whitehouse Farm.



A family business, in 21 years Whitehouse Farm Centre has grown from a small farm attraction into an award winning visitor attraction welcoming around 100,000 visitors annually.

Spread over 40 acres, the Farm is home to an impressive range of native and exotic animals. Its furry, feathered, hairy and scaly residents include snakes, skinny pigs, meerkats, marmoset monkeys, deer, wallabies, llamas, Shetland ponies, owls and parrots, all living happily alongside the more typical farm animals you would expect to find in the Northumberland countryside; sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and cattle.

To find out more go to www.whitehousefarmcentre.co.uk, Facebook: [whitehousefarm](https://www.facebook.com/whitehousefarm) or Twitter [@WhitehouseFarm_](https://twitter.com/WhitehouseFarm_)

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Ian Burke and staff from Sage Gateshead, have benefited from free skills training programme, Go>Grow

BUSINESSES TO BENEFIT FROM EURO CASH BOOST

North East firms are set to benefit from a multi-million-pound pot of cash designed to boost skills and employment in the region...

The North East received a much-needed boost recently when it emerged that Gateshead College had secured an additional £6.4m of European funding for companies to upskill their workforce and get people into work.

The cash boost comes on the back of the successful delivery of Go>Grow, a project that has been managed by the college and a partnership of North East training providers since 2016.

Secured from the European Social Fund (ESF), the additional money will help local firms to develop and strengthen their workforce for free. It will also support individuals who are looking to get back into work, progress in their current job or start their own business.

Employers in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham will be able to benefit from the fund, which will run until March 2019 and support sectors identified as crucial to the fortunes of the North East economy, such as engineering, digital and health and social care.

The cash boost comes after the college secured £15m of ESF funding to launch the Go>Grow programme in 2016. Since then the money has benefited almost 1,100 employers and 250 start-up enterprises, while 12,000 individuals have gained new skills through additional training. It has helped more than 650 individuals into employment and over 600 people have progressed into further education or training. The fact that Gateshead College achieved these impressive outcomes was a key reason why the organisation was able to secure the most recent award of ESF funding.

Judith Doyle CBE, principal and chief executive at Gateshead College, said: "This is fantastic news for the local business community. The additional funding means we can support the expansion of dozens more companies, helping them to upskill their workforce so they can grow and become more competitive.

"On a wider scale, the fund will help key sectors to create employment opportunities, tackle vital skills shortages and generate more value for the regional

economy. I'm also exceptionally proud of my team who have worked tirelessly to oversee the effective delivery of this fund, ensuring it meets the high standards we expect at Gateshead College."

The Go>Grow funds have helped dozens of companies, including Team Valley-based CBC Health, IT firm Advantex and Durham County Council. Staff at Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues (NGCV), a partnership of 10 organisations operating 20 venues across Tyneside, have benefited from free business skills training, while Port of Tyne used the funding to help its staff strengthen working relationships across the business in management, team leader and supervisor roles.

Firms in Northumberland, too, have benefited from Go>Grow. More than 80 employees at Alnwick-based Arcinova, a pharmaceutical research and development specialist, completed advanced Microsoft Word and Excel training to secure high-level IT skills in a move to boost productivity and performance levels.

To find out more about Go>Grow and the courses on offer visit www.gogrow.org.uk

AKZONOBEL BRINGS A SPLASH OF COLOUR TO NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK



A prominent North East decorative paints and coatings manufacturer is helping to give back to nature through an innovative partnership with Northumberland National Park Authority.

AkzoNobel's Ashington site has selected the National Park as its charity of the year and has committed to support the organisation with a number of restoration projects and volunteering activities over the next 12 months.

"We're delighted to be partnering with Northumberland National Park," said Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel Ashington.

"Every year, employees are asked to nominate one local charity for the site to support. In the past, we have used this platform to raise funds and awareness for small, independent charities. This year however, we wanted to do something a bit different which would allow our teams to use their skills to give back to our local community, tie in with our cultural and environmental values and encourage our workforce and their families to get out exploring the beautiful Northumberland countryside."

The first project that the AkzoNobel staff have been involved with is a maintenance project

to rejuvenate the boundary cairns which mark the National Park's perimeter.

Installed in the 1950s, the boundary cairns feature the National Park's iconic curlew logo and can be spotted at roadsides across Northumberland to let visitors know where the National Park designation starts and ends.

"The boundary cairns are often the first thing visitors see of the National Park," said Dave Richardson, volunteer and apprenticeships development officer at Northumberland National Park Authority.

"Because they are constantly exposed to the harsh Northumberland elements however, the paintwork has taken a beating over the years and the cairns are definitely in need of a spruce up!

"It's great to have the support and expertise of AkzoNobel on hand to help us rejuvenate them ready for the busy tourist season and we're looking forward to working with the teams of volunteers on various projects into the new year."

AkzoNobel is using its own specialist Dulux and Cuprinol paints for the project and sourcing all of the decorating materials required to carry out the project work from its Dulux Decorator Centres across the North East.

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



Fred Howie



David Taylor

Fred Howie has worked in the recruitment industry for thirty years. He established Howie White Resourcing in 1999 to provide an alternative to database recruitment agencies. The business has now completed more than 750 assignments across a wide range of industry sectors and disciplines throughout the UK, Europe and further afield.

We don't have a huge number of clients we work with. We are not a mass recruiter and have no ambitions to be one. The vast majority of our clients are repeat customers and many have worked with us since day one of the business.

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NORTHUMBERLAND MANUFACTURER PREDICTS JOBS GROWTH FOLLOWING EXPANSION

Commercial property specialist Naylor's has completed a major letting in Cramlington which is set to bring new manufacturing jobs to Northumberland over the coming years.

British Engines, the engineering group which has seven businesses across the North East, has signed a 10-year lease on The Mailing House at Nelson Park in Cramlington to enable the expansion of the Group's CMP Products division.

Since first transferring operations to Cramlington a decade ago, CMP Products has quadrupled its revenues to £60m and created in excess of 200 jobs.

Northumberland development company Arch



appointed Naylor's to market The Mailing House on a sale or rental basis and the agents say it received a healthy level of interest.

Keith Stewart, Director at Naylor's said: "We are delighted to have secured this letting on behalf of Arch. It's fantastic to see the prospect of job creation and growth in the region's manufacturing

sector."

CMP Products, which designs and manufactures cable glands and cleats for a range of industries including the oil and gas, construction and pharmaceutical sectors, has two existing sites at Nelson Park which it will be retaining as part of the company's growth plans.

MANUFACTURER BOOSTS SALES TEAM WITH NEW APPOINTMENT

Hartlepool-based expanded metal mesh manufacturer The Expanded Metal Company is pressing ahead with growth plans in the south of the UK with the appointment of Russell Lobb, a new territory sales manager.

Russell, from Newbury, brings more than 12 years' experience to The Expanded Metal Company, having worked in a variety of sales positions in sectors including electronics and polymers.

In his new role, Russell will be responsible for developing relationships with both existing and new clients throughout southern England in industries including architecture, security, transport and engineering.

Russell will also be working closely with the senior

management and product development teams at The Expanded Metal Company's headquarters in Hartlepool.

Russell, who studied Marketing at De Montfort University in Leicester, most recently worked as general manager for Hungerford-based vibration management system specialist Curotec Team Ltd.

Commenting on his appointment, Russell said: "I'm delighted to have joined a large and ambitious business with over a century of industrial experience behind it. The Expanded Metal Company is an innovator in its field and working with an organisation which has such a strong commitment to product development is particularly exciting."



IT'S GOLD AGAIN FOR NEWCASTLE'S CMR UK



Newcastle-based control instrumentation and electrical wiring specialists CMR Group has secured a second Investors in People Gold (IIP) for its 'outstanding' commitment to staff development and training.

The award, achieved by only a handful of UK organisations, sees CMR UK accredited against the sixth generation Investors in People standard.

The New York Industrial Park company initially gained IIP Gold in 2014 on the back of staff investment and new performance systems to improve quality and customer service levels.

Now, a second award reflects success in the company's management, development and support of employees.

It is expected that the commitment to use the IIP framework as a key part of its people development programme will lead to CMR securing Platinum level at its next assessment.

IIP Gold offers a comprehensive framework that helps organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the effective management and development of staff.

CMR UK is part of the global CMR Group, which supplies instrumentation, controls and power management for offshore platforms and vessels, marine, engine and industrial applications around the world.

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Samantha Davidson, MD of Horizon Works with Paul Ryan, Finance Director of Arcinova.

OUR JOURNEY WITH...ARCINOVA

Samantha Davidson, managing director of leading B2B marketing agency Horizon Works, talks us through her company's journey with Arcinova, and how it helped to boost the contract research and development organisation's profile...and support its international growth.

Arcinova, a contract research and development organisation (CRDO) based at a 15,000m² facility in Alnwick, provides both integrated end to end solutions and standalone services to pharmaceutical and biotech companies across the globe.

Arcinova was launched in February 2016, following the acquisition of the Covance site in Alnwick by Arc Trinova Limited, a company formed by Ian Shott and Paul Ryan, owners of Shott Trinova LLP.

Arcinova appointed Horizon Works in early 2017 to support its business development and in-house marketing team in building the company's profile and promoting its specialist services.

The first stage of our journey with Arcinova saw us undertake extensive global market research, findings from which were fed into the second stage - the creation of a new marketing strategy, which was shaped around the firm's business objectives.

New brand messaging was also developed to help Arcinova's communications resonate more clearly with its global target audience.

We have since supported Arcinova in implementing a range of marketing activities. These include social media support focusing on events, webinars and Arcinova's services, along with digital marketing initiatives to promote capabilities including

bioanalysis, drug substance synthesis, drug product manufacture and formulation development.

We also worked with Arcinova's team to support their communication with the company's client base, through methods such as a regular e-newsletter.

In addition, we also helped to generate coverage for Arcinova in major international pharma and biotech media outlets, which has helped the company to increase its visibility both in the UK and in target clusters in countries including the USA and Switzerland. This has been critical in helping Arcinova establish its worldwide presence.

Through implementing North East England-focused public relations campaigns, we have also helped to establish Arcinova as a major player in the North East's pharmaceutical sector and support its ongoing recruitment drive.

Horizon Works has supported in Arcinova's engagement with networks such as the North East of England Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC) – for instance by supporting the promotion of the NEPIC Pharmaceutical Conference 2018 which was held at the Arcinova site.

Mark Chadwick, CCO of Arcinova commented: "Horizon Works have provided good support for us in the early phase of our development and helped

us achieve our rapid growth in customer numbers."

Marketing activity based on a strategic approach has helped Arcinova to build its international brand presence, support its business development efforts and position itself as an attractive place to work, with a very exciting future.

Arcinova's client numbers have grown from 50 to 130 in less than 24 months across 20 countries and they have recently announced a £5 million investment from BGF to help drive continued innovation and international expansion.

Horizon Works understands, champions and supports innovators in complex industries with B2B marketing that is clear, connected and purposeful. From its in-depth approach to understanding what its clients do, Horizon Works' multi-talented team of writers, designers and digital experts produce seamless marketing solutions that generate results.

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.
For more information on Arcinova, visit arcinova.co.uk

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

IAN AITCHISON

Commercial Director,
Park Electrical Distributors.

What were your career ambitions growing up?

During my school years and shortly after leaving, I carried a burning desire to start and successfully run my own auto mechanical business. However, once gaining employment at the age of 17 years within a small, independent electrical wholesaler, my ambitions rapidly shifted to running a similar business for myself.

Tell us about your current role?

My current role within Park Electrical, as commercial director, sees me involved in many aspects of the business. Primarily, my main focus has evolved towards all things systems, stock, supplier, service, price and profitability related, but I also recognise the need to assist in all levels at all times, for all who need me.

What is your proudest business achievement?

Without doubt, realising my career ambitions as described earlier, and successfully starting up my own business back in 2008, closely followed by gaining directorship with Park Electrical in 2013.

How has your industry changed in the last decade?

The last decade has thrown down many changes and challenges in our industry.

Credit Crunch - As a business, we had to adjust to the impact the credit crunch had, not only with our customers, but also our supply chain.

E-commerce - The internet has had a huge impact upon the way we carry out our day-to-day lives.

Advances in Technology - We have seen a significant shift in our comprehensive database of products within the last 10 years, due largely to the introduction of LED technology, which has completely turned the lighting industry on its head.

What are you currently working on?

As the business has experienced steady growth over the last 5-10 years, it has become essential to adapt so as to ensure we are managing this growth effectively. As a result, the focus has been on the



commercial department within Park Electrical. This department has been slowly developing over the last few years and has gradually become the nuts and bolts of the business.

Tell us about your team?

Reporting directly to me are a team of five experienced branch managers. Chris Riley, Tony Arena, Tony Brumwell, Stephen Pinny and Tony Duckworth. They have a responsibility to control their branches and manage their individual businesses, ensuring that they maintain high levels of customer service and maximise the return on the investment that the company is trusting them with.

As well as the team of managers, I have Glen Charman who has recently been promoted to the position of senior buyer and is a key player in the commercial department. Glen has a wealth of wholesale experience and his contribution to the department will ensure that we achieve our goals.

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

This came from someone who I worked for within a national distributor some 25-30 years ago. He simply said: "Identify a couple of large key customers, make it your mission to take them under your wing and don't let go of them." This, I duly did with some success and can say that this was without doubt the best piece of advice which

helped me to climb the ranks during my career.

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

As mentioned above, it worked for me, but with the addition of "Don't be afraid to ask questions about anything you need to know and always listen to the answers carefully. In particular, always ensure that you pay close attention to detail."

Who are your heroes inside and outside of business?

Inside the business, my heroes are the colleagues that I work with. From the board of directors right down to every employee. They are the people who have combined to produce the results that have made Park Electrical into the North East's largest independent electrical wholesaler.

Outside of the business, who else but my mam and dad? They take the credit for instilling in me the work ethic that has enabled me to succeed.

How do you unwind outside of work?

There hasn't been a great deal of time to unwind outside of work lately, but nothing beats a relaxing sunny afternoon chilling in the garden with family and friends.

Favourite Book/CD/DVD?

Andy McNab, Chris Ryan, Lee Child books, action, adventure, any Tarantino film.

NEWCASTLE'S HENRY RILEY TURNS 30

It's hard to believe that Henry Riley LLP has had an office in Newcastle for 30 years. Even harder to believe is that I've been working there for all of them!

When we set up the office in 1988, the place to go was the Bigg Market, Newcastle United were in the old Second Division, and places like the Quayside and the Ouseburn were complete no-go areas.

I remember taking an old college pal of mine to view a derelict property on the Quayside and asking him if he was sure he wanted his company to invest in the area. The building now operates as an extremely successful hotel and bar!

Regeneration

Of course, that's not the only change I've seen. The regeneration of the riverside has seen iconic buildings like the Sage, Millennium Bridge and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art join existing landmarks like the Tyne Bridge. The centre of town has also recently exploded with new build student accommodation and a more 'user friendly' approach to the city centre, which is supported by NE1, Newcastle's award-winning Business Improvement District Company. In short, the transformation has been huge and a great improvement.

Office

The Henry Riley office is based at Hadrian House, with a team of 12. But it wasn't always that way. After six months operating out of my kitchen in North Shields, our first proper office was serviced accommodation in Gosforth. I say 'our' but at the time it was just me! Then after a growth spurt, our team of four moved to St Nicholas Chambers in summer 1989. From 1989 until 2008 we grew from four to 10 before making the move to Hadrian House.

For me, the first 30 years was merely setting the scene and creating the foundations for the office to grow into an even more important regional force. We have an ambitious team and in the last 18 months, we've seen significant changes in the diversity of sectors we work in and local projects we're involved with.



As Henry Riley LLP celebrates 30 years in the region, partner Paul Nixon shares his memories of the city, the company and how far they've come



Success

New and potential clients are constantly amazed at our impressive client list. I think our success is due to the fact we offer a local service with the backing of a large national consultancy. We have an outstanding team and it's very rare that we don't have experience of a project somewhere within the practice. That, coupled with a willingness to share skills and resources nationally, has produced a winning formula.

Clients

Previously, much of our work was for major national retail clients, and for years we were known as 'Sainsbury's QS of choice'. But that's now changed and today we're working with residential, commercial, infrastructure and education clients, as well as on our large portfolio of retail schemes. We're involved in many more local projects too. Thanks in part to my membership of Interact, a group of like-minded local property and construction professionals who meet on a regular basis to share ideas and leads, with the aim of winning new business for all the companies involved.

So why have I stayed for 30 years? I have an exciting workload and the practice has evolved and developed in such a positive way, particularly in the last 10 years. But it still retains its core values of being a practice that cares about its employees and wants to provide an outstanding service to clients.

Anyway, 30 years later on, the Bigg Market is a horrible place for a night out, Newcastle United are now in the Premier League, Henry Riley are going from strength to strength and I'm three stone lighter. What's not to like!



MR FOKHRUL ISLAM & NORTHERN GAS AND POWER LTD

Who are Mr Fokhrul Islam & Northern Gas and Power Ltd?

From humble beginnings in his bedroom in South Shields, Fokhrul Islam has lead Northern Gas & Power Ltd to become a global force in the energy industry. It is with his vision, drive and determination to succeed in an extremely competitive market place that he has become a force to be reckoned with. Mr Islam had previously worked in several positions, including the business telecom market, as well as with energy consultancies. It was with a talent for identifying problems, and by thinking outside the box he came up against management teams who could not grasp his vision for change, and where his suggested solutions would take them, almost to the point of being considered an upstart or a negative influence. But this was far from the case.

This brought him to the point of deciding to go it alone, and in his eyes, do things "properly". With a true insight into the customer journey and realising what was missing from that, as well as acknowledging the importance of the people around you and the valuable input they can lend to any given situation. In fact, "in our information-driven world, how much you know makes more difference to your long-term success than how much money you have or almost anything else".

In the beginning, suppliers would not take the time to speak to us, and an agreement with a third party pricing firm had to be set up to be able to gain pricing and put contracts into place for our customers. Things have changed quite considerably since then. Our relationships with the major suppliers and networks throughout the UK and around the world enable NGP to provide a professional service that has a platinum seal of approval from our clientele.

Rapid Expansion

We are very much target driven, and our global expansion has been part of our business vision from the very beginning. To have an office in Texas was always the dream. We have developed an amazing team of talented energy consultants, technical experts and management whose knowledge and work ethic have driven my dream

and vision. This can clearly be seen in offices in Gateshead, Paris, Chennai, Texas and Malta & Leeds.

Fokhrul Islam the employer.

Voted Best place to work in the UK 2017 - Chartered Management Institute and Glassdoor, 2017 Winner of Director of the Year – Energy Efficiency and Healthy Homes National Awards

2017 Energy Consultancy of the Year 2018 – NE Energy Efficiency and Healthy Homes National Awards 2018

Northern Gas & Power have recently been on the BBC discussing your "Work Life Balance" for your employees, could you please explain what sets NGP apart from the company next door?

Great question. This is not an easy job at the end of the day, and everyone in NGP including the director started from picking up that phone and contacting businesses, developing their skills and understanding of the role before progressing into management. This is vital, management know what each and every team member is experiencing on a daily basis. We know how hard the NGP family work, and this is rewarded in many ways. On top of their standard 28 days holidays per year, we do not want our team to work in December. We divide the yearly target by 11, and once we hit that target, (usually by the first week in December), we send the team home to spend time with their families and ask them not to come back until January. This is a great motivator, and creates a fantastic atmosphere.

I know how hard we work, and I appreciate it can be a very stressful environment, but I also realise that life-work balance is imperative. I am a family man myself, and I insist that our workforce has the time off to enjoy with their family and friends. I want them to remember why they go to work each day and to prioritise their goals in life. This ultimately gives our NGP family time to recuperate and come back full of drive, and enthusiasm lending to a happier and more productive goal driven company. I think that the awards we have received in recent months speak for themselves and I am extremely proud of our ever expanding global team.

PERUVIAN FASHION COMES TO THE NORTH EAST



Fashion designer Eleanor O'Neill talks to Northern Insight's Steve Russell about why she has joined the latest South American Revolution.

As a man more familiar with the hallowed racks of TK Maxx than the highfalutin world of haute couture, I must confess that beyond Paddington Bear's exquisitely tailored Duffel coat and Nolberto Solano's deluxe trumpet case, my expertise on Peruvian fashion is somewhat limited!

However, it seems I may be in the minority, with Newcastle based entrepreneur Eleanor O'Neill, among a growing number of fashion designers incorporating quality Peruvian fibres into their collections.

Eleanor's label, STUDY 34, has teamed up with Incalpaca, one of Peru's premier producers of Alpaca wool, to create luxurious but sustainable knitwear for women. STUDY 34's current range features baby Alpaca crews in two classic and natural shades, bringing versatility and elegance to any wardrobe. In case you were wondering (or perhaps it was just me?) using baby Alpaca wool doesn't mean that there are thousands of infant Alpacas roaming the Andes in an alarming state of baldness. "Baby" refers to the quality of the wool, with only the finest twenty percent being graded as such, as Eleanor explains:

"Part of what makes baby Alpaca wool such a luxurious material is the fact that the process of sorting and grading the wool can never be mechanized. The fibres are meticulously sorted by hand, a skill which has been honed over generations in Peru and the wool itself is so soft and light it's comparable to cashmere."

Compared to sheep's wool, Alpaca produces a silkier yarn and contains no lanolin, making it hypoallergenic. With her natural inclination towards a classic, functional aesthetic, Eleanor allows the quality of the fabric to speak for itself, and her timeless designs deliberately eschew prevailing trends:

"My background is predominantly in women's

knitwear and I really wanted to do one thing well, so I currently only design for women and I only do knitwear. My core values as a designer are about craftsmanship and style, rather than following trends, but also about using natural, sustainable resources."

The fashion industry has long been criticised for the exploitation of workers in developing countries, as well as the damage done by chemicals involved in manufacturing processes. While Eleanor acknowledges that importing goods inevitably has a small carbon footprint, she is proud to utilise a natural, disposable material, manufactured under ethical conditions, where workers receive a fair wage.

Having scooped The Prince's Trust Tomorrow's Business Award in 2016, it's a partnership that is certainly thriving, but how exactly does a girl from Yorkshire come to collaborate with Peruvian industry? Graduating from Nottingham School of Art with a degree in knitwear, Eleanor went on to work for some of fashion's biggest names, including spells with Li and Fung in New York and Hugo Boss in Switzerland. She values the skills and experience those positions brought but was always eager to set up her own label to allow her the creative freedom she craved.

"Newcastle has always been like a second home for me, so it was a natural choice for me when I decided to set up my own business. The Prince's Trust were fantastic in helping me to get established and winning the Tomorrow's Business Award was amazing as not only did it involve a cash prize and digital marketing training via Google, but I also received mentoring from Steve Rowe (CEO of Marks and Spencer) who himself has a background in knitwear."

Having access to such a luminary was invaluable and allowed her to expand her network considerably, something which she feels is vital for any aspiring entrepreneur: "My advice would be to build your network and don't wait until your business is ready

for the market until you start talking about it, otherwise you'll put it out there to silence. Newcastle has an amazing community of entrepreneurs, so it's such an exciting place for start-ups".

Owing to her passion for no-waste, "circular" fashion, STUDY 34's early designs were based on sourcing end-of-line and waste material from British manufacturers, but issues with supply and scalability led Eleanor to consider exploring a rather unexpected opportunity: "I got an email seemingly out of the blue about the Peruvian government wanting small businesses to come over and potentially collaborate with their manufacturers. I successfully applied and spent an intense four days over there visiting various producers. I was really impressed and found them really open to doing business, something that was sometimes lacking from the British manufacturers I have dealt with."

The success of her current range, which has brought clients from across the world, has recently inspired Eleanor to expand her collection: "My new pieces are in development now and will be available in the autumn. They will be a mix of Alpaca wool and Pima cotton, which is another Peruvian fibre used by the likes of Eileen Fisher, who is one of the pioneers of sustainable fashion. Using that blend of fibres makes them machine-washable so they'll be easier care-wise, but will still retain a luxurious feel."

Running STUDY 34 leaves her precious little free time, but what time she does have is spent inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs through an ongoing association with The Prince's Trust Enterprise programme, as well her involvement with initiatives like The Girls Network. Enabling other women to achieve their goals is embedded in the vision of STUDY 34, so there's clearly lots more Eleanor wishes to achieve, but in a world of fast, disposable fashion, it's refreshing to see a young designer who definitely doesn't value style over substance.

For more information visit www.study34.co.uk

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE'S HIGH STANDARD OF TEACHING AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Northumberland College has been awarded Silver in the Government-backed Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) Awards for delivering high-quality teaching, learning and outcomes for its students.

The College, which has around 4,000 students across three campuses at Ashington, Berwick and Kirkley Hall, is one of 16 higher education providers in the North East and one of four to offer academic, vocational as well as land-based learning programmes. It was awarded the accolade to recognise excellence in both teaching methods and preparing students for further study or employment.

Winners of the TEF awards are selected by an independent panel of experts comprising of students and academics that draw on national data as well as evidence submitted by each learning provider. They measure excellence of standards across three areas; quality of teaching, learning environments and the outcomes achieved by students.

Joyce Guthrie, Director of HE at Northumberland College said, "We are delighted to be awarded TEF Silver as it is great recognition for the hard work, dedication and high standards of teaching and learning support that our staff provide. Furthermore, it endorses the College's industry-based learning facilities such as our land-based provision at Kirkley Hall and our multi-million pound STEM academy offering a range of real-life commercial environments



Staff at Northumberland College have been awarded for their high standards of teaching and student outcomes.

to develop and improve skills for employment and apprenticeships for businesses.

"It's an award that's very highly regarded both within the education sector, by students considering higher education and the wider stakeholder community, so it's a great achievement by all those involved."

In addition, Northumberland College's HE provision has also received top honours from The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an independent body that assesses and ensures that all UK students working towards a HE qualification receive the education they are entitled to and to the correct quality standard.

Representatives from QAA visited the site to meet with students, course leaders and members of the

leadership team over a two day period to assess standards and quality of learning available. Following the mandatory review, the College received full confidence for its HE offering.

Joyce added, "This is another accreditation that confirms the high standards and quality of learning at Northumberland College and how students receive the correct knowledge and skills to progress on to further study or employment. There are wide-ranging opportunities to learn at any one of our three campuses with courses that span many industries and I would advise anyone considering higher education to come and see what we have available."

Northumberland College offers over 30 higher education programmes ranging from HNC and HND to foundation degree and top-up degree courses.

More details can be found at www.northumberland.ac.uk/higher-education or by contacting Northumberland College on t: 01670 841200.

SUNDAY NIGHT FEVER - HAS YOUR OFFICE BEEN HIT?

We're all aware of that Sunday night feeling, when the dread sets in and the anxiety begins then before you know it you're calling in sick with Sunday night fever. Mental health in the workplace is a rising issue which many businesses are struggling to handle and failing to notice. With an estimated 12.5 million work days lost due to work-related stress, how could you adapt your workplace to prevent absences and increase productivity?

Whilst it's not always easy to spot stress in an employee who is trying to perform their hardest, do ensure that your management team is provided with the appropriate training or awareness initiatives. Look out for common signs of workplace stress including changes in behaviour, a change in the standard of work produced and your employee's general attitude towards tasks.

If you do suspect that an employee is suffering from workplace stress, communicate with them. Approach your colleague with an open mind and offer support by reducing workload, reviewing deadlines and proving proactive discussions.

In 2017, the main cause of work-related stress, depression or anxiety was workload, particularly tight deadlines and too much work or an increase in pressure or responsibility. Other issues which have been known to cause employee's workplace stress include lack of managerial support and organisational changes at work.

If you need any assistance with workplace issues, Howe Consultancy work closely with your business to act as the strategic link between HR and the senior management team. Have a browse of our website for more on what we can do for you, or if you'd prefer to pick up the phone and speak to us, you can call us on 07921 256 981.



Joanne Howe

www.howeconsultancy.co.uk

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT NE1 LTD EXCITED FOR NEWCASTLE'S FUTURE

'NE1's bold, ambitious plans for Newcastle are mirrored by the wider aspirations of the city' says newly appointed Chief Executive, Adrian Waddell.

58 year old Adrian from Morpeth has worked for Business Improvement District Company, NE1 Ltd for over 9 years as Operations Director before taking up the role of Chief Executive in March this year as the BID company gears up for its second BID renewal vote.

After five months in the role, Adrian Waddell already feels the city is growing in confidence and is excited and optimistic about the future. "The spotlight is firmly on the North East with Newcastle reclaiming its rightful place in the premier league of national and international cities generating a huge amount of optimism in the city.

Recent high profile visits from Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England and Business Secretary Greg Clark coupled with the Great Exhibition of the North have all contributed to the feeling of mounting excitement and a sense of regional pride.

The Great Exhibition of the North in particular has attracted attention and generated a high level of interest in Newcastle and the wider north east. Innovation, which is embedded in the city's DNA, is driving much of what is happening as Newcastle looks confidently to the future.

What is NE1 doing to shape Newcastle's future?

"We are delighted that NE1's summer activity programme is complementing the Great Exhibition and everything else that's happening in the city. Our free, accessible events help give Newcastle the wow factor. At NE1 we've always had an eye on what can be done to make the most of Newcastle's unique assets. So with the eyes of the UK firmly upon us – we've been able to put on a fantastic show. Everything NE1 is delivering this summer is designed to shape Newcastle's future. It is about being innovative, bold and confident making a difference now to strengthen and shape the city for the future. NE1 is known for its' stand out pocket parks and the

latest additions do not disappoint, Adrian explains: "We have some dramatic and exciting pocket parks in the city this summer, all with their own distinct, signature elements. On Northumberland Street we have created a temporary Garden Village that will remain in place until October. It is equipped with artificial turf, deckchairs, the UK's largest astro turf covered sofa and a life size rhinoceros – it is truly eye catching! From the moment it opened, the park changed the way people used and saw Northumberland Street. The same is true of NE1's Blckett Street weekend takeovers, during the summer the street, which is one of the city's busiest bus routes, becomes a 1,000-foot park. Both street parks have been a huge hit with businesses and the public and are precursors to what we hope can become more permanent developments and improvements in the future.

NE1's ever-popular Quayside Seaside, the Screen on the Green and NE1 Newcastle Motor Show in August all add to the outdoor focus for the city. There is something for everyone to enjoy and to give people more reasons to come into town and dwell longer when they get here.

These initiatives also provide a test bed for us in partnership with the City Council, transport operators and others, to review how the city centre could look and develop in the future.

What is NE1 doing to ensure that Newcastle avoids the high street decline that has blighted other towns and cities?

As a city centre we need to keep working hard to create a 'destination' in the truest sense of the word with attractions and an environment that make people want to come into town. By creating interesting, exciting places with lots of free, interactive fun and things to do will encourage more families into the city. Successful towns are providing this and Newcastle must do the same.

Clearly retail is, and will continue to be, a crucial business sector for Newcastle. Newcastle is the No

1 retail destination in North East England and we want and need our high street to be commercially successful and diverse but we are acutely aware that things do need to change.

We know that to buck the trend we need to evolve and further develop our offer. To thrive, not just survive, Newcastle needs to offer more than just shopping. For long term success the city needs to be a fun, interesting place to be with plenty going on in and around the shops, business, leisure and restaurant venues. This all needs to combine with really high quality and well managed public realm, as well as having fantastic brands and retail outlets in the mix.

Where next for the city?

"We know that there is still a lot of work to be done especially around the river. NE1's Newcastle City Marina, the Quayside Seaside and the boat race on the Tyne have all shown that the area is ripe for further development and that there is an appetite for more events and activities.

"The challenge now is how we, as a BID company, can work alongside other interested parties including the City Council, our two city universities and college and our world leading hospital, to make the most of existing opportunities and identify new ones.

What next for NE1 Ltd?

NE1's upcoming BID renewal vote is in October, where we ask our business levy payers to vote on our plans for the next five years. This Renewal is a really big deal; through NE1 it provides the city with the capacity to test new ideas, to consider new, untried initiatives, look around Europe and globally for the best examples of how modern cities organize themselves and what they do. There's lots of untapped potential in our city and, given a new mandate in October 2018, we are looking forward to continuing our mission to create the best possible environment for people and business.



Grey Street resplendent and Blckett Street park



Northumberland street - NE1 rhino



Ged Bell NCC and Stephen Patterson NE1 Ltd



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, offers advice on the best way to handle your exit from a business.



Bryony Gibson

People often think that working your notice period is an opportunity to wind down before your next big challenge, but it's actually a very important time in your career.

In my experience, there are a number of things employees commonly do after they've handed in their resignation. Whether it's taking your foot off the gas, bragging to colleagues about how great your next job will be, or being disloyal around customers, these are all urges that you need to resist.

Prepare before you resign

Before you quit, make sure you've given some thought to the way you're going to describe your new job to colleagues. Be positive, but try not to be too upbeat as you don't want to upset anyone.

There's a good chance that some co-workers will feel a little disappointed that you're leaving. Staffing changes can bring with them office politics and mixed emotions, so it's likely that your relationships with some of your colleagues will change too. Being aware of this in advance will help you to take it less personally.

Stay motivated until the end

Depending upon the length of your notice period - which you should always expect and offer to honour - it can be quite difficult to stay enthusiastic and focused.

Don't get fooled into thinking that your actions no longer carry any serious consequences as, even though the threat of dismissal has gone, there are still two major things you have to lose: the respect of your employer and the respect of your former colleagues.

Let go of the reigns

As plans are drawn up to replace you, you'll regularly feel like any authority you used to have is disappearing on an almost daily basis.

This is when you really have to fight the impulse to treat work like it's getting in the way of your new and exciting future. Stay rational and work with your employer to allow a transfer of power to take place on their terms.

Work with your employer

Make sure you give reasonable notice, resign politely and are respectful about how your employer wishes to inform your colleagues about your decision.

Offer to help with the recruitment and training of your replacement. One of the biggest concerns people have about staff leaving is the knowledge they take with them, so try to provide a comprehensive handover that people will find useful for a long time after you're gone.

Help your colleagues

Try to finish as many of your ongoing projects as possible. Even though this is now an old job to you, it's going to be a new job for someone else so try to leave it in the best possible place.

Be considerate and support your colleagues by lightening their workload and agreeing with your employer what will be completed and what the

alternatives are for any projects that can't be finished.

Exit gracefully

As an employer, feedback on why you're leaving is really valuable but it has to be constructive. There's no need to criticise individuals or get personal in your exit meeting. Try to cooperate, be thoughtful and helpful in your comments.

Consider that your references will be requested at some point in the near future and you don't want a good reputation tarnished with an unfair view of you when you were working your notice period.

It's just business

Remember that wherever you work is business, it's not personal, so go into your notice period with thick skin and try to show the same attitude and outlook that you had when you first walked through the door.

This is the way you want people to think of you in terms of your approach to work and your professional integrity, so make sure you leave a positive impression and have a smooth exit.

After all, if the move doesn't work out you might even want them to take you back!

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



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LESSONS FROM THE BEST IN THE WORLD

Last month, during our family holiday to Walt Disney World in Florida, I took the opportunity to spend a day 'backstage' on a behind the scenes Business Tour. How could you not want to learn more about how Disney does Disney?

But before I share some of the keys to Mickey's Magic;

Yes - The secret underground corridors at Magic Kingdom really do exist. I travelled in them! It's called the Utilidor and allows all of the cast members, supplies and characters to pop up inside the park, in the right place at the right time.

Yes - There is a real-life luxury hotel suite inside Cinderella's castle. It can never be bought and can only ever be gifted.

And - have you ever wondered why there is a small drop at the beginning of many of the rides? Splash Mountain, Pirates, The Haunted Mansion to name but a few. Because you enter the ride via the themed 'show building' inside the park perimeter, then drop underneath the Railroad to the main part of the ride which is housed in a boring warehouse which lies beyond the park perimeter. Who knew!

So, three keys that you can use to emulate some of Mickey's Magic

1. Make it really simple for everyone to memorise and live your customer service culture

Disney's entire ethos is built on their four core values of Safety, Courtesy, Show and Efficiency. Every decision, every action, every activity fulfils one or more of these values.

Ask any cast member to recite them and rather than just say them, they'll show you how they live them. **It's easy to appreciate how everyone is empowered to make their own decisions when they have these four simple ideals as their guiding principles.**

Here are some examples of how this plays out day by day in Magic Kingdom;

If you look in detail, you'll notice how the curbs on Main Street are a different colour to the pavement. Why? Because they anticipate that when a guest



Nicola Cook, CEO of Company Shortcuts.

first spies Cinderella's castle they're not likely to be paying attention to their feet. So, they give you a little unconscious nudge to help you stay safe.

When the temperature outside reaches its peak, the shops and restaurants instinctively open their doors rather than close them, allowing the cool air-conditioning to drift outside and offer you some light courteous relief as you walk by.

Of course, Disney wouldn't be Disney without a good show, but did you know that there is a yellow line painted across all the access roads and walkways that link Backstage with Onstage, which acts as a helpful reminder to their cast members (the name they give all of their 85,000 Florida employees) of the exact spot where they must begin their 'performance' - regardless of whether they are part of the Custodial Team (cleaners to you and I) or part of the Entertainment Team.

And finally, anyone who's used a Disney Fast Pass to jump the queues will appreciate their focus on Efficiency.

2. Leveraging Technology to enhance the customer experience

For example, their Magic Band system, a tiny piece of wearable tech has radically improved their guest experience.

These personalised wrist bands, which link to an online APP, allow you access to your room (no more arguments at the end of the day of who had the key last!), serves as your entry ticket to all of the parks, allows you to queue jump using

the previously mentioned Fast Pass system, means anyone can instantly charge anything back to their room (no digging to the bottom of your bag to find cash) - and my personal favourite - allows your purchases to be delivered back to your hotel. (No more lugging heavy carrier bags of souvenirs around all day!)

They make it as easy as possible for you to part with all of your hard-earned dosh - AND enjoy the experience of doing so!

3. What's the worst that can happen - because it will. So, plan for it.

One morning my son's Magic Band stopped working. Within moments their Guest Experience team swooped into action. A smiley cast member made a big fuss of him, snapped a new photo on the iPad she had in her hand and BOOM, everything was sorted.

In summary, they've thought through, anticipated and have a protocol for absolutely every possible thing that could happen - like the time they did a full evacuation on 9/11.

I can confirm that my family definitely felt Safe, we were treated with Courtesy, were entertained all day by their Show, and benefited in multiple ways from their focus on Efficiency.

So ask yourself, what is the lasting impression you would want your customers saying about their experience following any interaction with your company?



GROWING RECRUITMENT FIRM SCOOPS MAJOR BUSINESS AWARD

Adkins and Cheurfi are celebrating a double triumph after winning the regional best newcomer of the year 2018 award and taking on new staff.

The hospitality recruitment firm beat nine other shortlisted companies to win the regional award as part of the Journal's North East Business Awards.

Adkins and Cheurfi also recently acquired a larger office space within the BIC and have recruited new staff as a result of their success. Managing Director Dean Adkins said: "It's an honour to receive the award and it filled all of our team with absolute pride. We've recently hired a trainee recruitment consultant and we're currently looking to bring in an experienced recruitment consultant in the near future."



ENGINEERS LAUNCH HIGH-END MANUFACTURING FIRM

A group of experienced engineers have capitalised on redundancy to launch a high-end manufacturing business.

The new Washington-based firm, Triotec, was set up by Andrew Calvert, Gary Marshall and David Downes after their time at a North East manufacturing firm came to an end.

The trio sought start-up advice from the North East BIC where they were supported through the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA).

Mr Calvert said: "We were delighted to work with BIC Business Adviser, Ron Anderson, who gave us the confidence we needed to start-up – he helped us with important matters like insurances as well as cash flow and record keeping."



ENTREPRENEURS TASTE SWEET SUCCESS

A Newcastle-based entrepreneur has featured on ITV's 'Give it a Year', a factual series featuring business leader Karren Brady CBE, who follows ambitious new companies in their first year of trading.

Canny Drinks Ltd was founded by Liam Watson and Simon Bishop after they recognised a gap in the market for milkshakes containing natural ingredients.

During their first meeting, Liam explained to Karren that Canny Drinks were selling four different flavours of milkshakes and he was aiming to double their sales in the first year.

One year on, and the company had temporarily stopped production to concentrate their efforts on their bestselling flavour – chocolate which is now available on musclefood.com and Tyneside Foodservice.



ADOPTION AGENCY PLACE 100TH CHILD

BIC based Adoption Agency ARC Adoption, have placed their 100th child since opening their doors in 2014.

Director Terry Fitzpatrick, is delighted with such a momentous achievement, he said; "Having received the approval of our 100th set of adopters recently, colleagues and I here at ARC are once again filled with great pride to announce that we have achieved another tremendous landmark of placing our 100th child with a loving and nurturing family."

"This occasion is certainly one to celebrate but more importantly it really emphasises for us the difference we have been able to make to the lives of children who have a plan of adoption and for the families who have come forward to care for them."



DARLINGTON TRAVEL PLANNING FIRM HELPS BUSINESSES SAVE MONEY AND GETS KIDS HEALTHIER

A Darlington business has partnered with a scheme backed by the Department for Transport (DfT) to encourage smarter and healthier travel planning.

PWLC Projects LLP, are working with schools and businesses to deliver projects which are focused on improving air quality, encouraging transport behaviour

change and creating sustainable communities.

Nick Butler, partner of PWLC said: "Our team will put together a bespoke support package for each school that we work with to get kids involved in fun activities so they enjoy learning about the benefits of active and sustainable travel."

NORTH EAST FIRM REAPS BENEFITS OF EXPORTING AFTER PARTNERING WITH INDUSTRY-LEADING US FIRM

A Sunderland thermal systems business is celebrating after forming a strategic partnership with a major US company.

BIC based HTUK, has secured a long term relationship with US-based Watlow – the world's largest industrial heating manufacturer.

Their specialist support sees them supply and install industrial heaters, temperature

sensors, controllers, insulation and system assemblies. The business also specialises in designing and manufacturing complete thermal systems, allowing them to recommend, develop and deliver thermal solutions for their customers.

And the firm are now a distributor for Watlow and their collaboration marks significant business progress for the Sunderland firm.





Hadrian HR's Deb Tweedy

THE BENEFITS OF PROVIDING A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS

For any micro or small business owner reaching a period of growth and creating new jobs is always an exciting prospect, but one task that should not be overlooked is creating a written statement of particulars for any new employee.

Here, Deb Tweedy, director at Hadrian HR, addresses some common questions around the importance of having a suitable written statement of particulars in place.

Do I have to provide a written statement of particulars?

Employers have a legal duty to provide a written statement of particulars, often termed an employment contract, within two months of an employee commencing employment. However, many employers still fail to provide a contract, despite this being a legal obligation since 1963.

Whilst an employer may try to use the lack of written terms to their advantage when negotiating an exit strategy or dismissing an employee the reality of the situation is that a contract of employment is still in existence where a person works for a company in return for a wage – often known as the “wage work bargain”.

What are the advantages?

A written statement of particulars not only provides greater protection for both parties but it can also reduce the risk of a contractual dispute in the event the relationship breaks down.

What are the risks?

If a company fails to fulfil their obligations to provide a written statement of particulars a tribunal can award an employee between two and four weeks’ compensation, based on the weekly rate of pay with compensation currently capped at £508 per week.

Will a written statement fully protect my business?

A written statement of particulars only covers the employee’s basic rights.

However, by providing a contract of employment the employer can draft specific clauses which at best can fully protect their business and at least can clear up any disputes should a claim be brought before a tribunal.

For example, if a business owner wishes to place someone on garden leave they must be able to demonstrate that they have the contractual right to do so. Without the relevant documentation the employer could be at risk of being sued for breach of contract i.e. the failure to fulfil their duty to provide work.

The “wage work bargain” is an agreement to both provide work and pay. Therefore contractual clauses such as the right to lay off or short-time working

should be carefully drafted to avoid a breach of contract. Such terms can also be covered by mutual agreement or collective agreements including with unions or national agreements amongst others. The only time an agreement would not be required is where an employer could demonstrate an implied right over a period of time.

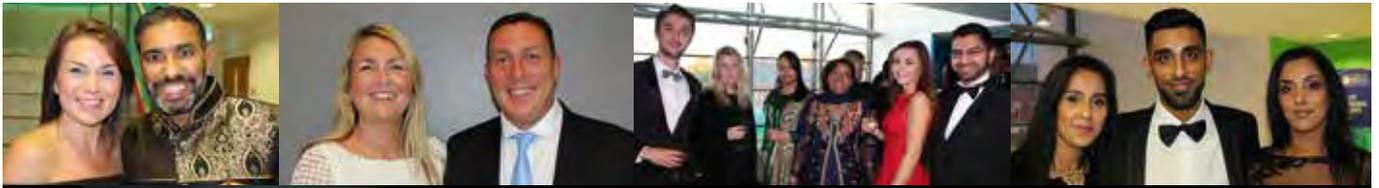
Workers

Unlike employees, the Government are now also calling for workers to be provided a written statement of particulars from day one. However, many business owners remain confused as to what constitutes worker status, self-employed status and employment status.

Many unscrupulous business owners deliberately set out to fake contracts, disguising employment as self-employment, in order to void their tax liabilities.

Hadrian HR’s team of specialists are here to help micro and small businesses with drafting up contracts which will ensure they remain compliant, whilst avoiding any unnecessary tax or legal liabilities.

Make sure your Employment Law knowledge is up to date at the Hadrian HR Employment Law Update Seminar, taking place on Thursday 13 September 2018, from 11.30am to 3pm at Newcastle Falcons.



ABC 9th Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony

in association with Gainford Group



Guest Speakers: Minister for the Northern Powerhouse
Daljit Lally, Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council

At the County Hotel Newcastle upon Tyne

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Ammar Mirza

BELIEVE AND YOU WILL ACHIEVE

Growing up as the son of two, or three if you count my step-mother, devout Muslim parents in Britain had its challenges. Especially if you add 9 siblings to the mix. However, I set out to become not only the best person, but the best British person I could be. Why wouldn't I, this is the greatest country in the world.

As a British Asian I have had to work three times as hard as those around me, not only to fit in but to get on in life, regularly suffering mental, physical, and verbal abuse. And whilst early on in life it wasn't something that I thought about, as my white friends called the local shopkeeper a Paki and then turned to me and said "we don't mean you Ammar, you are one of us", however reflecting on this it was absolutely wrong. And it is even more shocking to continue to experience such abuse later on in life.

The recent focus on gender equality, seems only right that everyone should be treated equally and fairly, but if we are going to make things more inclusive then we should extend this to the whole of society, including the Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) community together with those less able too.

Having devoted the last 20 years of my life to voluntarily make a difference, becoming the youngest Asian chair of governors at a primary school, chairing various committees representing the private sector, launching numerous educational initiatives, becoming the first Asian David Goldman visiting professor at Newcastle University, joining various charitable boards and helping raise millions of pounds, to then become the youngest Asian recipient of a CBE in the North East, amongst various other achievements and accolades, I continue to experience the same challenges I have all my life. Being treated unequal. Imagine devoting, supporting and promoting a system for nigh on half of your life that then fails you.

Having broken barriers to become the best, and at times better than those around me, it is sad to see people around you revel in failure. I read a recent

study which suggests that bad news receives up to 10 times as much attention as good. How sad is it to consider that we are a world filled with such negativity.

However, I remain motivated to continue to make a difference and focus on the positives in life.

Motivation requires motive, and my motivation is to simply provide those around me with the support that I did not have, and to help people become the best they can be.

My response to setbacks is to learn from them and do all you can to try and make sure they don't happen again, if they do, get up, brush yourself down with your head held high and get on with it. This to me is the best of British way of life that I have not only adopted but love and cherish. I believe and I will achieve my ambitions and aspirations, and so can you.

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

ONE VISION. ONE MISSION



OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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

Northumberland SME CofE Ponteland : Official Opening 3rd September 2018

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Email grow@smecofe.com Telephone 0844 24 777 04 www.smecofe.com

Our Partners Include





PIE AWARDS

The BIG PIE Challenge Awards Ceremony was hosted by the Fifth Fusiliers at Anzio House. Now in its 5th year the PIE Charity saw 10 finalists' schools from across the North East compete through a coding, STEM and enterprise challenge. Reid Street Primary in Darlington won the top prize of £5000 for generating £2000 of profit from a £100 loan. The fun event was attended by Lord Lieutenants from Tyne & Wear, Northumberland, and Durham alongside various business and community leaders, including Gainford Group, GAS, Brewin Dolphin, Reece Foundation and Bannatyne, with Sir John Hall as the patron.







BUSINESS CLUB

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



Our final Business Lunch Club event before the summer break was a memorable event. Over the previous months we have had speakers who have challenged the audience, initiated debates and generated a lot of laughter. Simon Bourne the entrepreneur behind The Hand Dyed Shoe Company delivered such an impassioned presentation that many of the audience were moved to tears. Thank you Simon for an honest and inspiring talk, we look forward to the next instalment. As we take a break now for the summer we look forward to connecting with you all from September onwards in Newcastle upon Tyne and October in Tees Valley.

BUSINESS CLUB LUNCH EVENTS

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE - JESMOND DENE HOUSE	Monday 24th September 2018 Ammar Mirza, CBE MBA FRSA <i>Asian Business Connexions</i>	TEES VALLEY - WYNYARD HALL	Monday 1st October 2018 Peter Barron MBE <i>Peter Barron Media Ltd</i>
	Monday 29th October 2018 Stefan Lepkowski <i>Karol Marketing Group</i>		Monday 5th November 2018 Matthew Scott <i>Navada Studios (Navada Group)</i>
	Monday 26th November 2018 Jon Chadwick <i>Durham Distillery (Durham Gin Ltd)</i>		Monday 3rd December 2018 Tony Robinson OBE <i>Enterprise Rockers CIC #MicroBiz Matters</i>
	Monday 28th January 2019 Sir Peter Vardy DL <i>The Vardy Foundation</i>		Monday 7th January 2019 Alastair Waite <i>Altec Engineering Ltd</i>
	Monday 25th February 2019 David Blair <i>BMC Recruitment Group</i>		Monday 4th February 2019 Andy Preston <i>Entrepreneur & Philanthropist</i>
	Monday 25th March 2019 Dr. Joanna Berry <i>Durham University Business School</i>		Monday 4th March 2019 Prof. Dr. Jane Turner OBE DL <i>Teesside University</i>

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

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WEDNESDAY 7th NOVEMBER - Ramside Hall, 9.30am - 1pm

Boardroom Diversity - every journey starts with the first step

Join our panel of experts from a wide variety of business sectors, public and private, all of who are driving the initiative to bring more women into board level positions.

Format: Panel discussion followed by Q&A . Panel chaired by Dr Joanna Berry

Panel members: Herb Kim, Kerrin Wilson, Gary Lumby, Katie Marshall, Andy Armitage.



MONDAY 24th SEPTEMBER - JESMOND DENE HOUSE

After a summer break we return with Ammar Mirza CBE as guest speaker

MONDAY 1st OCTOBER - WYNYARD HALL

Exclusive Business Lunch Club Tees Valley with Peter Barron MBE as guest speaker

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

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...

NICOLA COOK

Chief Opportunity Officer, Company Shortcuts

Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

Nope. Originally, I trained as a ballet dancer, but a serious skiing accident in my teens scuppered those plans. I entered the world of business via an American Express graduate scheme and I followed my nose into the sales team which is where I found my home.

What is your favourite aspect of the job?

The variety, I have a portfolio lifestyle. One day I may be working with my own team inspiring and leading them. The next, I could be guiding and supporting one of my own investments, before jumping on a plane to speak at a major conference. Or I could be in London facilitating a group of policy influencers, or simply chilling in my back garden compiling my research or adding the final touches to one of my books.

What has been your career defining moment?

Meeting the serial entrepreneur Lara Morgan and eventually taking charge (and full ownership) of one of her businesses. I learnt so much from her. Understanding first-hand the true challenges of scaling a business. Knowledge, that has helped me add more growth and value to our clients' businesses and helped me steer Company Shortcuts into the company it now is.

How do you measure success?

Number one, by the growth and results of CS clients, which is currently running at an average of 140% increase in Net Profit 12mths after engagement. Secondly, by how many goals and profit targets we achieve as we move forward with our three-year rolling plan and thirdly, by how happy and healthy my family are. Right now, the balance feels right and based on these criteria we are exceptionally successful.

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

Where do I start?! The way people buy, both in B2C and B2B (products AND services) has changed beyond recognition since I first entered the world of sales and marketing. Most companies, especially the scale-up sector that I predominately work with, may have an awareness of this but no idea on how to build a Sales Engine for growth. I spend a lot of time in America delving into the latest research on changing buyer behaviour, in order to bring that knowledge back to the UK (and Europe) and help businesses apply it, enabling them to maintain a competitive edge in an ever-changing marketplace.

How has your skillset developed accordingly?

I'm always learning. I strive to be the dumbest person in the room because I want to learn from those with more knowledge or expertise in the area I want to improve. I cringe when I think back to how green I was in the early years, but then if you stay open minded and humble you can learn anything.

Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

I don't think in those terms, but I'd like to think with experience comes wisdom. I still take risks, but my ability to evaluate risk has improved over the years. Not surprisingly I've made some humdingers over my career – all great learning experiences if you have the strength to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and live on to fight another day.

To what would you attribute your success?

On a person level - pure grit and determination and a desire to constantly deliver value. But, I couldn't have achieved any of my success without the support of an exceptional team and the unending support of my husband. It's impossible for one partner to have a career like mine, without the other picking up the slack. This still falls predominately to the female in a relationship, so my husband really is very special.

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

Not taking care of myself. I have such a strong mindset I can push myself to exhaustion and have been known to do so on more than one occasion, so I've learnt to build in more space for self-care and recovery.

How do you remain motivated?

My driver is - legacy. I'd like to think that when I'm long gone, even in my little corner of the world, I had a positive influence and left behind an imprint for future generations to build upon.

Would you prefer to be liked or respected?

Respected – everytime. It's pure vanity to chase other people's validation.

I'll retire when...

I'll never retire in the traditional sense, because I absolutely love what I do, but if you consider retirement to mean choosing 'who you work with', 'when you work' and 'how much you are paid', then I consider myself retired now. This past year I've even had time to indulge another passion of mine and publish my debut novel 'Belonging' under my pen name Isabella Wiles!





Alan Welby

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR INNOVATION

The North East LEP's recently appointed Innovation Director, Alan Welby, explains why innovation is a vital ingredient in the region's economic health, and how we can encourage more of it here in the North East.

In April this year I took up the position of Innovation Director here at the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). I studied at Newcastle University and I've been very happy to return to work in the region, having spent time as Director of Research, Innovation and Partnerships at Liverpool John Moores University. My role as Innovation Director is all about supporting economic growth in the North East and working with colleagues and partners to realise our ambition of creating more and better jobs in the region.

So how can innovation help us reach our goal?

The North East is operating in a global marketplace and innovation is a crucial part of our competitiveness as a region. People today have access to large markets and we need to make sure that North East businesses have what it takes to create new products and services that give them a competitive edge. Innovation is key to making that happen.

Innovation isn't just about new technology, it's something which applies to all parts of a business and it applies to businesses in all sectors.

It's what allows a business to create a product which no one else is making; it means a manufacturer is able to produce a product before its competitors; and it's what can make one product or service a success over another. Innovation is what makes big names like Siemens, Shiseido and Starbucks the global success stories they are today.

People often talk about the North East's great history of innovation, but innovation doesn't just belong in our past. Looking at the region today, innovation is alive in all areas of our economy.

Our offshore sector and the ORE Catapult at Blyth are developing new products and services for the global offshore and renewable energy sectors. Our digital sector is another area where we see collaboration, a skilled workforce and a global reach.

We can also see innovation cutting across sectors: the National Innovation Centre for Data in Newcastle will unlock the power of big data and help businesses to develop new products and services more quickly and effectively, while the National Innovation Centre for Ageing means we have the potential to be at the forefront of new models of business which are developed as a result

of changes in our population.

At the LEP, we want to build on all this and create the environment for even more innovation in our businesses.

We're working with universities to help them to embed their knowledge into the business community. We're working with skills providers to make sure we have a pipeline of people with the right skills to give us a workforce which can grow, change and innovate. And we're working with businesses to make sure they have access to a co-ordinated programme of support – they need access to finance, an environment where they can learn from and work with each other, and the right infrastructure to support innovation, whether that is incubator space, digital infrastructure or access to universities.

Ultimately, if you don't innovate then you don't remain relevant and you can't compete. That's why it's my priority to create a seamless infrastructure which can support North East businesses to be globally competitive and which positions the region as the partner of choice for organisations looking to achieve global success.

Businesses can find details of the support available at the North East Growth Hub – www.northeastgrowthhub.co.uk.



Michaela Reaney (l) with Kate Temple-Brown

CAN THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY SERVE UP SUCCESS FOR THE RESTAURANT SECTOR?

The hospitality industry is facing many challenges and with Brexit on the horizon, things could be about to get even tougher. Gradvert's Strategic Consultant Kate Temple-Brown explains how the Apprenticeship Levy could help make the sector more competitive.

The apprenticeship reforms could be the recipe for success for Britain's restaurants, according to leading industry expert Kate Temple-Brown.

The Strategic Apprenticeship Levy Consultant believes restaurant chains need employees who excel in customer service to set them apart in a crowded market - and the Apprenticeship Levy could be the key to achieving this.

Kate, who runs Apprenticeship Levy consultancy Aequalis, has teamed up with Gradvert on an exciting new collaboration and hopes to revolutionise the hospitality industry from the ground up.

Gradvert is now a registered apprenticeship training provider which aims to 'apprenticeise' leadership and customer service programmes with high-quality and cost-effective development pathways paid for through the Apprenticeship Levy.

A common misconception is that the Apprenticeship Levy is for school leavers but actually funds in the levy pot can be used for employees of any level to meet business needs.

With that in mind, the partnership has set its sights on delivering their outstanding, bespoke training to the restaurant sector.

Kate, who previously worked in early careers

recruitment and development for Goldman Sachs, said: "There are a lot of roles in this country that are seen as entry-level, transient roles that are not important enough to properly train someone in that position.

"We want to professionalise roles such as waiters. When there is so much competition among restaurants, the impact of spending some time upskilling people in selling and customer relations is huge."

With Brexit fast approaching and the prospect of fewer European workers, making these roles more attractive to Brits is also important.

Kate said: "This is a country that is led by the hospitality and leisure industry. We're a tourist hub but we're not getting the maximum benefit because often the people whom the tourists spend time with are undervalued and not empowered to give them a good experience."

The apprenticeship reforms come at a time when a reported third of Britain's biggest restaurant groups is loss-making, up by 75% in the past year, according to a study by accountancy group UHY Hacker Young.

Kate said: "Restaurants now compete with take away deliveries so when someone has left their house to go somewhere, their experience is key.

What you have to prove is that going out is better than sitting on your sofa and doing it online.

"I think what we're seeing is that restaurants, particularly chains, are missing a trick in not realising that customer service, upselling and giving their staff the right skills is vital. It's about making the experience stand out.

"This fundamental shrugging of the shoulders over high attrition rates and the view that there is no point training anybody because they leave is, unfortunately, just a race to the bottom.

"If your differentiating factor is customer service, then you will see everything else follow."

In addition to creating a more engaged workforce and cutting staff turnover, companies who use the Apprenticeship Levy are not required to pay National Insurance for anyone they train aged under 25, saving 13% on their salary.

Gradvert is one of the few training providers that allows clients to run pilots, allowing large restaurant chains to first test the benefits of the training in a few branches.

Kate said: "We're confident we can demonstrate that we can make a huge difference to your business, and we can also show you a cost-effective way to do it."

For more information, please email hello@gradvert.com or visit www.gradvert.com, www.templebrownconsulting.com

CHANGE IS THE NEW CONSTANT

We're living in a world where the pace of change is faster than ever before and only continues to speed up.

Andrew Mears, Director at Solutions Recruitment, talks about how their firm helps its clients to navigate in a world of such fast-paced change, while adapting their own business to fit.

The Solutions ideology

What is abundantly clear is that Solutions Recruitment is committed to investing time in getting to know their clients at every stage of their relationship; ensuring they fully understand how and where they can add value.

"We don't just work with anyone who approaches us; if we don't feel we add value, we are not afraid to say no." At the outset of any partnership, Solutions Recruitment invest time with the client; whether that be attending a meeting, spending half a day in the business or holding meet and greets with key personnel. Andrew continues: "This allows us to become fully immersed into the organisation, giving us a real feel for the company, its people, priorities and culture".

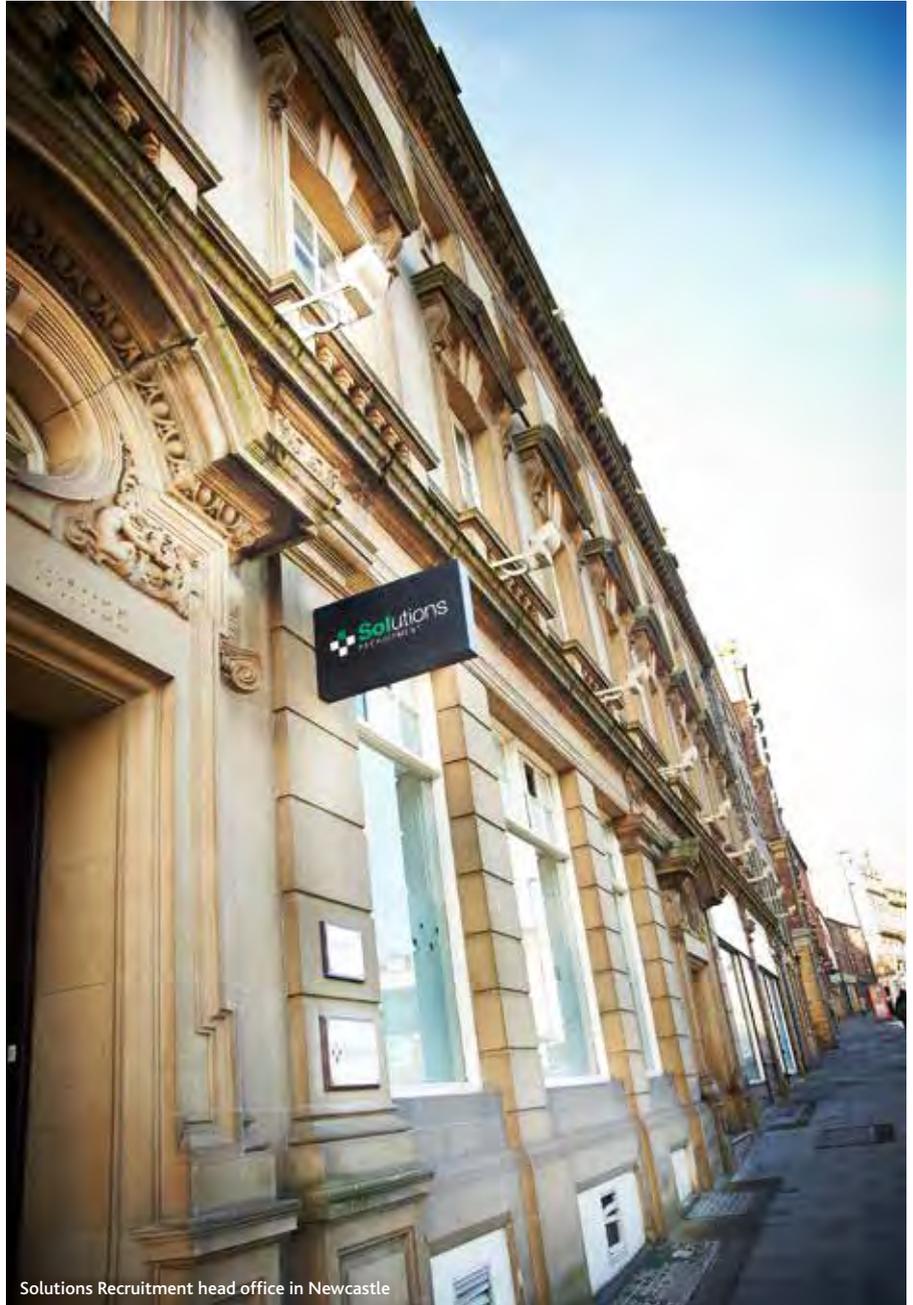
"We ask probing questions, whilst spending time getting to know the people behind the business to gain the truest possible reflection of the organisation."

Building partnerships

It is clear when speaking to Andrew that Solutions Recruitment is not just a firm which sifts through CVs to find a candidate to fill a vacancy for their clients.

"Whilst we recognise that finding talent for our clients is the game we're in, we truly believe the best way to work is by building long-term partnerships, acting more as a consultant than just a supplier; delivering value in lots of ways to each of the organisations we work with."

Describing what this looks like, Andrew explains: "We have been fortunate to be involved in some really exciting projects over the last 12 months; training a global FTSE 100 management team on recruitment best practice, creating an organisation design program as part of a post-acquisition integration plan, market mapping in support of client diversity strategies and employer branding exercises in support of client positioning."



Solutions Recruitment head office in Newcastle

"It is ingrained in our core values to provide a service which goes the extra mile. What good service looked like five years ago, just doesn't cut it anymore. Good enough, never is. For example, we were recently asked to source salary data for a client, but rather than producing generic data, we took the time to produce targeted market reports, providing specific income data sets and labour demographics, which our client can use to help them make much more informed decisions."

Talent war intensifies

"We're in a perfect storm for recruitment right now, with employment levels at record highs, low unemployment and businesses recruiting for the similar skillsets, we have acute talent shortages across the board." PwC reported in their 20th CEO survey that '77% of CEO's see the availability of key skills as the biggest threat to their business'.

Employers all need to think differently; Andrew explains: "We are living in a consumer centric world and the needs of the consumer are ever-changing.

People no longer look for compensation alone, they want to know about values, culture, work-life balance, flexible working, CSR, environmental and sustainability policies, to name just a few."

The Accenture employment trends survey 2014 showed that 95% of businesses 'believe flexibility is vital or important to the competitiveness of the UK's labour market and prospects for investment and job creation'.

Andrew adds: "As recruiters we need to provide more than just a job advert and person specification; a candidate needs to understand the core values of an organisation, just as much as an employer needs to recognise the needs of their target candidate markets."

It is clear that people are at the core of everything Solutions Recruitment do. Andrew closes: "We need to keep investing the time to know our candidates, clients and our own people, so we can keep providing the invaluable service and results we have delivered to date."

If you would like to know more about the services on offer or need assistance with recruitment at your business, please contact Andrew Mears at Solutions Recruitment at andrew.mears@solrecruit.co.uk or call 0191 221 0402.

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

If you approach a bank or finance house for funding then you'll be limited to what they can offer you from their own in-house funding products. Likewise, should you go to a small independent broker, the chances are that their funders panel will also be severely limited.

However when you speak to Advanced Funding Solutions, you immediately gain access to what is possibly the largest and most comprehensive portfolio of internationally based funders operating within the commercial finance market.

Chris Adlam, the founder of the company; Advanced Funding Solutions, told us how his company can help you steer through the minefield of lenders out there.

"You'll be able to benefit from an unparalleled choice of funding sources, including specialist funders who operate exclusively within niche market sectors.

"Whether you are in need of raising funds to grow your portfolio of properties, bridge a gap within your business in order to expand or just in need of a cash injection, then let us help you at Advanced Funding Solutions.

"What's more, thanks to our size, our market presence and the relationship we have forged with all our funders, we can bring you what are undeniably the most attractive and most competitive rates in the Commercial Finance Market."



For more information how Chris and his team can help your business, contact Advanced Funding Solutions on 0191 486 2089 or visit their website on www.advancedfunding.co.uk.

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HAY & KILNER INTRODUCER EVENT

Almost 100 people attended Hay & Kilner's event at Antler, one of Newcastle's newest bars and restaurants. The Alpine-themed bar was decked out in England flags on one of the sunniest evenings of the summer so far. Guests enjoyed a range of Austrian and Swiss food, with some Alpine beer to wash it down!

Hay & Kilner Law Firm
www.hay-kilner.co.uk



PLANNING IN ADVANCE FOR POTENTIAL PROBLEMS CRUCIAL FOR FAMILY BUSINESSES

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

As anyone who has ever been part of, or had dealings with, family-owned businesses will know, they come with their own unique set of challenges. This can often be embedded in personal and emotional matters as much as in the corporate and commercial.

This can especially be the case where multiple generations of the family are involved in the business. The structures within such multi-generational family businesses are not always straightforward, and while most family members know their own role within the business and within the (official or unofficial) hierarchy, things can change if a key individual becomes ill or incapacitated.

Getting appropriate advice in order to set out and agree exactly how everything fits together within the business is especially important in order to avoid any disputes within the family business, as such disputes can have longer-lasting repercussions for more than just the business.

This was borne out by a recent case in the Court of Protection, when a businessman's mental capacity issues resulted in his wife and nephew disputing the way in which his business affairs were to be administered.

The wife was named as attorney for her husband under a Lasting Power of Attorney for Property and Financial Affairs ("LPA"), which gave her the authority to make decisions about such matters on his behalf.

The dispute arose around a historical agreement



between the man and his nephew which was not formally documented, but which ensured the nephew would benefit from the business.

The wife was not aware of the agreement and therefore did not feel capable of fulfilling it, leading to the Court having to reach a decision as to how the businessman's assets should be administered.

Where personal and business matters overlap, as is the case within almost all family businesses, extra consideration must be given as to how best to approach such a situation.

For example, given the emotional challenges involved, would appointing a spouse as Attorney under an LPA, with authority to make business decisions, be the right path to choose?

As an alternative, a business partner, co-director or co-shareholder may instead be better suited to make decisions relating to the business.

Entering into two LPAs, one covering decisions about business interests, and another for all other

financial decisions, may be the right solution, so that the most appropriate person is able to make the different sorts of decisions required.

These sorts of consideration can also prompt a review of the business's governing documents, such as Articles of Association, Shareholders Agreements and Partnership Agreements.

Whilst regularly reviewing these documents is important in itself, it will also ensure that the chosen Attorney has the formal authority required to actually make the necessary decisions within the business, and can highlight where changes may be required before any urgent situation arises, in which it may become more difficult to make any such amendments.

At Hay & Kilner Law Firm, a multi-disciplinary approach can be taken between expert advisers within our different departments to ensure business owners get the right advice about managing both their personal and business affairs.

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



**HAY & KILNER
CLIENT EVENT**

To say 'thank you' to their loyal clients, Hay & Kilner hosted an evening at The Discovery Museum. Guests enjoyed a talk by one of the experts at the museum on both Robert Stephenson's Rocket and Charles Parsons' Turbinia, followed by drinks and canapes.

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CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL SERVICES GROWING AT HAY & KILNER LAW FIRM

Mark Adams joined Newcastle-based Hay & Kilner Law Firm in 2004 and is now a partner in the practice's expanding corporate and commercial team, specialising in corporate transactional work including acquisitions and disposals, corporate refinancing and management buy-outs. He is listed in industry bible The Legal 500 as a "strong corporate lawyer," with clients valuing the "excellent service" he provides.



How has Hay & Kilner evolved in your time with the firm?

Hay & Kilner has always had a strong reputation for its private client work, but over recent years, we've made a strategic decision to scale-up our corporate and other commercial work areas alongside the areas in which we're more traditionally known.

Areas such as commercial property, intellectual property and IT, employment and construction have all become increasingly important to us, and we've been recruiting in these areas to ensure we can provide clients with the specialist services that they tell us they want, as well as developing the skills and knowledge of our existing staff.

The region is becoming ever-more entrepreneurial, with more people willing to back themselves and their business ideas, and we're working hard to tailor the commercial services we provide to give them the support they need to achieve their goals.

Are there particular sectors in which you see more potential for growth for the firm?

We're seeing demand grow for all aspects of our corporate and commercial law services, especially for higher value and more complex projects, and we're also seeing increasing attention being given to regional companies from potential acquirers across mainland Europe.

The number of start-ups in the North East is also continuing to increase, and with the regional technology sector continuing to grow in importance and size, there are particular opportunities within the IP and IT markets.

There is a clear regional focus from government and business on supporting the start-up economy, and with the now-active North East Fund set to make

a real difference in this area, we expect to become even more active in helping ambitious businesses realise their potential.

It's generally taking a little longer to get deals over the line than it used to as all parties are, quite rightly, being more careful in carrying out ever more detailed due diligence. That said, we're finding there are still a large number of transactions on which we're being instructed.

Our employment law team is extending the training it does for our clients, providing bespoke role play-based seminars which give clients practical experience of dealing with situations that might arise in the workplace.

What do you feel Hay & Kilner's corporate/commercial team does especially well?

We very much take a cross-practice approach to ensure the range of expertise that clients need is easily available, and that we can provide solutions based on cohesive, "joined-up" thinking.

Partners are fully accessible both to clients and colleagues, and in a world where digital communication often makes a conveniently easy replacement for personal contact, we still believe that there's simply no substitute for proactively building positive personal relationships.

Having a detailed understanding of how clients like to work, what their priorities and interests are, and what motivates them both personally and commercially is essential in ensuring that the services we provide fit with them as people and can make a huge difference to the outcomes achieved.

What's next on the agenda for Hay & Kilner's corporate and commercial team?

We've already had some great success and recognition in the last 12 months. We were shortlisted across ten categories at the recent Northern Law Awards, had two of our deals shortlisted at the annual DealMaker Awards and risen to seventh in the latest Experian list of the region's most active legal advisers for merger and acquisition work on the back of rising activity, particularly in the veterinary, care home and pharmaceutical sectors.

With a strong pipeline of some high-value projects already in place, we're expecting to see our corporate and commercial work increase further still through the rest of the year and beyond.

And we're continuing to recruit the highly qualified people we need to service this growing demand, in what's certainly proving to be an exciting time to be part of the firm.

Established in 1946, Hay & Kilner is one of North East England's leading independent law firms and provides a full range of legal services to businesses and individuals from both within and outside the region. For further information, visit www.hay-kilner.co.uk or call 0191 232 8345.

GETTING TO KNOW... JAMES GODDEN



As partner of the property litigation department at Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF), James Godden combines his time managing his busy team with assisting with the wider development of the firm’s client base across all areas of the business.

James, who specialises in property litigation disputes, is also a member of the Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners (ALEP) and when he’s not in court he can be found on the slopes!

What is your passion outside of work, how did you get into it and why do you enjoy it so much?

It has to be snowboarding. When I was 15, a friend and I travelled with our families to ski and snowboard in Les Houches, France. Neither of us could snowboard and we decided to hire boards for the day. After some disastrous first few runs we decided to book a lesson and I kicked on from there. Snowboarding is a thrill a minute and being in the mountains allows me to completely get away from it all.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Ambitious, determined and conscientious.

What would your autobiography be called?

The Memoirs of an Obsessive Time Recorder.

What do you look forward to most at the end of the week?

Spending time with my amazing family and my two toddlers!

If you could have dinner with anyone dead or alive, who would it be, and why?

It would definitely have to be Jackie Milburn. It would be an absolute honour to speak to a former Newcastle United legend who has actually held silverware for the mighty Newcastle United.

What is the best book you’ve ever read, and why?

I am not a great reader of fiction, but George R. R. Martin’s Game of Thrones collection is pretty decent stuff (of which I scarcely managed one and half books). I am probably more hooked on the TV show!

If you could have one superpower what would it be, and why?

Invisibility. We all want to get away from it all, don’t we?

What was your dream job as a child?

Believe it or not, my dream job as a child was always

to become a solicitor and bring people to justice!

What is your greatest achievement?

It has to be my two amazing children.

What is it about your role at GBLF that inspires you?

The reassurance that if you put the effort in then you will reap the rewards.

How long have you worked at GBLF for, and what keeps you at the firm?

I have worked at GBLF for nine years now. As a business, it has a great culture and really looks after its people. We are given some fantastic opportunities and are able to choose our own niche which enables us to grow with the business.

With offices located in Newcastle and Chester-le-Street, GBLF offers a range of legal services and advice across all areas of family, residential conveyancing, wills and probate, dispute resolution, corporate and commercial law. Its dedicated team of solicitors understand that each case is unique and provide bespoke advice and guidance to individuals and organisations.

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DIVORCE IN LATER LIFE



Sarah Crilly

Sarah Crilly, Partner in the Family Law team at Ward Hadaway, looks at why divorce rates are rising for couples in later life.

Divorce among those in their 50s and 60s continues to increase despite a decrease in the rate of divorces across most other age groups in the UK.

The reasons for people divorcing later in life include that people are living longer, marrying later in life, that greater assets are available to this age group and there isn't the stigma associated with divorce at any age.

We are living in a much more tolerant society and people aged 60 to 70 are no longer considered old. Married people's children tend to be adults by this age and there is no longer that bond holding people together.

In some cases, people want new experiences for the last chapter in their lives and are no longer prepared to just put up with unhappy marriages.

People in this age group are likely to have built up valuable property and pension assets which are readily accessible and are likely to have been married for 20 or 30 years-plus and thus fall into the long marriage category which the courts will

approach on the basis that there should be equal sharing.

Invariably divorces involving this age group are likely to see one party, normally the husband, with the pension provision and the other with simply a joint interest in the matrimonial home.

The legislation which provides guidance to the courts when considering the division of assets between a divorcing couple does point the court to considering the length of the marriage and ages of the parties as some of the factors that should be taken into account.

The case law encourages equal sharing of assets and pensions on divorce after long marriages. Since it is likely that divorce in the over-60s will involve long marriages, an equal split of assets is the overall likely solution in most cases.

Properties that have formed the matrimonial home in these types of cases can be ordered to be sold with the proceeds being divided equally. The court can make Pension Sharing Orders in favour of the spouse who has less or no pension, thus equalising

the parties' income in retirement.

As divorce lawyers, we often see this category of marriages with not just property and pensions that have been built up during the marriage as a result of both parties' joint endeavours but sometimes inherited assets that have fallen in to the middle of the marriage from either of the respective spouses parents.

Provided these have fallen in during the marriage as opposed to post-separation and become intermingled with matrimonial assets then the equal sharing principle can still apply, unlike in medium or short marriages where such assets would be treated very differently.

The pensions freedoms that now exist will force divorce lawyers to consider whether or not prevention of drawdowns by one party should be sought by way of injunction from the court to preserve the status quo while any divorce is being dealt with for this age group.

There is much to consider and specialist financial and legal advice must be always be considered.

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.

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SUNNY CELEBRATION!

As Durham basked in glorious sunshine, it was outdoors for an evening of celebration at award-winning law firm Swinburne Maddison LLP (Swinburne Maddison).

Celebrating the stylish transformation of its HQ, Swinburne Maddison's partners and staff were joined by its many clients and intermediaries, for a summer drinks party in the firm's private grounds, at Aykley Heads.

Managing partner, John Davison welcomed guests with a light-hearted, humorous speech quoting lyrics by both Bob Dylan and Kanye West and thanked everyone for their continued support and contribution to the firm's ongoing growth and success.

The event was topped off by sublime ice cream and a contemporary jazz soundtrack.







Alexandra Besnard

YOU LEARN SOMETHING EVERY DAY!

Alexandra Besnard, Senior Associate at Collingwood Legal discusses how to tackle difficult employees that affect the rest of the workforce.

We've been busy delivering Masterclasses over the last few months and our latest one was on "Extreme and Difficult Behaviour".

I think we've all been there and have worked, managed or heard about that employee who is often grumpy, unhelpful or negative or the colleague who thinks their sexual innuendos are hilarious despite repeated requests to stop or obvious embarrassed looks. There are also the employees who will not accept any change to work processes because "they know better" or their way has "always worked".

However they may also either be very good at their job or not bad enough to justify a dismissal for poor performance. They are just obstructive and difficult to manage. They also never quite cross the line that you feel would enable you to justify a dismissal for misconduct. So they remain employed for years and the longer it goes on the less you feel able to tackle their behaviour and you start to just excuse the behaviour by saying "oh well, that's just Alex, ignore her". But clearly, this is not healthy for any organisation, as these individuals, slowly, but surely, affect the morale of their colleagues as well as the atmosphere in their department, which can have a debilitating impact on team performance.

You may feel powerless in tackling it, either because the person is too obstructive or they have been allowed to behave that way for years. It is however clear that this counter-productive workplace behaviour will undoubtedly affect the productivity of your organisation and even the health of colleagues who work with these "functioning psychopaths" (but we can't refer to them as that unfortunately!)

So what do you do? Well, as an employment lawyer, I have advised on these issues many times and when tackled reasonably and to the end of the process, the employee can be dismissed fairly. But often, managers don't have the appetite for what could be a confrontational process or any attempt to tackle their behaviour is thwarted by threats of grievances or sickness absence.

During the masterclass, we invited a guest speaker to discuss the psychology of these difficult employees and that was enlightening. I tend to believe that people can change, with coaching (even though as I get older this belief is in danger of being eroded!), but our guest speaker destroyed that myth fairly quickly. Having studied human psychology for nearly 20 years, he was clear that employees with extreme behaviour will not change. What needs to change is how you handle

these individuals. The word underpinning most of employment law principles is "reasonableness" and with most employees, if you act reasonably, they will listen and adapt their behaviour. The difficult employee will not have the same response. If you seem reasonable, they will see this as a weakness and will push you until you agree with them. The advice our guest speaker gave was "Tell, Don't ask", i.e. "ask nicely once, a bit more firmly a second time and then just tell them", because that's the only language they'll understand.

When you add the psychological analysis of the "difficult employee" to your legal principles of fairness and reasonableness, you are far more likely to keep their behaviour under control and if not, provided that you have followed the appropriate process and acted reasonably you can then proceed to a dismissal, which should be fair.

I am clearly not saying it will be easy to manage these individuals, because it will not, but you can challenge and manage them, even if they have been allowed to behave like that for years. It is never too late! There may be hurdles along the way, but in the long run, once this is over, you will undoubtedly have a more cohesive and happy workforce that will go the extra mile for you because, that's what 99% of your workforce is ready and willing to do.

We are rolling out our masterclasses to our clients and can come to your workplace to deliver training to empower your managers and HR team to tackle these and any other employment related difficult situations, so please give me a call on 01912822886 if you are interested.



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FIZZ IN THE CITY

Mincoffs Solicitors recently held another successful Fizz in the City ladies' networking event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, raising £166 for Children NE, bringing together business women from across the region for an afternoon of informal networking and prosecco.

The next Fizz in the City event will be held in autumn, with a spin off series 'Fizz in the City Presents...' being introduced in September.

To keep up to date with the details of the next events, follow Mincoffs on social media.

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ARE YOU PAYING YOUR DATA PROTECTION FEE?

Gillian Scribbins, data protection specialist at leading law firm Muckle LLP, explores the data protection fee and the latest changes affecting what businesses need to pay.

A question we're hearing from all manner of organisations is, do I have to register with the ICO? Usually swiftly followed by, how much is it and how do I pay? The rules of registering have changed recently, but fortunately the new system is just as simple.

Data controllers previously had to notify the ICO of their data processing; and CCTV had to be registered, and both of these incurred an annual fee. These obligations have now been swept away. Now all data controllers will pay a single data protection fee, between £40 and £2,900 per annum, dependent on two very simple criteria: staff numbers and organisation turnover.

European laws oblige member states to set up their own data protection supervisory authority system. In the UK we have the Information Commissioner's Office, who are to be partially funded by this new data protection fee.

On the 25 May, a piece of legislation called the Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018 came into force alongside the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This replaces the former requirement to notify or register with the ICO as a data controller. Now, data controllers must pay the ICO a data protection fee instead, unless they are exempt.

These exemptions are limited. Whether a micro-organisation or a large PLC, you should assume this fee is payable. Failure to pay the data protection fee could result in a fine of up to £4,350.

Exemptions

Not-for-profits, limited uses of data, and judicial processing are some of the exemptions to the fee. If your organisation is the data controller of personal



Gillian Scribbins

data for staff administration purposes only, then you may not have to pay. Similarly, if you are a not-for-profit organisation, you are likely to be exempt.

The ICO has a simple self-assessment tool on their website, and newly issued guidance on the data protection fee, which explains how organisations can determine whether or not they are exempt. The new legislation also allows an exemption if none of your processing is carried out on a computer.

Regardless of the exemptions, if your organisation controls any CCTV, then you will need to pay the fee as data controller (where in the past CCTV had to be registered with the ICO), although this does exclude domestic use CCTV.

The Fee

After considering the exemptions, if you have established that your organisation does have to pay the fee, you then need to consider which fee tier it

falls into. The fee payable is tiered into:

- **micro organisations - £40** - for organisations with a maximum annual turnover of £632,000, or no more than 10 employees
- **small and medium organisations - £60** – for organisations with no more than 250 members of staff, or an annual turnover of up to £36m
- **large organisations – £2,900** – for organisations with more than 250 staff or a turnover of more than £36m

Charities will only have to pay the first tier fee, regardless of staff numbers or turnover, as will small occupational pension schemes. Public authorities only need to consider the number of staff, and can disregard turnover. The ICO has also launched a self-assessment tool for determining how much your organisation will be liable to pay.

How to pay

If your organisation is already registered, the ICO will contact you before your current registration expires, to explain how to pay your fee under the new system. You won't need to pay anything more until your current registration expires.

Recently expired registrations however are liable for a tier 3 fee until such a time as the organisation informs the ICO of their tier criteria otherwise. Organisations paying for the first time will need to contact the ICO to provide their details and set up their payment. Organisations can simply pay by cheque, credit card or direct debit and payment is due annually.

Full details of the data protection fee, the exemptions, and how to pay, along with the previously mentioned self-assessment tools, are all on ico.org.uk.

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

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WINNS WHITE PARTY DAZZLES GUESTS

Fabulous entertainment, luxurious trappings, and the best of the British summer weather; the Winns 'White Party' mixed the perfect cocktail of ingredients for a summer soiree.

Opening his sprawling bachelor pad, The Towers, for the evening, Winn Solicitors MD, Jeff Winn, hosted the mid-June party to bring staff and business contacts together. The dress code was designed to make the most of the rare sunshine, with a white clothes only policy. Thankfully, each of the 300 revellers got into the spirit, showing up in their finery.

With plenty of entertainment provided, the Winns White Party was a night to remember.







50TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Les Reay, Owner of North East Catering, recently held his 50th birthday party at Colonel Porters. Guests enjoyed a sumptuous Indian buffet and danced the night away to the silky sounds of resident DJ Keith Martin.



TOGETHER FOREVER

The Chloe & Liam Together Forever charity ball took place last month at the Hilton Newcastle where over 300 gathered to raise funds for the charity set up in their name.

The Chloe and Liam Together Forever Trust raises money for young people to help them realise their dreams and ambitions. It goes towards helping them fulfil their potential, something that Chloe and Liam were robbed of, when they were killed in the Manchester Arena bombing last year.

A whopping £45K was raised on the night, with entertainment brought to them by Britain's Got Talent's Jamie-Lee Harrison and the superb Collabro.

In attendance on the night was Chief Constable Ian Hopkins, from Greater Manchester Police as well as the Mayor of Manchester, the Right Honourable Andy Burnham.

Andrew Potts, from KP Simpson Certified Public Accountants and Trustee for the Chloe & Liam Together Forever charity told us:

"The event was a great success, everybody had a fantastic evening and it was good to see so much good come from something so tragic. The amount of money raised for the charity too was amazing and it was fantastic to see everyone digging deep into their pockets for such a worthwhile cause."



@ChloeAndLiamTogetherForever



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THIRSTY THURSDAY DRINKS EVENT

Andrew Cawkwell, a Director of Newtons Solicitors in Durham and Michael Horner from Shawbrook Bank have joined forces to launch a series of monthly drinks networking events in Durham City. The event follows a very simple format in that it takes place in the new and exciting venue of Rotunda Bar, Hotel Indigo at 6pm on the First Thursday of every month.

If you are interested in attending and would like to be added to the guest list, please contact andrew.cawkwell@newtons.co.uk.



NEWTONS: IN THE NORTH



Since incorporation in 2009 Newtons has developed a model based upon local delivery of legal services in market towns and cities in Yorkshire, Teesside and into County Durham.

The business is a full service law firm with strength and breadth in both private client and company commercial services. The firm is owned by an entrepreneurial family and their approach to our business that has resulted in its phenomenal growth is positively reflected in our delivery of legal services for the benefit of our clients.

The firm is led by a Board of Directors with other senior leadership figures who head teams and offices in their own right. The firm employs a significant number of senior solicitors and the high quality of legal services is determined by their relative experience and also the fact that the firm is in a position to pay reasonably good market salaries to its team, meaning that the overall quality from the client perspective is maintained.

Each staff member has a training budget in order to improve their skills. The firm regularly invests in specific educational activities such as applications to join the Society of Trust and Estate Planning. In addition, the firm has subscribed to the Rilliance platform which enables all of the staff members in the various offices to view webinars and online training which is a very efficient and effective way of disseminating training information to our team.

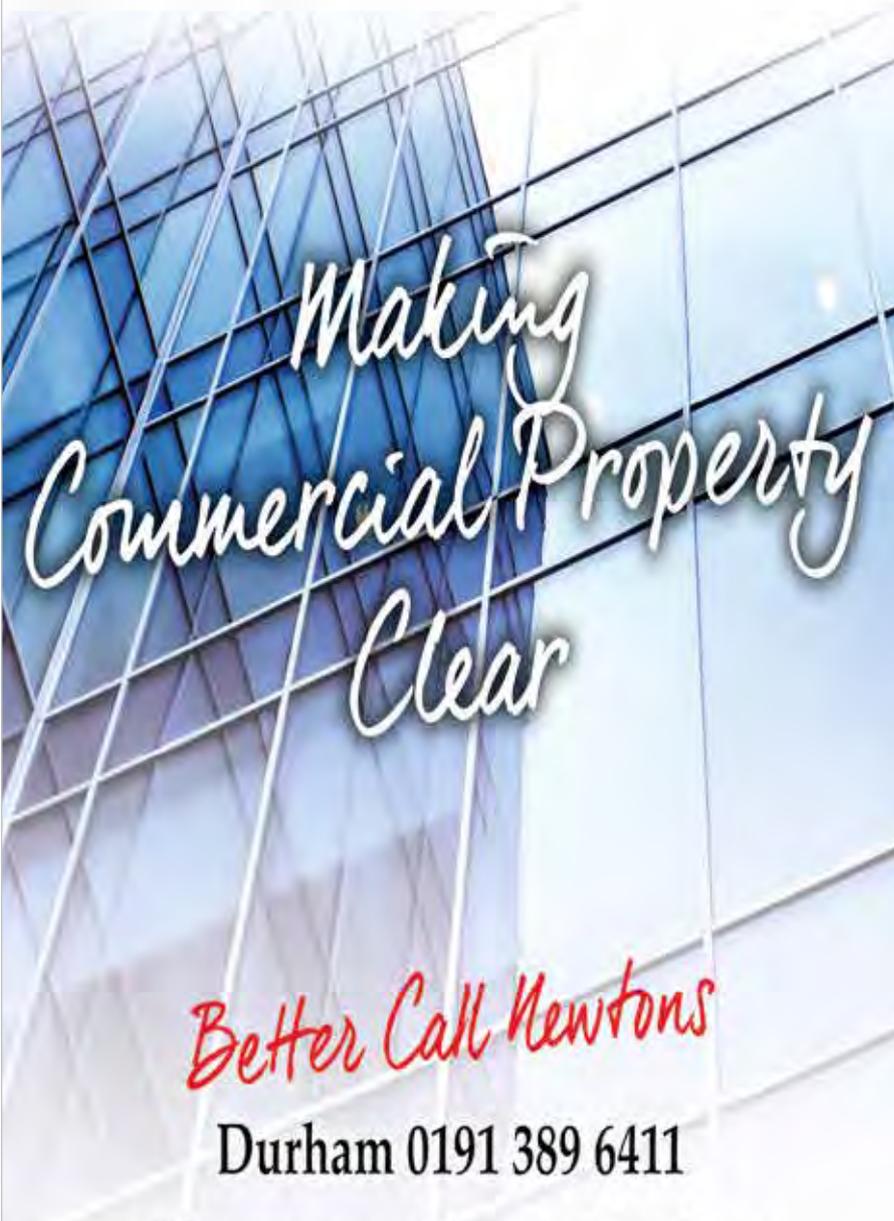
The firm is very active in respect of its corporate social responsibility and regularly takes part in initiatives for example a 5 km fun run at Ripon on a Saturday was attended by over 40 staff members in the firm. In addition, the firm regularly holds dress down days and captures the contributions by just giving sites to give to nominated charities.

Our medium term goal is to become a top 200 law firm, something that we believe that we will achieve within the next 5 years.

Contact Andrew on 0191 389 6412 or email at: Andrew.Cawkwell@newtons.co.uk



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MURGITROYD: KEEPING INNOVATION ON THE RADAR

Dr Tom Olbrich European Patent Attorney at Murgitroyd – a global firm of European patent attorneys and trade mark attorneys – shares how good communication led to business success.

Dr Tom Olbrich, who is based at Murgitroyd's Newcastle upon Tyne office, isn't your typical patent attorney; in his native Germany he spent a few years in the special military forces, where he competed in athletics and bobsleigh before going on to achieve a number of degrees. This has enabled him to specialise in a range of subject matters from electrical engineering and physics (particularly computer-related subject matter), medical devices, sports equipment, semiconductors and power tools.

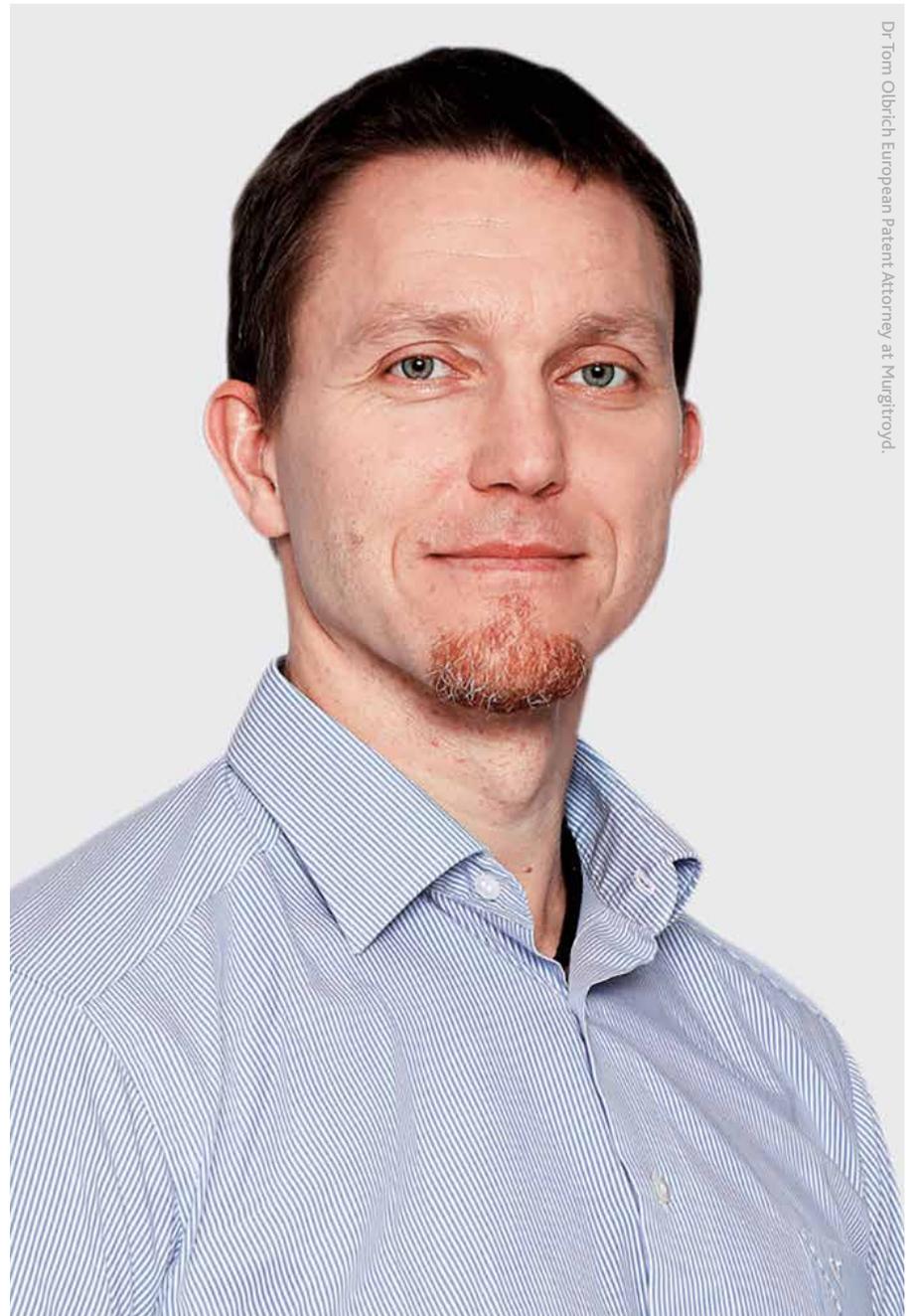
In his experience, he's best placed to advise a client if he gets to know the company and the products. It's an approach that's followed by the attorneys at Murgitroyd who offer regular complimentary meetings to understand new developments with the client, what they are working on and get to grips with any queries they may have.

These sessions are mutually beneficial and in the case of one client led to a successful and key portfolio patent...

inov-8, the all-terrain footwear, apparel equipment specialist, had teamed up with The University of Manchester to become the first-ever company to incorporate graphene into running and fitness shoes.

Tom reflects: "The client dropped into conversation about the work they were doing with The University of Manchester on the use of graphene. I instantly knew that this was something they needed to protect, but it wasn't something that they had yet considered."

James McKay, Product Director at inov-8 comments: "Product innovation is a number-one



Dr Tom Olbrich European Patent Attorney at Murgitroyd.

priority at inov-8. It's what enables us to compete against major sports brands. And Tom understands this and takes the time to get to know us and our products."

Tom echoes this and adds: "In our regular meetings we often discuss ideas and I can provide guidance on what they should and can protect and what they can't. My well rounded experience means I can also offer a technical perspective of 'will it even work?'"

James says: "I can talk to Tom freely about all parts of the business and use him as an impartial soundboard at times. It's one of the key reasons we've continued to be a client for the past six years."

Graphene, despite being the thinnest material in the world, is also the strongest and is 200 times stronger than steel. It's also extraordinarily flexible, and can be bent, twisted, folded and stretched without incurring any damage.

When added to the rubber used in inov-8's G-Series shoes, graphene imparts all of its properties, including its strength. A unique formulation makes these outsoles 50% stronger, 50% more stretchy and 50% more resistant to wear than the corresponding industry standard rubber without graphene. The graphene-enhanced rubber can flex and grip to all surfaces more effectively, without wearing down quickly, providing reliably strong, long-lasting grip.

The patent was filed at the end of 2017 and inov-8's graphene-enhanced footwear, which was launched in June, has received great praise by the BBC and Runner's World.

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

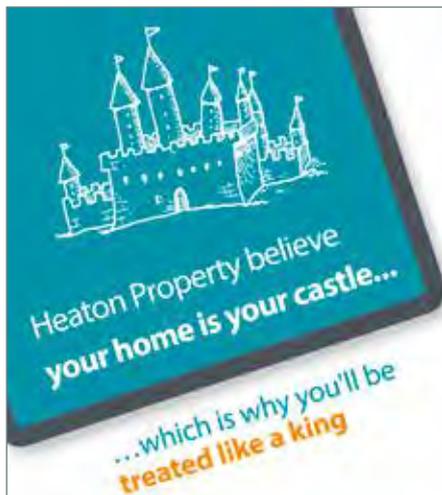
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Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

ALL CHANGE

In Catalonia they have a lovely old expression when bidding farewell to a friend. "Que no haya novedad". "Let no new thing arise". Because as we know, change usually means trouble.

But in business change must be seen as an opportunity to be embraced. Possibly the biggest change to hit business in living memory was when Sir Tim Berners-Lee developed something he called the World Wide Web and look at where that has taken us?

In the private rental sector change has come about due to consumer demand for higher standards and legislation to ensure fair, compliant management of rental properties. There are now around 140 laws and regulations relating to landlord and tenants, well over half of those introduced since I joined the industry.

This raft of legislation means it is increasingly difficult for smaller landlords who entered the market decades ago to keep pace. Back when I started out, getting a mortgage was simple. You wrote your salary on a piece of paper and the nice man (it was always a man back then) at the bank told you how much you could borrow. You could re-mortgage very quickly and realise up to 90%

of the property value so building a portfolio was relatively simple.

Today the mortgage market is heavily regulated requiring in depth checks on income and finances. Add to this a requirement to verify tenants right to live in the UK, the loss of various tax breaks, tenants rising expectations of high standard accommodation and change can spell a perfect storm for some old school landlords, many of whom are selling up and quitting the sector.

But where one door closes another one opens, such is the nature of change. The private rental sector has never been more buoyant. Having doubled in size since 1997 the sector now outstrips social housing. While newcomers to the market may include large, institutional investors we are taking instructions today from some of our past tenants.

Millennials first experience of tenancies may have been high standard, purpose-built student accommodation. From there they may move on to high standard rental property, initially through our

'ProShare Plus' scheme. Today many are in well paid jobs and are looking to build a property portfolio. It is interesting, possibly obvious, that the properties they seek to acquire are of the highest standard. They simply cannot envisage owning a property they would not be prepared to live in.

Thus, the change in standards driven by market forces and regulation are providing new investors at a time when many of the previous generation of landlords are heading for the door. As these new investors are busy professionals they require a fully compliant, efficient management agency to administer their property portfolio. Cue quiet smiles and the full embrace of change here at Heaton Property.

The expression "Que no haya novedad" always makes me smile but in reality, lack of change equates to stagnation. In the words of American author Hugh Edmonson Prather III, "Just when I think I have learned the way to live, life changes". Long may it continue.



HODGSON SAYERS OPENS BASE IN NOTTINGHAM

The opening of its first base outside of the North East is further confirmation by Stanley-based, award-winning building and roofing specialist Hodgson Sayers of its expansion strategy taking shape.

The company has established an office in Nottingham and appointed Eddy Maxwell MBE as contracts manager for the Midlands with a brief to build on the wider opportunities presented to Hodgson Sayers after it secured a place on the Efficiency East Midlands Framework in 2017.

Hodgson Sayers has already won contracts in excess of £1million on a variety of roofing projects in Leicester, Rugby, Northampton and Nottingham.

Managing Director John Sayers said: "While the North East is our heartland and the focus of so much of our activity, we are ambitious and realise that expansion outside of our traditional market is a natural next step. We identified Nottingham as the location for an office and are delighted to appoint Eddy Maxwell. Eddy's role will be to build relationships with existing and potential customers and to manage recruitment of staff."

Hodgson Sayers is also embracing new technology as part of its expansion plans and is integrating Building Information Modelling and Enterprise Resource Planning software into its systems and processes.



KNIGHT FRANK REPORTS RECORD 12 MONTHS

Property firm Knight Frank Newcastle has announced its best 12 months' trading in 24 years.

Turnover at the firm is up 27% percent on last year and business is showing no signs of slowing down for the remainder of 2018.

Head of Office and Partner Peter Bowden believes that the strong performance is down to healthy demand for its consultancy teams, particularly building consultancy, property management and business rates services, as well as a strong performance from its capital markets team.

The building consultancy arm has expanded after recently completing work on a number of major commercial projects. These included refitting a 55,000 sq ft office headquarters, project managing several new build retail developments in County Durham and completing technical due diligence surveys on numerous large portfolios for property investors.

Ian Tew, who heads up building consultancy at Knight Frank, said: "We have seen an increase in demand for our expertise in increasing the asset values of buildings through refurbishment, new build project management, building surveys and dilapidations advice."

To help meet the demand, the team has also taken on Wilf Prowse as an additional building surveyor.

PLANNING HOUSE RECEIVES MAJOR AWARD



Shining a spotlight on East Durham, Planning House owner Chris Pipe has been named National New Freelancer of the Year 2018.

The awards, the centrepiece of the tenth annual National Freelancers Day held at Kings Place, London, recognise excellence in freelancing. Sixteen finalists across three categories were judged on the strength of their portfolio, passion and commitment to freelancing, business acumen and the creativity and distinctiveness of their offering.

Chris founded Planning House in 2016 and has a wealth of experience in the Town Planning industry. As former UK Planning

& Land Director for a large PLC property company, she knows her way through the planning system from a unique perspective.

With a passion for town planning which began through seeing the decline of the coal mining community where she lived, Chris has developed an amazing career built from a love of people and places and how they influence one another.

She said: "I'm thrilled and honoured to receive this award since the calibre of the other finalists was awe inspiring. I'm delighted to be recognised by this prestigious award and ecstatic to be flying the flag for North East businesses."



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The Granary Runnymede Road, Darras Hall

With accommodation approaching 7,000 square feet, this is a fabulous opportunity to acquire an impressive house which has been extensively improved. With private gardens extending to circa 0.75 acres including an orchard at the front and a substantial private garden at the rear.

Price Guide: £1,999,500

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rare! From Sanderson Young

Ashleigh Sundin
 ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk
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East Wing Scots House, Newcastle Road, East Boldon

🗝️ 4 🛏️ 3 🚗 4

This unique Grade II* listed home has a great deal of character and has been tastefully updated whilst retaining its charm, with beautiful high ceilings and stunning fireplaces. The grounds extend to approx. 5 acres with equestrian facilities and summerhouse dating back to circa 100 years.



Price Guide: £795,000

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UPLANDS, NEWCASTLE ROAD, CORBRIDGE



PRICE ON APPLICATION

Uplands is a stunning detached house, significantly remodelled, extended and rebuilt to a very high standard, providing a fine family home. This impressive property has extensive accommodation of circa 10,000 sq ft including nine bedrooms, a magnificent lower ground floor leisure wing with swimming pool, gymnasium and doors to sunken terrace, and a highly impressive, and very versatile, large entertainment area to the second floor, accommodating a games room, full size snooker table, drinks bar, general lounge area and access to a sunken balcony. Uplands occupies a fabulous site of circa 1 acre with lawned areas, well stocked borders, stone flagged terraces and pathways, fabulous lighting and balustrades, and a kitchen garden with outbuilding, greenhouses and storage areas. To the front of the house there is parking for a number of cars, a courtyard and a small coppice.



Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 2233500 ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk www.sandersonyoung.co.uk

PLANNING APPEALS

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House

'If in doubt, kick it out' you may not have heard the saying but some Councils do adopt this approach in terms of dealing with planning applications. If your application is refused know your options. This short article will look at how to approach appealing your planning refusal. If you are refused planning permission, you are entitled to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, an impartial government body independent of your local Council.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Whilst planning appeals are free to submit, they cause delays, are time consuming and could incur additional costs. Engage with your local planning authority regarding alternative development to potentially avoid a planning appeal. Could your plans be amended to something which the Council (and you) would be happy with, if so this could save a lot of time and uncertainty.

BE PREPARED

If you do embark on a planning appeal, be aware of what evidence you and the Council have to support both sides of the argument. Planning policies relevant to your site will be critical when forming your planning case for an appeal, so make sure you know how they relate to your site.

Every planning refusal should have an officer's report (Committee or delegated) which outlines the proposal, planning policies and material planning considerations associated with your proposal. These are generally part of the Council's online planning application. Reading the officer's report will help you focus on the reason you're appealing.

Look for similar developments or appeals which could support your case (via the Appeal Casework Portal or via an internet search), referring to similar cases could assist the Planning Inspector in weighing up your proposal.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Applications for award of costs can be made by either party in the appeal process, so be aware the Council could apply for their costs associated with the appeal to be paid by you (although rare this can happen). However, you can also make an application for award of costs if you believe the Council have acted unreasonably. Be realistic in any application for costs, just because you disagree with the planning outcome doesn't mean the Council have been unreasonable, refer to the Planning Inspectorate website for more information.

Be aware of any additional costs such as technical report costs, legal agreements (s106), Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) etc. For instance, if a scheme was refused due to traffic impact, you may wish to commission a transport study to support your appeal.

If a legal agreement (s106) is required to secure planning obligations you must submit this (or Unilateral Undertaking) along with your appeal. If you omit an agreement the Planning Inspectorate will not allow your appeal even if they were inclined to do so.

GROUNDINGS OF APPEAL

When finalising your appeal submission collate any supporting documents and have plans, form etc, they can be submitted online via the Planning Inspectorates Portal.

Your grounds of appeal must fully disclose your case through full representations and any supporting evidence. The grounds of appeal must be concise, clear and comprehensive.

TIMESCALES

It is of paramount importance that you are aware of the deadlines which are set by the Planning Inspectorate, there is generally no scope to alter these – a deadline missed could put a nail in the coffin of your planning appeal.

On a final note, don't despair if your appeal fails, take stock and read the Inspectors report to determine if there is an alternative development you can progress. If in doubt seek assistance.

PLANNING HOUSE can be contacted on 07944844882,
info@planninghouse.co.uk or by visiting www.planninghouse.co.uk



FOUR REASONS WHY A BUILDING SURVEY IS ANYTHING BUT A TICK-BOX EXERCISE

Puneet Vedhera, Associate at Knight Frank Newcastle, shares his expertise on building surveys.

You wouldn't buy a house without having it surveyed, would you? And the same should apply to buying a commercial building. But you'd be amazed at how many think it's not necessary and just a tick in a box.

I have worked as a building surveyor and project manager in commercial property for around eight years now - covering offices, industrial and retail properties with projects ranging from £50k to over £10m.

I am frequently involved in commercial and residential sales, often where the purchaser is hesitant to instruct a building survey unless it is an express requirement of their financiers.

Quite often all the buyer wants to know is, is my building going to fall down? Most chartered building surveyors can answer that in minutes of seeing a building.

The value of a full survey is something that should not be underestimated. That survey could save or indeed make you a fortune.

Gone are the days where a building survey provides just a statement of fact, highlighting construction methods and a building's condition, or just a regurgitated CIBSE guidance note stating the average life expectancy of elements and plant.

The real value in appointing a property professional to undertake a building survey is to benefit from their experience and expert opinion and advice.

That surveyor, if they are part of a multi-discipline property firm, can give you a commercial view on all aspects of a building.

They can give you considered advice through discussing a building or project with their sales agency, valuation, management or landlord and tenant specialists.

1. Market Trends

Experienced building surveyors often hold valuable expertise in what occupiers and purchasers are looking for and can advise you on how to stay on top of the market. We often advise on conversion and refurbishment costs and the likely end values within our building survey reports in order to maximise our client's investment.

2. Leases

In our day-to-day role we advise our clients on both landlord and tenant sides on leases, schedules of condition and dilapidations. We are therefore well placed to advise on the level of risk imposed on a purchaser.

Common mistakes include an investment where there is a large blue chip company with a long FRI lease that is effectively ineffective due to a schedule of condition. On the other hand, we often see purchasers become uneasy about leases where a schedule of condition is in place where in fact the schedule would not be as detrimental to their position at dilapidations stage as it would first seem.

3. Property Management & Planned Maintenance Opportunities

It is very easy for a surveyor to pick faults in any building, old or new, and we often review damning reports of properties or portfolios where a surveyor has highlighted potential risks and the associated costs. Our advice goes one step further, highlighting opportunities with utilising service charges, undertaking less costly short-term repairs, providing advice on prioritising items in order to help spread costs throughout the property lifecycle, or ensuring high risk items within a portfolio are dealt with correctly.

4. Capital Expenditure and Asset Management Opportunities

A good surveyor can and should highlight and advise on opportunities through their expertise and involvement in refurbishment projects. Market knowledge procured through such involvement ultimately means a surveyor understands how expenditure can be utilised in order to create best value.

The above are just a few examples of good, commercially minded qualities that anybody dealing in property should be looking for in a building surveyor as part of their normal due diligence.

A building surveyor can offer valuable advice and this should be seen as an opportunity rather than an obligation.

Puneet Vedhera works in the Building Consultancy and Project Management team at Knight Frank in Newcastle. He can be contacted at puneet.vedhera@knightfrank.com 0191 221 2211.



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PRICE COMPARISON SITES VS REAL LIFE BROKERS



Lewis Chambers

Director of mortgages and finance for Bradley Hall, Lewis Chambers, discusses the benefits of choosing a mortgage broker rather than an online comparison site.

Since the growth of financial price comparison sites many people have been replacing real life financial advisors with an online version. Now the credit scoring agencies are taking over and competing, Experian, Clear Score and others are offering a credit match product guiding you into what could very well be the wrong deal.

Although there are, of course, many financial products which can easily lend themselves to being compared; such as home insurance and savings accounts, this is not necessarily the case when it comes to the more complex financial products such as mortgages. Opting to compare mortgage deals via a price comparison site and then going direct to the lender may end up being more complicated than you may have first imagined – not to mention it could very easily cost you more.

When it comes to arranging a mortgage you have two options available; find your own mortgage and applying direct or using a mortgage broker.

As a mortgage is the biggest financial commitment you will likely ever make, it is imperative to ensure that you are getting the mortgage which is exactly right for your personal circumstances. Factors that need to be considered include the initial interest rate, any introductory offers, the rate beyond the fixed period and potential product fees. It is easy to use a price comparison table to find the cheapest current rate on the market, you may apply to a particularly attractive looking deal without realising that there are specific criteria for the deal that you do not actually meet.

Advice

Although you can complete background research online you will not be able to acquire the amount of specialist knowledge which comes through experience and working with mortgage applications on a daily basis. Even the most straight forward mortgage application could benefit from expert mortgage broker.

Information provided by price comparison sites focuses on the cost of the mortgage products and it is difficult for these platforms to consider any of your personal circumstances in order to find a deal that suits.

Affordability

Although you may have an idea on how much you can afford every month, a mortgage lender may not agree. Stricter mortgage lending and home buying schemes such as the Help to Buy scheme come with affordability criteria that needs to be met. We can reduce the chances of you getting rejected by mortgage lenders by assessing your affordability prior to making an application and applying to the products which are right for you.

Home Buying Schemes

Current government home buying schemes such as Help to Buy, Shared Ownership, and existing schemes means there are lots of options available for first time, and second time buyers which may not be available through price comparison sites.

Credit Score

A price comparison site doesn't understand how credit scoring can best match you to the most

suitable mortgage. Although some of the credit providers are starting to get into this market, they can't account for what fits with each and every lenders criteria. Perhaps a mobile phone blip or missed payments on credit cards, price comparison sites will still guide you to the lenders, you may apply direct, undertaking a credit check, resulting in points being deducted to only be refused. A broker has knowledge and can give advice based on your credit history and circumstances.

Exclusive Deals

Mortgage brokers have access to an array of intermediary only deals which are only available to those applying for a mortgage using a mortgage broker, these will not be displayed on a price comparison site. On top of this, here at Bradley Hall we have negotiated a selection of exclusive deals for our clients.

Although there are mortgage deals available for those who are direct applicants only, these are not necessarily going to save you more money than the other deals on the market and it's important not to miss out.

Full Home Buying Service

If you go direct you will then need to make the applications and handle all of the paperwork yourself. This can be a complicated process, especially for first time buyers who aren't aware of the ins and outs of arranging a mortgage and buying a home. We offer a full home buying service, this involves handling the process from start to finish, dealing with any solicitors and surveyors, this complete service is something that the price comparison site cannot offer you.

For more information please call 0191 260 2000 or email mortgages@bradleyhall.co.uk



NEWFIELD HOUSE

HEPSCOTT, MORPETH

Guide Price £2,950,000

EPC Rating C80



Newfield House, situated in the sought-after location of Hepscoth, Morpeth, is certainly one of the most impressive homes currently on the market. This stunningly finished property comes with several luxurious added benefits comprising; a full leisure suite including swimming pool, jacuzzi, steam room, sauna and changing room, a spacious cocktail bar, a cinema room and gym, as well as a self-contained apartment occupying the first floor.

The open plan dining kitchen, which is fitted with a range of high quality wall and base units and integrated appliances, offers a more relaxed

informal style with huge west facing windows, which flood the room with natural light. Its selection of large reception rooms provides several luxurious and spacious areas to relax or entertain.

Located on the first floor is the master suite comprising of a spacious double bedroom with a walk-in dressing room and en-suite bathroom with a double jacuzzi and double shower rooms. Picture windows lead onto an external balcony overlooking the front gardens and driveway. The remaining four double bedrooms all benefit from en-suite bathrooms or shower room facilities. A

spiral staircase off the first-floor landing takes you into a guest suite with a sizeable double bedroom, en-suite, dressing room and luxury bathroom with a walk in shower and sunken bathtub.

Externally the property occupies a very secluded a private spot in Hepscoth that extends to approximately 1.2 acres. Gardens to the front, sides and rear are mainly laid to lawn with various paved seating areas and hedged peripheries. Access is through electronic timber double gates and directly onto a sweeping granite, hand carved and hand placed driveway with a double garage and ample parking spaces.

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HOW PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COULD SAVE YOU THOUSANDS



Catherine Affleck

Catherine Affleck, operations director and head of property management at Bradley Hall discusses compliance in her specialism of property management

I think we can all agree, as landlords and as property and facilities managers - and even as tenants to some degree, that property management compliance can be an absolute chore!

Of course, we all understand its importance and the potentially dire implications of when things don't go to plan - but that doesn't make it any more palatable subject to any of us. Compliance is the red tape we all must wade through to facilitate our true property intentions. There will never be anything appealing about legionella testing, a health and safety risk assessment is unlikely to get hearts racing, but the devil is in the detail and these are the documents which will protect you should things ever go wrong.

So, should a landlord ever just wing it and hope for the best? In a word, no!

If the worst-case scenario fear of having a tenant fatality in their premises isn't sufficient incentive, then the hefty penalties for non-compliance might

be enough to make those landlords who might allow their safety standards to slip to save a couple of hundred pounds a year think twice.

In Sheffield an amateur landlord was fined £17,000 for failure to provide a gas safety certificate, a London landlord was fined £214,000 for a series of electrical and fire safety breaches across their property portfolio and, in Brighton, a landlord who failed to suitably maintain fire escapes and equipment was fined £43,680.

I don't believe there are any landlords out there who genuinely don't care about their tenants' safety and welfare, and I've certainly been lucky enough not to come across any in my time in property management. For those who do drop the ball it is sometimes down to inexperience as a landlord, not understanding their obligations, perceived restrictive cost implications or just a simple and naïve belief that "something bad won't happen to me".

What do you need to do as a landlord? Before letting your property you'll need an EPC, a gas safety certificate which is ideally accompanied by a boiler service, a PAT testing certificate for any landlord owned electrical items, a fire alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm. It's also best practice to have a five yearly electrical fixed wiring test certificate. There are further considerations if you own a block of residential properties, particularly where there are shared services, but we're here to advise you further in that case.

At Bradley Hall we pride ourselves on the service we provide to our landlords and tenants. Tenant welfare is a major priority and where we have happy tenants paying their rent, we have happy investment clients. We understand that our landlords have other things to think about, compliance is second nature to us, we deal with it day in day out with our team of trusted approved contractors.

If you'd like to talk to one of our specialist property managers about your property portfolio and what you should be doing to protect your tenants, your property and yourself, we would be delighted to help. For more information please call the Bradley Hall property management team on 0191 232 8080.

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PLANNING APPEALS NIGHTMARE, DOUBLE WHAMMY FOR DEVELOPERS

By Jon Tweddell, Director of JT Planning



Jon Tweddell

If a local planning authority (LPA) refuses your planning application, or fails to determine it within a specified period, you have a right to appeal. If you have exhausted all possibilities with the LPA, appealing can be the only route forward.

However, like most LPAs, The Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who process and decide appeals, are under-resourced at a time when there are lots of projects going through the system.

PINS failed to meet six out of nine of its key planning and enforcement casework targets in 2017/18, according to its latest annual report, which describes its performance as "unacceptable" for many customers (www.planningresource.co.uk).

In 2017/18 it took PINS on average 19.5 weeks to determine written appeals; 31.1 weeks for Hearings; and 44 weeks for Inquiries. When you have already endured a long planning process with the LPA, further lengthy delays are the last thing a developer needs.

Here at JT Planning, 90% of our work is preparing and submitting planning applications and appeals. At a time when the Government is promoting the benefits of new housing, it is extremely frustrating that LPAs cannot deal with the volume of applications. To add insult to injury, the appeals

process is also grinding to a halt.

Delays and bad decisions creates uncertainty for developers. It can also dissuade developers from investing in a certain area if the local council cannot make timely decisions on their planning applications.

So, what's the answer and how do we improve this? As ever, it is never a simple answer! In my opinion, planning needs to be given more priority by Government and by LPAs. The easiest way to achieve improvement is to increase budgets and better fund the sector. I guess this is very unlikely given the austerity programme we have endured since the financial crisis and planning is just one of many other priority services that need better funding.

I do think there are other ways of improving the overall planning service, whether it be through the LPA or PINS. The Government has already gone some way to alleviate the pressure by increasing permitted development (PD) rights (taking some developments out the system) and increasing

planning fees. But to be perfectly honest, not much has changed, if anything it might be slightly worse, as the new PD rights introduced can be complicated and there are inconsistencies in how they are processed at a local level.

I don't have any major gripe with our planning system. I think it is quite a good one, and does reasonably well to balance everyone's interests. The problem I have is the human element and how planners interpret a proposal. We see major inconsistencies in terms of how policy and legislation is applied and interpreted.

This creates huge delays and major costs for clients. There's always a human element with any decision, and maybe this is one part of planning that will never change.

Perhaps additional training and more emphasis on these issues through universities might help to create more, good planners who want to facilitate development, not stop it in its tracks!

For more details visit www.jontweddell.co.uk

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When you hear the words 'home transformation', what does your mind initially jump to? The majority of us think of a house extension, interior design makeover or a new kitchen or bathroom. But what about a tiled conservatory roof?

It is never the first thing mentioned, and what most people don't realise is the transformation and increase of value it can add to your home. According to an Everest survey, a well-built conservatory can add up to 5% value onto your property, so it is definitely worth the investment.

If you don't have a tiled conservatory roof, then the chances are, you're sick of your glass or polycarbonate one. They are freezing in the winter, overbearing in the summer and the year-round condensation levels just make you constantly frustrated whilst sitting in perishing or scorching temperatures throughout the year.

This is why you should consider changing the roof to solid tiles. By contacting Conservatory Roof Supplies, we can remove the glass or polycarbonate roof

and replace it with tiles. Your home will be more cost-effective and all of your current conservatory problems will be fixed.

The main benefit of using solid tiles is that they're much more energy efficient than glass or polycarbonate. The tiles have high performance installation to keep your conservatory warm in the winter but cool in the summer so is perfect all year round! With reduced heating bills and a conservatory you can use all year round, you are getting so much value added back on to your home.

Unlike your old conservatory, tiled roofs will also blend into the brickwork of your house, ensuring the overall exterior of your home looks modern and aesthetic.

We will, if required, also supply and fit replacement double glazed windows, doors and full conservatories along with a complete range of roof line products, for an added cost.

So, if you want your home to be totally transformed, get in touch with Conservatory Roof Supplies for a quote for your project.

Visit conservatoryroofsoutheast.com email us at info@conservatoryroofsoutheast.com or call us on 0191 427 0222.

PRINCE'S TRUST YOUNG AMBASSADOR GETS AN EPIC BOOST FROM NORTH EAST DIGITAL START-UP

A successful North East digital start-up is pooling its resources to help a young man from Newcastle to achieve his dreams.

Chester-le-Street-based social media advertising agency, Epic Social, has teamed up with The Prince's Trust Young Ambassador Award winner, Tom Rebar, to help him create his own personalised digital marketing strategy.

Tom was recognised with the prestigious accolade in March 2018 by the Prince of Wales after he utilised the services on offer at the charity's Cheryl Cole Trust Centre in Newcastle to help turn his life around after an adolescent struggle with anorexia. Tom now wants to use his new-found status to raise awareness of mental health and eating disorders to help young people who might be going through a similar situation.

Tom was introduced to the team at Epic Social through a mutual connection who felt that the company would be able to give him a solid grounding in how to establish a brand identity, build up an online presence and how to reach and engage with his target audience.

Ben Maughan, managing director at Epic Social, said: "When I first met Tom, I was absolutely blown away by his incredible story and his passion for helping others.

"The Prince's Trust has leveraged a fantastic

position for Tom to build on, but he recognised that he needed a little help to get his social media channels and website up to speed.

"We invited Tom across to our offices in Chester-le-Street to spend the day with the team where he got to learn more about social media management, content creation, photography and videography direct from our in-house experts.

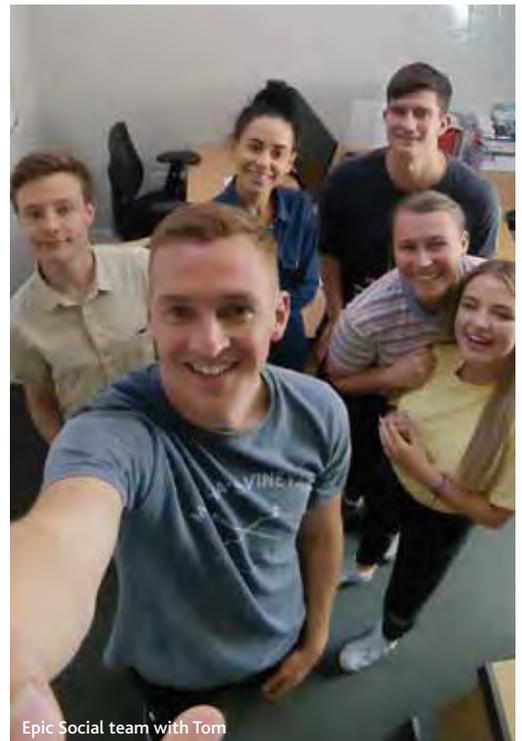
"As a business, it's wonderful for us to be able to give something back to the community and Tom's story has really warmed our hearts. He is a truly inspirational young man and we can't wait to see what the future has in store for him."

"I really enjoyed the day that I spent with Ben and the team at Epic Social," Tom added.

"It was fascinating to learn more about social media from a business perspective and how this differs to how people use platforms like Facebook on a day-to-day basis.

"I'm really pleased to have Epic Social on board. The team were really friendly and upbeat and helped me to come up with some great creative ideas to get my channels off the ground. They even worked with me to create my first short video blog."

Epic Social specialises in premium content creation and highly-targeted social media advertising campaigns for brands and businesses.



Epic Social team with Tom

For more information, visit www.epicsocial.co.uk or for more information about Tom and his work with The Prince's Trust, visit www.tomrebar.com.

DISRUPTIVE INTERNATIONAL EVENT PROMOTED BY NEWCASTLE FIRM

An international legal event challenging working practices among lawyers and law firms is to be promoted by a leading Newcastle PR consultancy.

TOLES Legal, the organiser behind The Legal English Event, has appointed MHW PR to publicise the high-profile event being held at The Law Society, London, on November 1-2.

This event is the first of its kind anywhere in the world, focussing on the legal, language and tech skills that international commercial lawyers will need in the next decade. The event is tailored to international law firms, international law students whose first language isn't English, universities and large corporates who work at a global level.

During the two-day event there will be four keynote presentations, which will include 'legal rebel' and international speaker Ken Adams who campaigns for clearer commercial contracts; along with law tech specialist Alex Hamilton who will highlight the combined threat and opportunity posed by technology in the legal sector.

In addition, the organisers, Catherine Mason and Natalie Canham of TOLES, will launch their latest book, *Advanced Legal English*. This is a practical and



useful book for international commercial lawyers and has their English requirements in the workplace as its absolute priority.

The specialist business-to-business PR consultancy will undertake a media relations campaign, offline and online, while also coordinating social media activity and email newsletters. MHW PR is also tasked with raising the general profile of TOLES Legal to a national and international audience.

Leading the communications campaign is PR director Wayne Halton and senior account manager Jez Davison. They combine specialist media skills with an understanding of the legal and education sectors.

Jez Davison said: "This is an exciting project that throws up many challenging issues in the legal sector – from work focussed legal English, language that's current and practical, to the disruptive influence of technology in the sector."



NORTH EAST VIDEO AGENCY SHINES A LIGHT ON THE OUSEBURN VALLEY

A leading Tyneside video production company has partnered with the Ouseburn Trust, creating a short film aiming to promote the Ouseburn Valley, ahead of the Great Exhibition of The North.

Neil Wood-Mitchell, Creative Director at Newcastle based Three Motion explained his motivation for approaching the Trust. "We've been based around the Ouseburn Valley since we set up ten years ago. We love this corner of Newcastle and wanted to create a film which celebrated the area. The trust does an amazing job ensuring the valley remains a great place to live, work and visit. They were the obvious partner for this campaign."

With the aim of shining a spotlight on one of their favourite North East hangouts, Three Motion and the Ouseburn Trust hope their campaign will encourage others to go and find out more about this wonderful area.

VAST NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ON THE HORIZON AS ISO27001 CERTIFICATION IS ACHIEVED

Gateshead-based mailing house, Washington Direct Mail, has 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.

Based on Team Valley Trading Estate, the company, which was founded in 1983, will, as a result of the award, now compete on a level playing field with UK-wide print management and direct mail companies.

Washington Direct Mail 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.

While the company has been planning for ISO27001 for the past two years, the timing of the certification coincides with the recently launched General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

ISO27001 is the international standard that describes best practice for an ISMS (information security management system).





IF YOUR BRAND IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM, WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOUR COMPANY?

www.bradleyomahoney.co.uk



EDDIE MAIR'S MOVE FROM THE BBC TO LBC PROVES COMMERCIAL RADIO IS CHANGING.

And the North is playing a key role.

Eddie Mair is probably most famous for calling Boris Johnson a "nasty piece of work", to his face, on TV. But as a BBC broadcaster of thirty years and presenter of one of Radio 4's most prominent news programmes - his decision to leave the comfort and prestige of working at Broadcasting House for a job in the commercial sector was a significant moment for UK media, and an indication of the changing landscape for broadcasting in Britain.

You only ever used to hear LBC in London taxis. But as Uber, the gig economy and open borders have shifted the demographic of the average taxi driver, huge investment, visionary leadership and the relocation of 5 live to Salford have transformed the cabbies' favourite station LBC from a shouty, cockney 24/7 phone-in to a national broadcaster of influence and relevance. Listeners have taken note (LBC gets 2.2 million listeners a week, a rise of 21% year on year) and now it's essential that brands, and those who market, promote and buy media for them do too.

If your brand wants to reach consumers with influence and spending power, then perhaps, at last commercial radio offers an alternative to the often impossible task of securing a 3 minute interview on the Today programme.

It was Eddie Mair's defection to LBC that triggered this article, so that's a good place to start. When it was the London Broadcasting Corporation the content was mostly 'lock em up, kick em

out' with the odd conspiracy theory chucked in. Now, national and rebranded as 'Leading Britain's Conversation' - you've still got Nick Ferrari and Nigel Farage getting tough on crime and the liberal, metropolitan elite causes of crime - but they share a schedule with James O'Brien (fast becoming a viral left wing pro-Remain sensation), former Islamist Majid Nawaz and soon the softly spoken Scotsman, Mair.

LBC's transformation has come since its purchase by Global Radio, which through rampant acquisition and ruthless modernisation has become Europe's biggest player in commercial radio - building a national suite of brands, designed with the sole intention of taking the fight for listeners to the BBC. As well as LBC, which is quarter by quarter slicing away the speech radio audience previously only served by Radios 4 and 5, Global also has Capital competing for the 15 to 34 year old audience served by Radio 1, Heart and Smooth (competing with Radio 2 for people too old for Drake but not Ed Sheeran) Classic FM (a more accessible Radio 3) as well as Gold, Capital Xtra and Radio X (Chris Moyles and Kings of Leon) for those who don't find a radio home elsewhere. Global's brands reach over 25 million people a week.

But Global aren't the only innovators in this space, providing credible national alternatives to the BBC. The other big commercial player, Bauer (owner of Absolute, Magic and Kiss) recently transformed Manchester local radio station Key 103 into Hits Radio, packed it with big name presenters and sent

it national. It's very listenable, sounds professional and reflects modern Britain, not just London. Commercial radio is upping it's game.

talkSPORT made its name by commentating on World Cups from hotel rooms instead of stadia and having ex professional footballers turning up on air in the morning after a long night of...socialising. But it now has a spin off station talkSPORT 2, has exclusive rights to a chunk of Premier League football and got rid of Richard Keys and Andy Gray. Its not slick like 5live but its presenters talk just like its listeners - it has identity and a loyal following. talkSPORT's owners recently launched talkRADIO (lock em up, kick em out) and brought back the much loved Virgin Radio brand (Kings of Leon, again). They were then acquired by News UK and Rupert Murdoch, the potential synergies and convergence with The Times and The Sun are mouth-watering for Murdoch and for Marketers and brands looking for multi-channel campaigns.

You're still going to have to work hard and smart to get your new flavour of peanut butter some broadcast coverage. But the number of national, influential and credible outlets is increasing - and commercial radio is leaner and better managed than its license fee funded rival. So next time you find yourself passed from one planning editor in a BBC organogram to another, remember there is an alternative - and it may well be the most suitable home for your brand and target consumer, and that should be music to your ears.

Christian Cerisola is head of W North, part of W Communications www.wnorth.co.uk @WCommNorth

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LUSH CAMPAIGN: SHOULD MORE BRANDS TAKE A STAND?

By Sarah Hall, managing director of
Sarah Hall Consulting Limited

Handmade cosmetic retailer Lush came under fire for its #SpyCop campaign, designed to bring attention to a Public Inquiry into Undercover Policing. Should more brands take a stand on society's issues?

On 1st June Lush joined with campaign group Police Spies out of Lives to launch an awareness raising campaign called #SpyCops.

The goal of the campaign was to place pressure on Home Secretary Sajid David to accelerate an ongoing Undercover Policing Inquiry. It included visuals of police officers with the words "Paid to lie" across its storefronts, accompanied by incident tape saying "Police have crossed the line."

Bathing in controversy

Although Lush's intention was to support activist victims who were spied upon by undercover police officers and who still can't access the data held on them despite the inquiry, reaction to the campaign in the immediate aftermath was largely negative.

Some Lush shops even took down the displays due to "in-store intimidation".

A key issue was its creative execution according to Jo-ann Robertson, CEO, Ketchum London.

"Whilst I admire big business taking a stand on important controversial issues, the execution of these campaigns is absolutely critical," she said.

"In my opinion, Lush got this campaign all wrong. It appeared to attack the entire British police force, rather than the small division that behaved inappropriately.

"Marketeers put Lush staff in a very compromising position. Trust in the police has never been higher and I think this showed a lack of judgement."

Retail consultant and high street champion Graham Soult agrees.

"The stark and aggressive straplines and imagery caused immediate offence, while largely failing to get across the intended message."

Soult believes the lobbying element was less of the problem.

"Lush has always had a reputation for being a campaigning, and sometimes controversial, retailer. It's hard to argue with the case for drawing public



Sarah Hall

attention to the ongoing, but seemingly stuttering, public enquiry into past undercover policing units, where women formed intimate relationships with me who turn out to be police 'spies'.

"However, where a marketing campaign goes so wrong that it requires the company to issue a lengthy statement explaining what it was trying to achieve, it may be time to cut your losses and admit defeat," he said.

Soult was right about the lobbying element. But while the campaign was curtailed on 17th June due to the overall reaction, data shows Lush sales were up 13%.

According to social analysts Brandwatch, positive mentions climbed alongside negative ones throughout the campaign. By 9th June it was back to business as usual with sentiment back to Lush's average of over 80% positive.

Is it time for brands to do more?

In the face of political turbulence and years of austerity, and at a time when public trust in business, government, NGOs, and the media is at an all-time low, there is a growing recognition that organisations need to do more to contribute to society to secure long-term customer loyalty and advocacy.

This has created an important shift in organisational communication. With the right campaign planning and execution, should more brands seek to use their influence in dealing with some of society's big issues?

Professor Anne Gregory, chair in corporate communication at the University of Huddersfield, thinks so.

She said: "[Organisations] are being forced to re-think their purpose and how they gain and maintain their legitimacy not only with their immediate stakeholders, but to society more widely."

While companies are increasingly called upon to have a social purpose linked to their objectives that underpins everything they do, success will be down to careful execution.

Lush may not have been as hard hit as expected in terms of sales for its clumsy approach to an important issue but the creative execution remains key.

As Amanda Coleman, head of corporate communication for Greater Manchester Police, said: "All organisations get things wrong and all public sector organisations have to face scrutiny but surely it should be in the right place, at the right time and in the right way."

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MEDIAWORKS DRIVES QUIZ'S E-COMMERCE SUCCESS

Fast-fashion clothing retailer QUIZ is celebrating fantastic achievements from 12 months of online and international retail success.

Overall, the brand witnessed a 30% increase in revenue, up to £116.4m. There was a 12% rise in revenue for UK stores and concessions, while online sales grew by 158% to £30.6m. Likewise, QUIZ's recently launched international presence has performed strongly over the past year, with collective efforts triggering a 32% rise to £21.2m.

Through delivering targeted SEO and PPC campaigns, Mediaworks have been a key contributor in helping the brand achieve this incredible online growth over the past 12 months and are proud to be QUIZ's chosen digital partner.

QUIZ operates in a notoriously difficult retail space, featuring intense competition from brands like ASOS, Missguided and Boohoo.com.

Mediaworks devised an intelligent omnichannel strategy that would increase QUIZ's digital presence, effectively showcasing both the brand and product range.

Mediaworks created and optimised the brand's on-site copy around carefully chosen keywords, which they review seasonally. The outreach team at Mediaworks works closely with core influencers within QUIZ's niche to generate online coverage of the brand and grow the site's authority. Through Google Shopping, they created a highly optimised product feed which ensures visibility of the products for relevant searches.

As well as growing QUIZ's UK presence, Mediaworks are supporting the brand's international success, with a focus on the

brand's expansion into Spain. As Mediaworks collaboration with QUIZ continues, they will continue to deliver outstanding results and drive forward the brand's overall success, aiming to make the next 12 months even better than the last.

Zara Porter, Digital Marketing Manager at QUIZ Clothing, commented on the success by saying, "Mediaworks has successfully supported QUIZ's digital marketing strategy through their expert knowledge in SEO. Their strategic approach has allowed QUIZ to make great improvements in keyword rankings, website traffic and revenue. We've got some really exciting projects happening this year and we're looking forward to working with Mediaworks to achieve our goals."

In a competitive marketplace, Mediaworks can flex their search skills to help you stand out. Make Mediaworks your digital partner - get in touch today by calling 03301084418 or emailing info@mediaworks.co.uk



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

North East PR agency, Harvey & Hugo celebrated its ninth birthday in July with a fabulous 90s themed party at The Blackwell Grange, Darlington.

The team (affectionately known as The Pack) and their clients danced the night away to 90s classics, complete with an incredible birthday cake, created by Fondant & Apron Strings.





IN CONVERSATION WITH...

CHARLOTTE NICHOLS

Leader of the Pack, Harvey & Hugo.

What were your career ambitions growing up?

I wanted to be a professional athlete. Sport, in particular swimming and water polo, was my life growing up and I only started thinking about an actual career when I finished University. I do think that my fleeting career as a junior athlete prepared me much more for running a business than the world of academia. Getting up at 5am to go training before, as well as after school instilled a strong work ethic within me as well as teaching me discipline and resilience, all vital attributes for running your own business.

Tell us about your current role?

I currently manage the day-to-day operations of my PR and marketing business, Harvey & Hugo. One of my main responsibilities is business development which is a very sociable role involving attending many meetings and events. I've also recently become a director of local charity, Wag & Company North East Friendship Dogs, which enables visiting dog teams to build meaningful new friendships with older dog lovers across the North East of England.

What is your proudest business achievement?

There's no one moment in particular, but when I hear people say lovely things about my business and my team, it makes me very proud.

How has the media industry changed in the last decade?

Like all industries it has become more digital, but I set up my business around this and made sure services such as social media and content marketing complemented our traditional PR offering. As the online world accelerates, visuals are gaining more attention than words so we have added services such as graphic design, animation and video to meet demand.

What are you currently working on?

I'm currently developing our new brand vision for Harvey & Hugo as well as a new website to showcase our increased offering. Also, currently working on a number of PR and marketing strategies for clients in a variety of sectors, so there's never a dull moment.

Tell us about your team?

We call ourselves The Pack - this quote from The Jungle Book is our motto: "For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." We're all rather unique individuals, but when we combine PR, marketing and design forces, magnificent things happen! There's always laughter coming from the office, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

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

I've been given so much good advice over the years but one piece that stands out was from Karren Brady at a recent conference. She said: "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude about it." This resonated with me as I often worry about things I can't change in business, however I've learnt to just alter my perspective.

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

Believe in yourself. Although it didn't always appear so on the surface, I've always struggled with insecurities while growing up. It's only in the last few years that I've become more confident and noticed the difference it can make. I wish I'd had more of this as a young sports person as mental attitude is half the battle.

Who are your heroes inside and outside of business?

I guess it's more sport than business, but I currently greatly admire Gareth Southgate's leadership of the England football team.

Outside of business my Mum and Dad are my inspiration. I aspire to achieve what they did in business as well as raising a family the way they raised me and my brother.

My husband, Chris is another hero of mine, not only because he used to be a marine, but for how he battled a serious illness which involved three major head operations and left him with a titanium forehead. Although this does now make him an inconvenience going through airport security.

How do you unwind outside of work?

I have a shameless love of fancy dress and outside of work it's rare to catch me in anything else! My fancy dress section of my wardrobe is constantly expanding with the most recent addition being an inflatable Mr. Blobby suit which I donned for Harvey & Hugo's 90s themed ninth birthday party.

My favourite fancy dress costume is 'Joy'. Joy is an 86 year-old, fun-loving lady who summers in Benidorm. I attend friends' weddings (at the bride's request), hen dos and general family occasions as Joy. She even sometimes comes into work. My friends prefer Joy to Charlotte.

Favourite Book/CD/DVD?

Apologies for my answers here, but I recently read the children's book Diary of a Wombat and it was the best thing I'd read in a long time.

Favourite CD is Meat Loaf's first album Bat out of Hell.

In terms of films, I love ridiculous comedies such as Step Brothers, Borat and Napoleon Dynamite.



ASK SILVER BULLET...



“ WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘BRAND DILUTION’? ”

Brand dilution occurs when a brand is overused through extending into other markets, price-cutting or increasing volumes – the brand loses its inherent value from excessive use.

The results can be devastating as the value of the brand, itself an asset that generates future revenue, falls – consumers no longer expect the quality or experience they once did.

Whilst all this is so far marketing theory, the Fall and Rise of the House of Burberry is perhaps the best example I know of that exemplifies brand dilution and how painful it can be to stop the process.

The classic British fashion brand was established in 1856 by Thomas Burberry concentrating on outdoor clothing. His breakthrough came in 1879 with the introduction of ‘gabardine’, a water resistant but breathable fabric where the yarn was waterproofed before weaving. The clothing quickly gained market share being worn by both Ernest Shackleton on his 1914 Antarctica expedition and George Mallory on his 1924 Everest expedition, but it was the adoption of the ‘trench coat’ by British officers in WWI and subsequent post war popularity with civilians that assured the brand’s success.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s however, the company had signed licensing agreements with global manufacturers to produce complimentary products, all featuring the iconic check. The result was that the check was appearing globally on everything from dog collars and kilts to prams and baseball hats and, in the UK, had been adopted by a far from glamorous section of society and was now known as ‘chav check’. When Eastenders actress, Daniella Westbrook, infamous for her drug problems, appeared in head to toe Burberry goods, it was no longer the luxury brand that the original customers wished to be associated with and the share price reflected this, falling to an all time low of £1.60 in November 2008.

CEO, Angela Ahrendts, appointed in 2006, was already taking action, reviewing the 23 global manufacturing licenses – in the USA, for example, the coats were sold cheaply with ‘Made in the USA’ labels. Ahrendts began to wield the knife, closing down the US factory and the Welsh factory that made Burberry polo shirts in a host of drastic moves that included the end of their Hong Kong design office – everything now went through the Creative Director and brand czar, Christopher Bailey, who

realigned the brand with its core values. A painful period of restructuring, shutdowns and lay-offs followed. Out went the baseball caps and in came uniformity – every store would look the same, the company would concentrate on what it did best, the trench coat, and move forward with digital innovation, including the first live streaming of their fashion show in 2010.

Angela Ahrendts left to run Apple in 2014 and Christopher Bailey became CEO and continued to move the brand back up-market into the luxury, but affordable, range where it had originally enjoyed such success. At the time of writing, the share price has risen to £19.70, reflecting the resurgence of the brand.

Any successful brand, whether this be a regional provider of legal services to a national chain of restaurants, requires uniformity and understanding of core values which can often be lost unless a firm control is kept. So, whilst you may not be responsible for such a giant as Burberry, the lessons of over-exposure and control of the brand can be learnt. It takes years to create and define a brand, but it only takes minutes to destroy it...

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" US - MARITIME VOLUNTEER SERVICE & NORTHUMBERLAND FREEMASONS

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 two of Keith's passions in life – freemasonry and the Maritime Volunteer Service (MVS)

As well as being an active freemason, I am also a member of a nautical charity that operates regionally from Berwick to Hartlepool and provides invaluable support, both afloat and ashore at events such as the Tall Ship's Race in Sunderland. When the Freemasons of Northumberland donated £15,000 to the MVS, it was a great opportunity to publicise the good work of both organisations.

The Maritime Volunteer Service (MVS) has 25 active units around the coasts & estuaries of the United Kingdom. The organisation's aims are to help to keep the UK's maritime tradition alive by training and delivering practical seamanship and engineering skills.

The Northumbria Unit of the MVS received its new rigid inflatable boat aptly called "Northumberland Freemason" at the NE1 Pontoon on Newcastle's Quayside after a £15,000 donation to the MVS from the Freemasons of Northumberland. A delegation of freemasons came to watch the naming ceremony which included the Provincial Grand Master of Northumberland, Ian Craigs, christening the vessel with an appropriate bottle of Newcastle Brown Ale right in sight of the iconic Tyne Bridge.



The story has appeared in local newspapers, extensively online and will be featured later in the summer in a number of national magazines about boating as well as publications specifically for freemasons. The story swamped local social media and has raised the profile of both organisations.

MVS Head of Unit, Volunteer Officer Angela Carrington said, "This is a very generous gift to our charity from the freemasons that will benefit our members and the community too. We will be using the boat on all of the region's rivers so she will be a common sight from the Tweed to the Tees. She's a very manoeuvrable craft making her ideal

to train people in seamanship and boat handling skills. In turn, we will pass on these skills to help at community events all across the region. We are very grateful and will sail her with pride."

Provincial Grand Master of Northumberland Freemasons, Ian Craigs said: "All of our trustees agreed that this was a very worthwhile cause to donate to as the vessel is being used on the region's waterways doing sterling community work. We are proud to be associated with MVS Northumbria and look forward to hearing more about "Northumberland Freemason's" good work as time progresses."

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L-R: Robert Simmons, Co Founder, Eric Guo, Founder and Zoe Maylam, Head of Business Relations

REVOLUTIONISING HOSPITALITY IN THE REGION

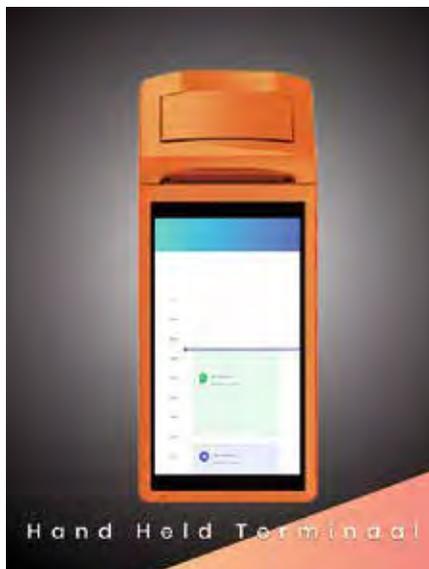
It's just over a year since the team at StreetAway launched their first product in BETA stage - the StreetAway lifestyle app - already a success and growing in popularity amongst both advertisers and users.

Now the innovative Newcastle-based company are set to shake-up the local hospitality sector with the introduction of a cutting-edge, fully integrated EPOS system that will transform the way venues currently operate.

The new hardware and software, due to launch in Autumn 2018 with pre-orders available soon (www.info.streetaway.co.uk/business), will offer northeast hospitality venues one seamless solution, replacing POS, CRM, social and sales applications, as well as linking to other existing applications and the StreetAway app - creating one multifunctional ecosystem.

Eric Guo, Founder of StreetAway, explains, "Many hospitality venues presently rely on a multitude of operations and marketing systems to aid with sales, bookings, customer communications, staff and stock management. Our technology will combine these various systems into one solution, effectively streamlining processes, driving efficiencies and cost savings, as well as vastly improving in-house and customer communications. Venue managers will see a plethora of benefits; many manual operations will be automated, our real-time reports will enable more confident management decisions, the business will become increasingly data-driven, and they will gain much greater control. Plus, if the business is quiet, they can easily introduce and manage a promotion to attract new customers via the StreetAway app."

As well as transforming the way venues are



managed, the new system will provide users with significant savings and earning potential. Robert Simmons, Co-Founder, explains: "Venues will no longer need to pay the heavy installation, maintenance and operational costs of hardware, software and a multitude of systems. Instead, they can opt for just one that is simplified, user-friendly, and even better, can create a new income stream. Our dynamic platform with its integrated marketing tools, including email, push notifications and SMS services, will create new channels and

opportunities and measurable new business. Using fuzzy logic and smart algorithms the system will be able to make smart suggestions ranging from things like which promotions to use to which stock needs reordering. These prompts will allow businesses to operate with much greater precision, confidence and to ultimately grow. Additionally, our StreetAway app users will be able to scan live promotional offers, select, book and communicate instantly with the venue - enhancing the customer experience - which is continuously evolving thanks to involvement from the local business community."

Zoe Maylam, Head of Business Relations, comments; "We aim to revolutionise the hospitality sector. We do that in two ways; by providing highly innovative technical solutions and by working collaboratively with local businesses. Working closely with our business partners and hospitality clients means we develop products that best meet their needs, provide networking opportunities and new ways of working. Our events are popular too; Our coffee mornings create a real buzz and link-up budding entrepreneurs and well-established north east brands, and we're inviting select businesses to our Golden Ticket event at Motel One on the 6th August to meet and share in a creative and enjoyable experience (email goldenticket@streetaway.co.uk). We have amazing support from the business community, and we're passionate about supporting the North East."

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WE'RE ALL SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERTS, RIGHT? WRONG!

Why is it then that some businesses still allow staff with little business social media, PR or communications experience to manage their brand's social media platforms?

If you want to drive footfall and increase your bottom line, read on...

Hands up who owns a saucepan that's been used to rustle up a few culinary delights? Many of us, right?

However, just because we know how to use a saucepan, does that make us Michelin star chefs? Of course it doesn't.

The majority of people now use social media personally, but this doesn't make you an expert in the social media field in the same way that owning a saucepan doesn't make you a professional chef. Brand social media is completely different.

Let me explain further. If we go back 20 years, professional video production was a craft that was performed by those who had undergone years of training, with a good level of experience and knowledge on the craft. There was immense skill and years of honing one's craft involved in creating truly compelling, engaging and technically sound video, for example perfectly lighting a scene to most effectively illuminate its subject, in recording crystal clear, high quality audio, and in crisp, sharp editing to set the tone of the video and achieve its primary objective.

These tasks used to require years of training and experience to master.

As technology costs dropped and the quality of this technology rose, more and more people started to create videos. The result of this was lower cost, but lower quality videos that did not effectively communicate the company's message and in some cases were in fact detrimental to the brand through their lack of quality. So the main lesson that many businesses have had to learn the hard way, is that "you get what you pay for" and if you're looking for results, it's always best to opt for an expert.

Even though social media has been an integral part



of most of lives for years, many businesses today still haven't fully grasped the importance of social media to their business. Many businesses appoint an inexperienced member of staff, who in their eyes might be the most technically savvy, rather than hiring an expert who can deliver the results all businesses crave; footfall and growing the bottom line. During consultations, I have asked business owners if they would ever hire an unqualified electrician or an unqualified accountant. This is usually when the penny drops.

Social media is an immensely powerful tool that needs to be utilised professionally and consistently as part of an integrated marketing and PR strategy across all platforms. Having a marketing strategy for you business, of which social media is just one of several areas of attack, is critical to achieving long term, consistent results. This strategy should also incorporate PR as a means of building your brand and spreading your message to a new and wider audience. Remember, your online voice is your reputation 24/7.

The key to such a plan is to identify the goal of your communications, to have a clear understanding of your product and what makes you unique. From a social media perspective, this is reflected in the

tone of voice you use, the types of content that should be used, the specific platforms that best support your unique goal and your brand message, along with the frequency of your posts and the targeting of your social media adverts. Wording and images are also paramount in communicating your message and if executed correctly, can engage your target audience with your brand

Business owners should also understand that brand social media marketing does not follow the theory of, "If you build it, they will come." In other words, just because you're posting to Facebook or Twitter, does not mean followers will flock to your business platforms. You have to develop a compelling strategy to tell your unique story, attract followers and grow your online audience, as well.

Developing and implementing these social marketing plans require trained and experienced professionals to ensure success, just as a set of detailed blueprints require an experienced architect to follow them in order to build a home.

Social media is a tool that is used to carry out your marketing plans and give a voice to your brand. Like a saucepan, anyone can use one, but trust me, you'll want to hire an expert to see the best results.

Catherine Harland is Media & Communications Director of DigiPro Media, an integrated digital agency specialising in PR, web design, branding, marketing and social media management. For more information or to get in touch, visit digipromedia.co.uk or call 0191 6030091.

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MEDIWORKS GOLF DAY

On the 29th of June, Mediaworks hosted their annual golf day at Close House. This year the theme was 'The World Cup'. Guests were split into two teams 'England' VS 'The Rest of The World'. In true Mediaworks fashion this was no ordinary game of golf, with additional challenges on the course such as 'foot pong', a penalty shoot-out with NUFC's Monty the Magpie and mini football skills timed challenge - guests were certainly entertained throughout the day.

Over £2,000 was raised on the day, which was donated to the Newcastle United Foundation who make a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged children, young people and families in our region.





ITPS BUILDS NEW DATA HALL TO MEET CUSTOMER DEMAND

IT Professional Services (ITPS) is expanding its data centre in County Durham as part of a new phase of growth, thanks to a £3 million financial package from HSBC.

Experts in information and communication technologies, ITPS will use the funding to meet increasing national and international customer demand by adding a second data hall to its existing, industry-leading modular data centre facility.

The new data hall, in ITPS' high security, ISO27001-certified data centre, will include over 3,000 square feet of fully-serviced rack space, and sit alongside its onsite dedicated workspace recovery centre.

The expansion is expected to generate new jobs across the company, from engineering to administration roles.

ITPS Finance Director, Michael Jopling said: "Building the new data hall underpins our second stage of ambitious growth, and we could not have done this without the great support we've received from HSBC. It means we will be able to create new jobs in the North East, and ensure we are competitive for both national and international clients."

Tony Leech, Area Director for HSBC North East, added: "ITPS is a 21st century company looking to meet the exciting opportunities in a quickly evolving industry, and we are very excited to be a



part of this next step of its evolution."

Local accountancy firm, Tait Walker, worked on improving ITPS' information management ahead of its deal with HSBC. Graham Dotchin, Associate at Tait Walker, commented: "It has been fantastic helping ITPS shape its significant volumes of data into manageable insights. We are sure

this investment will allow them to continue its impressive growth story."

Founded in 2000, ITPS provides a full range of strategic IT consultancy, implementation, data centre services and unified communications, as well as support services and workspace and disaster recovery.

NEWCASTLE-BASED RECRUITMENT AGENCY LAUNCHES NEW TECH BRAND



The award-winning technology recruitment agency, Frank Recruitment Group has announced the launch of its newest brand, Jefferson Frank. The company's ninth brand is dedicated exclusively to recruitment across the Amazon Web Services (AWS) industry.

Jefferson Frank will help better meet the ever-growing demand for skilled AWS and cloud technology professionals, serving clients across the US, UK, and Asia-Pacific markets. The launch of Jefferson Frank follows a marked increase in the demand for AWS talent globally.

"AWS is an emerging technology with incredible business potential," said James Lloyd-Townshend, CEO at Frank Recruitment Group. "Amazon Cloud has recorded more than 1 million active users per month, and with no less than 90% of businesses migrating to the cloud, it comes as no surprise that we've seen such a boom in demand for skilled cloud professionals across the AWS ecosystem. To meet this demand, we've launched Jefferson Frank, whose remit is to focus solely on AWS recruitment."

HOWELL TECHNOLOGY GROUP RECEIVES VIRTUALISATION SPECIALIST DESIGNATION

Leading IT Consultancy, Howell Technology Group is the first Citrix Solution Advisor to become a Citrix Virtualisation Specialist in the North East of England.

South Tyneside-based Howell Technology Group (HTG) has received the Citrix Virtualisation Specialist designation, joining only thirteen companies in the UK who hold this status.

Citrix Specialized Partners can deliver faster time to value; offer verified expert guidance and new technologies; resell Citrix solutions; and provide consulting, design and implementation

assistance, as well as maintenance.

Partners who achieve a specialist designation have been rigorously vetted to join an elite group of companies with demonstrated success and the highest level of experience and expertise in Citrix solutions and services.

Established in 2005, HTG is a customer-focused boutique IT consultancy that offers a range of disruptive digital technology solutions utilising best in breed products. This encompasses workspaces, application containers, cloud solutions, virtualisation, networking, IT security and professional services.



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What Downtime Could Really Cost Your Business

We are all accustomed to having systems and data at our fingertips, 24/7. But when that situation changes, it's not just an inconvenience, it can also cost your business thousands of pounds.

Business interruptions come in many forms, ranging from floods and fires to cyber attacks and even simple human error.

IT'S NOT A CASE OF IF AN INCIDENT WILL HAPPEN, BUT WHEN.

We've **helped hundreds** of clients to measure the true cost of downtime. Every one of them was surprised at the results, and we think you will be too.



Get in touch to request our 'cost of downtime' calculator to help you assess the level of risk facing your organisation, and find out how we can help you to mitigate it.

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WHAT DOWNTIME COULD REALLY COST YOUR BUSINESS



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Business interruptions come in many forms, ranging from floods and fires to cyber attacks and even simple human error. It is not a case of if an incident will happen, but when.

Using our easy to use 'cost of downtime' calculator, we have helped hundreds of clients to measure the financial impact of a potential disaster. Every single one of them was surprised to find out how much downtime would really cost them.

These are our six tips for examining potential downtime costs.

Define what downtime means to you: is it a complete loss of all systems, or just business critical applications, or email going slow? All disasters are different, and bespoke to the business.

Consider the timing: if your payroll system fails in week one of the month, it can be less disastrous than if it happens in week four.

Basic cost of downtime: even while cashflow is interrupted, costs still mount up. Divide your annual revenue by the number of available working hours per year, then add salary costs per working hour to give you a basic cost of hourly downtime.

If you are an ecommerce business operating 24/7 internationally, your costs might be higher than a traditional 9-5 operation.

Departmental cost: if you expand the basic cost and analyse by department or even by IT system, you can see a more detailed view. When you look at your departmental salary costs you need to add in total lost revenue because staff – costed at various levels of function and seniority – cannot do their jobs.

Systems cost: if your CRM fails for an hour your productivity might drop by 30%, while a telephony or mail server failure could see it drop by 40%. Factor in elements such as an inability to carry out monthly invoicing, and the joint impact could be far higher than 70%, depending on the timing and nature of the interruption.

Peripheral costs: don't forget to add in the cost of lost contracts, regulatory penalties, reputation and brand damage and even an impact on your share price. They might be difficult to forecast, but those costs are nonetheless very real.

The cost of downtime is likely to be a shock but

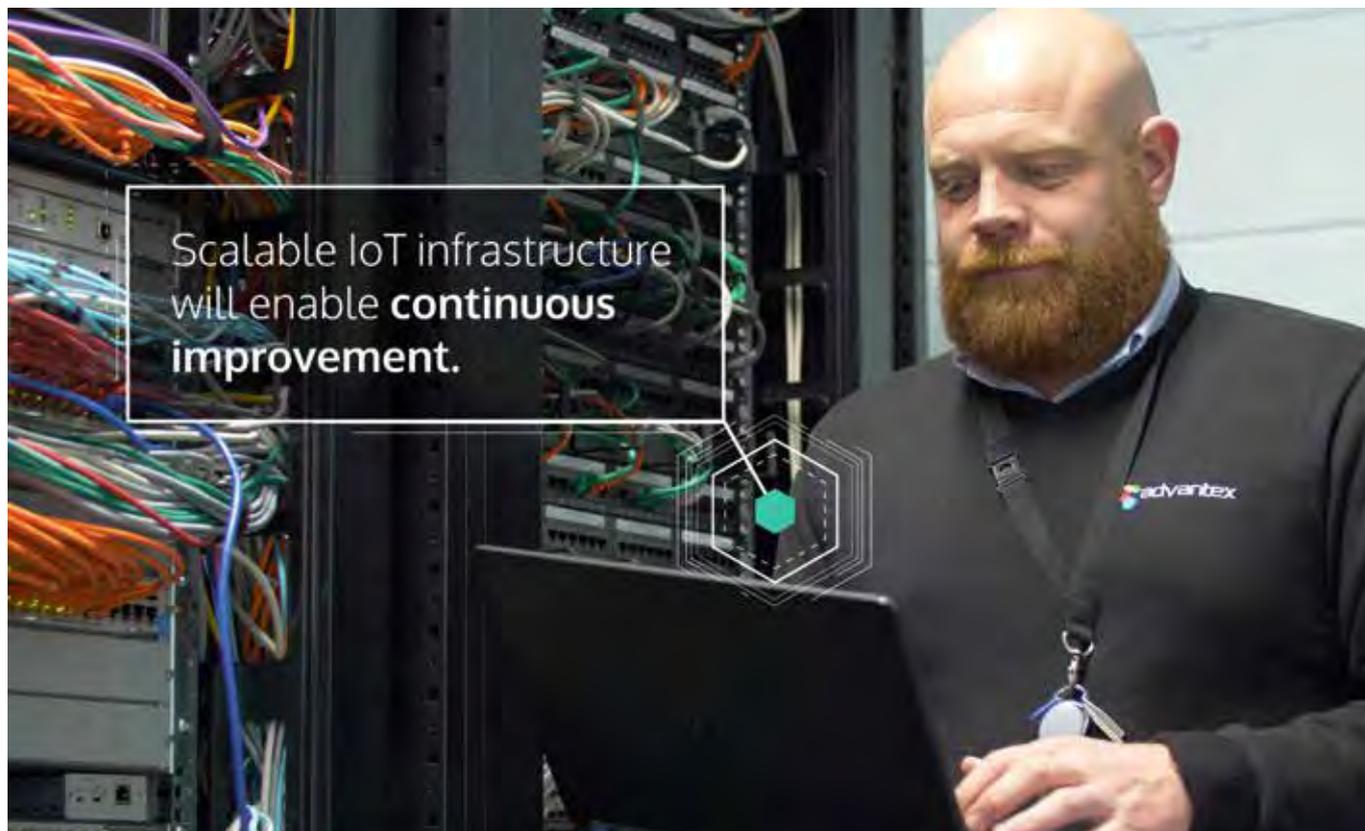
the last thing you should do is bury your head in the sand and hope it doesn't happen to you. Disaster can strike at any time, and a business continuity and disaster recovery plan is a business essential. When you have one in place, make sure you regularly test it. Anecdotal evidence shows that over 60% of organisations test their disaster recovery plans less than once a year – and some never test them at all.

For our global cargo and aircraft ground handling client, every minute of downtime would cost them over £7,500. Working with best of breed IT tools we have helped them slash their recovery time from days to minutes. Much of that change involved strengthening the business continuity plan, and regularly testing and revising it.

The question you are probably asking yourself now is how long your business could last without systems and data, and how much that is worth to you.

Get in touch to request our 'cost of downtime' calculator to help you assess the level of risk facing your organisation, and find out how we can help you to mitigate it.

For more information call 0191 442 8300, email contact@itps.co.uk or visit www.itps.co.uk



INTERNET OF THINGS: HAVE YOU GOT IT?

Evidence points to a strong awareness of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and the Internet of Things (IoT) among North East manufacturers, says Steve O’Connell, sales director at Advantex, who considers the best way for organisations to embrace new technology.

The internet is transforming the way we live, fuelling economic growth, driving innovation, and creating the platforms for the manufacturing and production facilities of the future. These so called ‘smart factories’, interconnected by super-fast, secure global digital highways, are powered by cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things, cloud technologies and advanced computers. Greater coordination and the real-time flow of information across supply chains and relationships, smarter production and smarter products are the living, breathing manifestation of all this advancement.

But are manufacturers really ready for tomorrow’s world? And how should they get to grips with these revolutionary times, where the IoT will continue to become more omnipotent?

There’s no panacea but experience shows that one approach would be to adopt a small project within a factory, where the results can be measured and assessed properly for demonstrable results. For example, this might be to implement something around conveyor sensing, access control, surveillance, or thermal sensors used to monitor temperature for predictive maintenance purposes. You can then scale-up once the results are in and the bottom line benefits identified.

IoT data from smart operations is raising the bar for manufacturing companies, driving seamless

record keeping and traceability. But the capture and analysis of data is, in turn, facilitating requirements for faster, more secure record archiving and search capabilities. But this too has ramifications, from government regulatory compliance through to customer satisfaction to GDPR requirements.

Furthermore, because the 4IR intensifies the reliance of networks on each other, there is a need for information sharing. Concerns around commercial confidentiality and security increase the challenge of developing protocols for information sharing that would help customers and other stakeholders to understand the risks to them. Not only infrastructure providers, but also businesses need to understand the risks and the requirement for resilience.

In short, the capture of new data, and where to store places, focuses the spotlight on reliable, solid infrastructures that support IoT and 4IR.

Of course, manufacturing is a tantalising target for crafty cyber criminals and hackers, bent on stealing valuable data, or disrupting the ebb and flow of commercial life. A survey by the EFF, the manufacturers organisation, has revealed that 48% of manufacturers have at some time been the victim of a cyber security incident. Doubtless, there are many more attacks that will have gone undetected.

Minimising the cyber threat requires a robust infrastructure, spanning LAN, WAN, fibre optics and wireless technology. At Advantex, we have some of the foremost experience in this area, developing and installing advanced network architecture, which is the backbone for dozens of businesses – and the gateway to the 4IR.

Adopting the latest in cybersecurity for your network is recommended as our world becomes ever more interconnected. Remember, each device can provide a tempting entry point for a hacker to breach or compromise your hardware and software systems. Investing now in expert knowledge and the technologies will keep you safe and secure.

Manufacturing is one area of UK business embracing the 4IR and IoT to improve productivity, performance and profits. Although Advantex has the expertise and experience in the sector – Unipres and Hitachi are among many manufacturers who use our solutions – we are also working with clients across a whole host of other sectors to support their growth ambitions.

With our breadth of service, ISO9001/2000 certification and high calibre engineering team, partnering with us will build resilient and scalable connectivity for your business and deliver peace-of-mind.

More at www.advantex.uk.com



SYNERGI RACE DAY
Team Synergi enjoying a glorious and colourful day with clients and friends.
We thank you for your ongoing support.





SYNERGI SHOWCASE MODERN DIGITAL WORKPLACE

In the fast-paced, ever-changing world of technology, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of so called 'solutions' presented. There has never been a one-size fits all 'solution' however as the emergence of modern cloud solutions begin to dominate over yester year on-premise platforms, it is important to find a partner that can demonstrate how to integrate and maximise the functionality available from the new modern tools on offer.

"As the market changes and is disrupted by new platforms, Synergi has also needed to evolve," Peter Joynson, Managing Director at Synergi explained, "We are continually evolving in line with how Microsoft are shaping the new modern partner landscape. When Justin and I launched the business, nearly 5 years ago, we had a very clear vision to focus on educating and helping clients successfully migrate to products like Office 365; the pace of uptake and the development of other complimentary tools has not surprised us, nearly all businesses we speak to have either already moved some of their platforms or are planning to do so in the very near future. The cloud marketplace is maturing quickly, so we have re aligned and created three focused business pillars to ensure our teams continue to be leading specialists in their practise areas, this will allow them to continue to gain the skills required, whilst ensuring they work seamlessly together to personalise solutions to fit the individual needs of an organisation".

Synergi's new 3 pillar practise approach focuses on core Office 365 and Security, the recently launched Dynamics 365 Business Central for ERP and CRM capabilities, and Nintex for process automation and insight.

The popularity of Office 365 as a core cloud foundation is undeniable. Now with over 30.6 million subscribers, Microsoft quoted an Office 365 commercial revenue growth of 42% at their recent Inspire event in July. That being said, having modern software and utilising software productively are often very different things. Many organisations still only utilise the very basic features such as Outlook elements within Office 365 and consequently miss out on a whole suite of productivity and communication tools available to them.

Peter continued "Businesses need Office 365, it is a solution that is accessible to any size or industry. However, we come across many Office 365 users that just don't utilise the full potential of the platform, we love working with new clients, helping them to fully adopt and improve user and business efficiency; many have just not been introduced to functions like Groups and Teams, Modern Intranet sites, Skype or Business intelligence. These are some of the skills that differentiate us from others".

Whilst Synergi are also well positioned and ready to help their regional clients who may wish to move their ageing accounting systems to Dynamics 365, it is their third pillar –Nintex process automation- for which they are being increasingly recognised, not just regionally but on a national stage. Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) software is

a core offering, it's really an extension to Office 365, automating the once manual processing of information.

When it comes to IPA, the leading software is created by Nintex, providing features including low-code workflow automation and document generation, Nintex eliminates the need for laborious re-keying of information replacing out-dated paper forms and spreadsheets with digital forms that can automatically input data into Office 365 and other cloud technologies.

"Synergi are now a leading national IPA player," added Synergi's Technical Director and Nintex Technical Evangelist, Justin Short. "We run workshops and seminars throughout the UK in which we showcase the capabilities of IPA and the huge productivity and efficiency benefits organisations can gain through the use of this software."

He continued. "When we talk to firms, we often find that whilst they feel they are generally well organised, many are still inefficient when it comes to their 'back-office processes and could save time, effort and money by introducing IPA into all lines of business".

Intelligent Process Automation is at the core of Synergi as a business. Their ability to provide these automation solutions to a high standard has won them major contracts with many clients across the region and the UK, now with a client base in excess of 150 clients, including Irish Life, Repsol and Drager. They have recently added resource in London, expanding their reach from their Gateshead head office and Glasgow territories. It is therefore little wonder that they have recently received a Nintex Partner Award, for the third year running.

Synergi's growth is not just shown through their client base, but also through their staff; they have recently doubled their office space in Gateshead and are continuing to recruit new members to the team. The business has also recently named an Academy Manager whose role will include overseeing the development of a graduate training scheme.

Despite their steady growth, Synergi's ethos is unwavering, delivering Digital Transformation is at its heart. They aim to build strong relationships with their clients and to be a strategic and trusted partner, whilst providing a great fun place to work and grow a career.

Moving forward, they have no doubt that all three practise pillars will continue to grow and evolve, with Artificial Intelligence increasing its influence and robotics moving steadily onto the scene. Synergi hope to use these new developments to help businesses further increase their productivity and efficiency in the not too distant future.

To find out more about how Synergi can help craft a solution to suit your needs, contact them today or check out their upcoming events. Synergi can be reached on 0191 4770365 or enquires@synergi.it



IN THE SUMMERTIME

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster at Durham School



Summer time is traditionally a quiet time for education. Schools are on holiday, with pupils and teachers enjoying a well earned rest. However, for universities, there is growing activity as they build towards A Level results day.

Behind the scenes, a phenomenal amount of administrators, managers and indeed academics are involved in laying the groundwork for the feverish few days that lie in wait. University admissions processes are becoming more and more frenetic as the years progress. The climate has changed hugely in the last few years; not very long ago, universities at least issued their offers and waited to see if candidates made them. If they did, they were in; if they didn't,

they were placed into the maelstrom of clearing or forced to take a gap year and possibly even resit their A Levels. Nowadays, the boot is very much on the other foot, with the expansion of universities and the removal of the funding cap on places meaning that universities are competing more and more with each other to fill more and more places.

This expansion is not without controversy. Indeed, it has been a very difficult year for universities, constantly in the news for the size of Vice Chancellor salaries, a more businesslike approach to education and allegations of dumbing down as record numbers of first class degrees are awarded.

It is hard not to be cynical. As with schools, increased numbers of students means increased income for universities to spend. Top class facilities, state-of-the-art sport centres, award-winning architectural extravaganzas are being seen with increasing frequency in our most prestigious institutions. The inevitable question arises: is it possible to expand university places so significantly without a concurrent lowering of academic standards?

Many Universities will refute the latter claim. They will point to the number of people they reject who nonetheless have the grades to access the course. They will also, quite rightly, point out that interest and applications from international students is growing every year. An education at a British university is one which is sought-after throughout the world and therefore it is possible to increase significantly student intake without diluting the ability profile of the students.

No doubt this is true. However, the expansion of UK

universities has posed teachers and pupils in school with an interesting ethical dilemma. Almost uniquely throughout the world, undergraduate admissions to UK universities are based on predicted grades rather than achieved grades for most youngsters. Teachers are required to make informed "best guesses" of what pupils will achieve at A Level and conditional offers are issued on the basis of those. So far, so reasonable.

In recent years, however, the dynamic has changed. Put yourself in the place of an A-level physics teacher. One of your pupils wants to study a science degree at a good Russell group University; she has been desperate to read this subject since a work experience project two years ago. The University specifies ABB as the entry requirement; your pupil is a solid, hardworking C grade candidate who, on the evidence from a year of A Level study, is unlikely to get a B. However, you remember that last year a similar student got a place at the same university to read the same course with BBC. On results day, the University dropped its requirements and took him. What is the ethical thing to do? Hold fast to the likely grade or bump the prediction so the pupil's application at least will be processed?

Small wonder that, given this scenario, predicted grades issued by schools are being criticised for being unreliable. Teachers and schools want to do right by their pupils, but it takes honesty on both sides of the university application process for the system to work. Increased access to university is no doubt a good thing, but a grown-up and civilised debate needs to happen if universities aren't going to be seen as saying one thing whilst doing another.

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 731 9270, email admissions@durhamschool.co.uk or visit www.durhamschool.co.uk

LESSONS FROM THE SADDLE - WHAT I LEARNED FROM 24 HOURS ON MY BIKE

By David Tickner, Headmaster at Newcastle School for Boys.

About eighteen months ago, I signed up a hilly 65-mile charity cycle event linked to the 2017 Tour de Yorkshire. I retrieved my road bike from the garage, joined my local club, North Tyneside Riders, started training and became hooked.

Fast forward twelve months and a few thousand miles of riding. Add a little alcohol (lesson one), some peer pressure and I found myself agreeing to join a club group attempting to cycle over 300 miles in a single ride (with food and rest breaks) from London to Newcastle.

Besides the obvious health and fitness benefits and the discovery of the undulating Northumberland countryside, cycling also affords me thinking time. To occupy my mind during the 21 hours in the saddle that it took to complete the journey north, I started to think about what I could learn from the experience:

Failure – the ride caused me to examine my relationship with failure and to acknowledge how fear of failure can hold us back. Having signed up for the ride, I was very hesitant in telling others. This wasn't modesty but insecurity. What if I told people what I was attempting but didn't achieve it? I was worried what they would think. They would see me as a failure. I felt uncomfortable about that.

Yet, challenge and courage are particular virtues that



we promote in our boys at Newcastle School for Boys. Without the prospect of failure, real challenge and the opportunities it brings for learning are inhibited. Without fear, there is no courage. So what if I failed? Fear of failure wasn't a reason to pull out although it crossed my mind seriously on a number of occasions before and during the ride.

Self-esteem – I trained as hard as school and family commitments would allow but I knew I was not as strong or as experienced as the majority of my fellow riders undertaking this challenge. This added to my anxiety about failure. What if I couldn't keep up? What if I held the group back? Or compromised their opportunity to enjoy the challenge and complete the ride?

Relating this to my work as a teacher, it made me think about the stress placed on those children who struggle in a particular class or subject. The thought that 'I might not be able to do this' was stressful. The feeling that 'compared to the others I might not be good enough' consumed quite a lot of my mental energy in a negative way. I now understand better pupils who worry they 'can't do' something that they perceive the rest of the class can.

Teamwork and leadership – I have discovered since joining North Tyneside Riders that riding in a group, it is possible to cycle more safely, faster, further and for longer than you can on your own. The more the group is able to work together; the better everybody's performance. The stronger the communication and understanding, the more individual and group performance is enhanced. The application of this goes beyond just a better understanding when watching Tour de France highlights on television. I was only able to achieve this ride because the stronger riders did more than their share of the really hard work on the front of the group.

My next challenge? Applying those lessons learnt and a coast to coast ride in a single day. A mere 128 miles this time but with nearly 12,000 feet of climbing.

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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KUMON MATHS AND ENGLISH PROGRAMMES

Established for 60 years, Kumon is the world's largest supplementary education provider, with more than 4.3 million students in 50 countries. The Kumon Jesmond Study Centre is part of this worldwide organisation and provides individualised maths and English programmes to children of all ages and abilities.



Natalie Taylor is the Instructor at the Jesmond Study Centre, working with a fantastic team of dedicated and motivated assistants. Natalie told us, "The Jesmond Study Centre is run from dedicated commercial premises within walking distance of many local schools. Our close proximity to the central motorway and public transport links means we also have students travelling to us from Northumberland, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. We are Ofsted registered, so parents can use childcare vouchers and be assured that we follow the highest standards of child-safeguarding."

When asked about the benefits of Kumon study Natalie said, "Kumon is a unique method of study. Rather than teaching in the conventional sense the Kumon programmes develop study skills in every child that last a lifetime. Focusing on the vital subjects of maths and English, we help children develop their self-learning skills. If children are equipped with the ability to learn for themselves they are never dependent on - or limited by - the skills and knowledge of others, and can truly achieve their full potential."

"We see many children starting Kumon because they are struggling in school. An initial assessment reveals exactly where each child is currently, not only in their academic ability but also their ability to focus and concentrate on their work."

"All children start the programmes at the level where they are able to work confidently and with focus. We call it their 'just right level'. At this level children are able to succeed from day one. Children will always work at a level that is just right for them, allowing them to develop concentration and focus. Gradually, as the work becomes more challenging, children develop a willingness to persevere and the self-belief that what they couldn't do last week they will - with appropriate support and practice - be able to do next week. Typically this helps Kumon students to pay attention at school and be more willing to respond in class."

"At the moment there is a lot of interest within education sector about developing a 'Growth Mindset' in children, so that they are able to persevere and develop a 'have a go' attitude. Kumon has successfully been developing this attitude in its students for over 60 years."

"Having developed this growth mindset, many of our children are studying several years above their school level; as the programmes encourage the pursuit of potential in each individual child."

The Jesmond Study Centre offers classes five days a week, including Saturdays. Children are encouraged to attend two classes a week and they receive individualised work to complete at home on the other five days. As each child is working on their own individual development plan, attendance at class is on a 'drop-in' basis for about 30 minutes per subject during class opening times.

Current students are aged from two to 16 years old and more than one third are studying at an advanced level for their school age.

Natalie and her team look forward to welcoming you and your family to the Kumon Jesmond Study Centre.

BOOST YOUR CHILD'S CONFIDENCE

Kumon's Maths and English Study Programmes work to build your child's confidence and inspire a passion for learning.

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Jesmond Study Centre **0191 261 2944**

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Terms and conditions apply. Fees vary. Please refer to your local study centre.

The Kumon Jesmond Study Centre is located at 156 Sandyford Road, NE2 1XG. For more information or to book a free assessment, you can contact Natalie Taylor on 0191 261 2944 or email jesmond@kumoncentre.co.uk Class times and fees can be found on the website: www.kumon.co.uk/jesmond

Here, children are encouraged to dream. To have an ambition to reach for the stars. To us, every student is a son, a daughter. And to your child, every teacher becomes a parent, a guide, a mentor who gently steers them towards a fruitful future.

Visit us to know more about this 134-year old institution, a family-run independent school, with a heritage in building generations.

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*Every child is born
with ambition.*



FORD TRANSIT UNDERGOES TRANSFORMATION INTO MOTORHOME



(l-r) Craig Lofthouse, foreman at Nesmo Truck Bodies and Alan Bailes, group commercial manager, with the converted Ford Transit.

Jennings Ford Transit Centre, part of Jennings Motor Group, has expanded its business, by offering customers the option to convert their new or used commercial vehicles into bespoke mobile motor homes.

Currently on sale at the company's Cargo Fleet Lane dealership in Middlesbrough, is a Ford Transit Custom 290 L1 H1 170 PS 6 Speed Colour Edition, which has recently undergone a complete conversion by Stockton-based Nesmo Truck Bodies, also part of Jennings Motor Group. Finished in Shadow Black with contrasting Red 'Pop Top' roof, incorporating a double bed, the converted model, which also offers Gloss Black Alloy Wheels, and a sports trim exterior with decals, colour coded Red mirrors and a front spoiler, is on display and available to test drive at the Middlesbrough-based dealership.

Commenting on the new conversion concept facility, group commercial manager, Alan Bailes, said; "This is an exciting and innovative service we are offering customers who are looking for a high quality and competitively-priced motorhome –

with the Ford Transit being the ideal model for a conversion."

Fully fitted with privacy glass, insulated sides and a two-tone fitted carpet, the four berth model offers a Leatherette Rib Seat Bed, which has been crash tested in order to ensure the safe travel of up to two passengers, in addition to offering two single front seats set on swivel bases. Other features include a removable table, a 230V hook-up power supply, leisure battery, interior touch on/off LED lights, double gas hob, 12V/230V fridge, sink, Diesel powered interior heating, Driftwood interior units with a black work surface, Tambour doors to units, LED Side Door floor entrance light, USB ports, and a Power Inverter.

Those considering taking advantage of this new concept on offer at Jennings Ford Transit Centre, have plenty of options to choose from. Everything

from a basic conversion, which adds windows and an insulated carpeted interior, to full bespoke conversions are available.

Customers are expected to wait up to four weeks from the point of order through to the final conversion – depending on stock supply - for their fully converted Ford Transit motorhome.

Craig Lofthouse, foreman at Nesmo Truck Bodies, which provides commercial vehicle body building and repairs to the commercial vehicle industry, utility suppliers and local authorities, was responsible for overseeing the project, he said; "We pride ourselves on providing high quality workmanship, this coupled with an experienced and highly skilled team and our second to none customer service, enabled us to complete the conversion to the highest standard, and within the allocated project timescale."

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Ford Transit Centre, contact 01642 209100, or visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk

For more information about Nesmo Truck Bodies, contact 01642 766161, or visit www.nesmo.co.uk

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Ford Lease Contract Hire is available to Business Users only, subject to status. Guarantees/indemnities may be required. Rentals shown based on a 6-0-35 non-maintained agreement (6 initial rentals up front followed by 35 rentals +VAT) with a mileage of 10,000 per annum. Subject to availability. Rentals must be made monthly. Prices exclude VAT. When the vehicle is returned it must be in good condition and not have exceeded the agreed mileage, otherwise further charges will be incurred. Prices are correct at the time of going to print and are subject to change without further notice. Terms and conditions apply. Ford Business Contract Hire is provided by ALD Automotive Limited, Oakwood Drive, Emersons Green, Bristol BS16 7LB. Cars not necessarily as illustrated. Certain categories of business users may be excluded. Offers end 30th September 2018. E&OE.

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES ARE READY TO RETURN



The Bootleg Beatles have announced their 2018-19 tour of the UK starting this December, which will feature a special segment marking the 50th anniversary of the iconic White Album. The band, along with their renowned string and brass ensemble, will visit 17 cities.

As ever, the band will perform favourites from the whole Beatles' catalogue but will also bring a special focus onto some key tracks from the White Album, playing many of them for the very first time. As well as some of the best-known classics, the band will also be taking on more obscure tracks

in an attempt to bring to life the breadth and depth of this incredible LP.

The White Album is in many ways a counterpoint to Sgt. Pepper, which The Bootleg Beatles toured to huge acclaim last year with the 80 piece Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The White Album was created with a sparser sonic palette that saw song arrangements significantly stripped back and also saw the band working independently of each other in their own creative niches.

Formed from the original cast of London's West

End hit show Beatlemania, The Bootleg Beatles have become an institution in their own right with their note-perfect recreation of hits from every era of the world's most famous songbook.

Since their inception in 1980 the band have performed hundreds of gigs across the globe, earning themselves an amazing reputation along the way. Every tiny detail is meticulously covered from costumes to authentic period instruments. But it's not only their sound that is so authentic as they also bear an uncanny resemblance to the fab four.

BLOCKBUSTER NEW SEASON ANNOUNCED AT THEATRE ROYAL



Turbulence in 19th century France, star crossed lovers and super athletic male swans – Newcastle Theatre Royal has it all in its Autumn '18 / Spring '19 season.

Top of everyone's list is likely to be the behemoth extravaganza *Les Misérables* (15 Aug - 5 Oct '19). The musical will visit Theatre Royal for the very first time ever in a mammoth eight week run.

Theatre Royal is also welcoming back the Royal Shakespeare Company who are bringing their gorgeous new adaptation of Shakespeare's epic love story *Romeo and Juliet* (5 - 9 Feb '19). Exploding onto the stage with a stellar cast, this age-old tale of passion, family loyalty and intense blood rivalry in 15th century Verona is re-imagined to sensational effect.

Later in the year comes another adaptation with *The Girl on the Train* (29 Apr – 4 May '19). Adapted from Paula Hawkins' novel, this gripping new play will keep audiences guessing until the final moment.

Matthew Bourne's epic *Swan Lake* is also back for a two-week run (7-18 May '19). An exciting 21st century re-imagining of the classic production with its iconic menacing male ensemble, this multi-award-winning show remains as thrilling, audacious and witty as ever.

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PAPERBOY DELIVERS YOUNG ACTING TALENT

Three talented young people from the North East have been selected from thousands of hopefuls to play parts in two major new theatrical performances set to premiere this month.

The three friends, Callum Saddler (13), Brooke Armstrong (12) and Kate Storey (14), all auditioned with more than a thousand other young actors at the Youth Music Theatre UK's National Auditions for the chance to perform in a number of new performances all across the UK.

All three performers are students at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre Stage School where they gained valuable experience of dance and theatre to such a high standard that they all passed their auditions

with flying colours.

Kate will be appearing in Help! Get Me Out Of This Musical at South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell, where she will perform from 10 - 12 Aug. Callum and Brooke are heading to Belfast to take part in Paperboy, a new musical featuring the sounds of the Bay City Rollers.

Set in 1975, Paperboy tells the story of 12-year-old Tony who delivers newspapers in Belfast at the height of the troubles. The play has been adapted for musical stage, with music from platinum-selling Belfast artist Duke Special and writing by stand-up comedian Andrew Doyle.

RECORD OF THE MONTH – NOW THATS WHAT I CALL MUSIC 100

With August being a graveyard for new musical releases, this month we bring you something a little different. After the inaugural release in 1983, the iconic compilation hits triple figures and to celebrate, the makers of NOW! are shaking things up a little. The first half of the compilation is a regular rundown of the biggest hits of the last four months including Calvin Harris, Dua Lipa, Clean Bandit, George Ezra and more. The second CD includes 21 classics from previous compilations featuring Take That, Kylie Minogue, Spice Girls and Robbie Williams – who has interestingly featured in the series more than any other artist. Now that's what I call a must Summer buy.



WHAT'S ON THIS AUGUST?

The Wizard of Oz

August 1-4

Whitley Bay Playhouse T: (0844) 248 1588
www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk

The Addams Family

August 1-4

Gala Theatre Durham T: (03000) 266 600
www.galadurham.co.uk

Jersey Boys

August 1-11

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Crooners

August 2

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022
www.atgtickets.com

The Roy Orbison Story

August 3

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022
www.atgtickets.com

Orbital

August 11

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com

Stomp!

August 16-18

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

When The Boats Come In

August 16-25

The Custom's House T: (0191) 454 1234
www.customshouse.co.uk

The Neil Diamond Story

August 17

Whitley Bay Playhouse T: (0844) 248 1588
www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk

The League of Gentlemen

August 24-26

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022
www.atgtickets.com

Madagascar The Musical

August 28-September 1

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022
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A BEAUTIFUL DAY AND NIGHT AT BEAMISH PARK

By Michael Grahamslaw



With our wedding anniversary just around the corner, I thought it was about time to treat my wife Lisa to a luxurious night away, and Beamish Park Hotel provided the perfect place.

Situated in Marley Hill just one mile from Beamish Museum, the independent hotel boasts 42 chic bedrooms, a unique conference and banqueting suite and, much to my delight, a par 3 golf course overlooking the idyllic surrounds of County Durham. Catering for various events including weddings and christenings, the hotel accommodates for both leisure and business guests alike, so I was sure an enjoyable trip was in order.

After a warm and welcoming reception, we checked into our room. Met with a luxurious king-sized bed, traditional decor and a complementary tea/coffee tray, the room really did promote feelings of comfort and relaxation, whilst still exuding sophistication with a large plasma screen TV, radio and state-of-the-art sound system. What I was most delighted by however was the hotel's commitment to going above and beyond for its customers, as we were provided with wide patio doors which gave us the option to conveniently park right outside our room.

Not wanting to put the slippers on just yet, we swiftly dropped the bags and visited the hotel's attractive bar and lounge area where I unusually ditched the Guinness and instead opted to share a chilled bottle of rosé with Lisa. Taking advantage of

the recent heatwave, we supped our drinks on the hotel's stunning outdoor beer garden where we immersed ourselves in the picturesque views.

Feeling rather crispy after an afternoon's roasting, we decided to have a quick freshen up before heading down to the hotel's bistro for a much-needed nosh up. The venue immediately offered a light and airy feel with floor-to-ceiling windows, contemporary oak strip flooring and exquisite jazz-themed wall art. Feeling relaxed already, the friendly service continued to put us at ease throughout.

As a family-run establishment, one can really be assured of the hotel's personal investment in its customers. This is of course reflected in the bistro's offering as the hotel aims to provide high quality, varied produce in line with the changing seasons.

Feeling famished after the afternoon's refreshments, we were delighted by the arrival of the starters. As a self-professed chilli addict, I devoured fresh king prawns soaked in a tangy sweet chilli jam and pineapple salsa. Meanwhile, Lisa savoured classic prawn cocktail with a contemporary twist as she enjoyed the heavenly apple and Bloody Mary dressing which accompanied.

With much Asian-inspired cuisine on offer, I then

opted for the tempura sea bass, a scrumptious dish served with zingy Asian salad, crispy prawns and delectable black bean dressing. Conscious of her summer diet, the mains also appealed to Lisa as she tasted an exquisite blackened chicken, bacon and avocado salad. Coated in mouth-watering honey & harissa dressing, the dish was loaded with flavour. Despite feeling satisfied, we made sure to leave a little room to share a delicious cheeseboard, which was washed down with tasty coffees and liqueurs.

The following morning, with Lisa fast asleep, I attempted to burn some of the previous night's calories with an early round of golf. The hotel provides fantastic golf facilities with a driving range, short game area and 9-hole Par 3 golf course. Unfortunately though, the several glasses of pinot did not do much for the swing but at least the beautiful surroundings made up for it.

After a delicious cooked breakfast, we then left Beamish Park Hotel after a truly memorable and relaxing stay. Given that the hotel is only seven miles from the centre of Newcastle, the venue is easily accessible yet still offers a welcome escape from the humdrums of working life. All in all, a great place that we can't wait to return to.



Beamish Park Hotel can be found at Beamish Burn Road, Marley Hill, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE16 5EG. For more information visit their website www.beamish-park-hotel.co.uk or call 01207 230 666.



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STOBART RAIL & CIVILS NORTHUMBERLAND PLATE DAY SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018

On a glorious afternoon in High Gosforth Park, Newcastle Racecourse delivered another superb Plate Day, with exquisite fashion, fantastic entertainment and top class racing all on show.

The historic Plate race was won by Withhold (as pictured), defeating his 19 rivals in spectacular style, on the all-weather track.

The racecourse would like to extend a huge thank you to all hospitality guests, racegoers and sponsors for making this year's event one to remember.



Withhold







JESMOND BISTRO RECRUITS FORMER YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

Highly acclaimed Jesmond bistro, The Patricia, has expanded its team with the addition of award-winning chef Alex Walker.

The small bistro ran by Nick Grieves, previously of River Cafe in London, has gone from strength to strength after its opening in December 2016. Recognised in the Michelin guide and highly rated by Times critic Marina O’loughlin, the focus is on high quality ingredients with unusual, mostly natural wines.

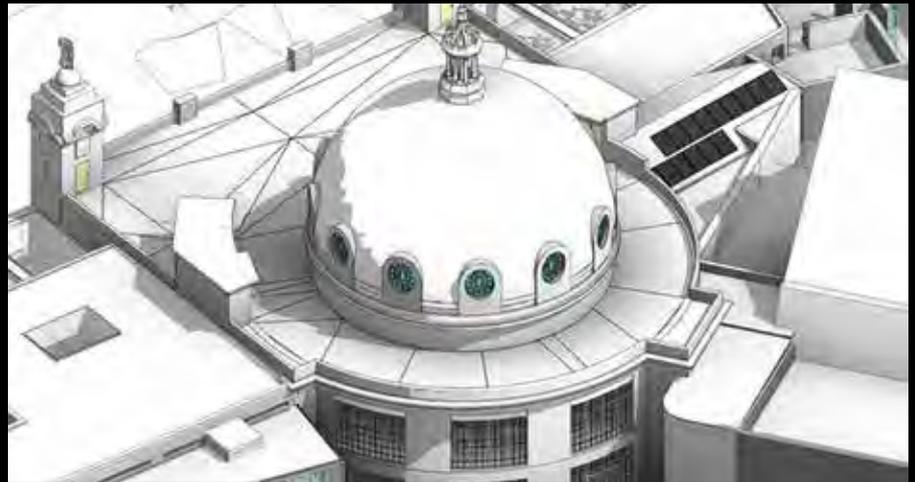
Alex, 25, claimed the regional title of North East Chef of the Year in 2016, leading him to the national finals earlier this year.

SEVEN DAYS, OVER 100 RESTAURANTS



The traditional offer of dining out for only £10 or £15 per head at some of the city’s top restaurants, NE1 Newcastle Restaurant Week returns from 6 -12 August. Since its launch in 2011, NE1 Newcastle Restaurant Week takes place twice a year in January and August and is one of the most anticipated events in Newcastle’s social calendar.

The event is expected to beat all records for the number of participating restaurants and number of diners surpassing January’s event, which attracted over 45,000 diners and gave a £1/2 million boost to businesses and the local economy.



NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR SPANISH CITY

Another milestone has been achieved in the restoration and revamp of Whitley Bay’s Spanish City, as the iconic venue edges closer to opening.

Kymel Trading, a hospitality group which owns and operates a number of restaurants and hotels in the North of England, has now formally agreed a 10 year lease to run the prestigious venue when it opens this summer.

Tyneside-based Kymel were advised on the lease agreement by real estate lawyers at Muckle LLP, the North East’s leading independent law firm for businesses.

Under Kymel’s stewardship, the dome will offer a

range of dining options including a traditional tea room, fish and chip restaurant, champagne bar, ice-cream and waffle house and a fine dining restaurant. The venue, which includes a dedicated function room ideal for private parties, also boasts seaward-facing full height windows, revealing incredible views of the coast.

Kyle Mackings, CEO of Kymel, said: "This is an amazing project for Kymel to be involved in. We specialise in high quality led businesses that offer nothing but the finest quality in unique surroundings, and Spanish City, which has been lovingly restored and retained many of its original features, fits our business perfectly.

DURHAM COUNTY CRICKET CLUB PARTNERS WITH LOCAL LEISURE OPERATOR



Everyone Active – the UK’s longest established leisure operator – has joined forces with Durham County Cricket Club and their registered charity to deliver an extensive range of activities across the county.

The leisure operator will work in partnership with Durham County Cricket Club to deliver a vast range of community-based initiatives to encourage people of all ages and abilities to take part in physical activity.

Everyone Active’s colleagues are working alongside Durham County Cricket Club’s community team to deliver weekly sessions at Riverside Leisure Centre with the club’s disability sports club. The sessions take place every Wednesday from 5pm-6pm.



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Chair covers and Ivory sash. (40 ceremony only)



Northern Insight talks to

GARY HUTCHINSON - THE MAIN MAN

He's the man responsible for bringing some of the biggest names in music to the North East and now he's started an exciting new venture at one of Newcastle's most iconic sites.

Take That. Rihanna. Coldplay, Foo Fighters. Royalty of the music world who all have one thing in common - they took to the stage at Sunderland's Stadium of Light.

And that in turn gives them all a second link, the relentless work ethic of the former commercial head of SAFC who built relationships with the management of all of these top acts and persuaded them to come to Wearside.

It is that dedication that Gary Hutchinson still exhibits - but this time channelled in a different direction as he takes to the helm of his own empire, Chrysalis Leisure.

It's hard not to miss the former Fat Buddha site in its prime position at the gateway to Newcastle - but under Gary's lead it has now been transformed to the city's first Alpine themed bar/restaurant.

The attention to detail which Gary is known for is very much in evidence at Antler - from the authentic ski gondolas in the outside garden area to the stripped, back, stylish décor which evokes the world of apres ski.

Food reflects the theme - think schnitzels, spatzle and sausages - and in true Gary style, he has pulled off a deal which sees Antler as the only place in the city to offer Krusovice tank beer.

He's rightly proud of the venue.

"I was always very determined to create

something really new for the city," he said.

"This is such an iconic spot that it was important to open it as somewhere different but at the same time offering the highest standards of food and drink."

Even though the lower floors have changed, the Buddha is very much still in evidence.

It has now taken over the upper floor, in what was formerly the city's Royal Arcade and with a menu which Gary believes is the most authentic Asian offering in the North East.

He's appointed renowned chef Walter Pang to oversee the kitchen, who's impeccable credentials include working in Japan, Miami and at Nobu in London.

While favourites remain, Walter's touches are very much in evidence and he constantly adding new dishes - and new twists - to the menu.

Given his background, it's also not surprising that Gary is also showcasing Antler as a venue for events, celebrations and business meetings.

"We're lucky to be able to cater for anything from small groups of about ten up to 800 people across the site," he said.

It's already been a hit with many of the city's business people who are relocating regular events to Antler. One of the first was Frank Recruitment Group which is now hosting its

monthly First Thursday events for staff at Antler.

Rebecca Callaghan, Senior Employee Brand Assistant at Frank Recruitment Group, said the company had already held an event at the venue which was a huge success.

"We've developed an ambitious and entrepreneurial environment that rewards success in a fun and supportive way, both in and out of the office," she said.

"Our monthly First Thursday meetings are a fantastic way for us to recognise the efforts of our sales and support staff, and we can't think of a better venue than Antler."

Frank Recruitment Group is just one of the businesses which is now looking towards Antler as the perfect venue for its events.

"We've got off to a really great start and I think that's down to the quality of the product and the versatility of the venue," said Gary.

"We're just unveiling a really exciting Christmas package which we think will be very popular - after all where better to celebrate the festive season than in an Alpine setting?"

"We've also taken on board the needs of business during the day and have now launched an express lunch in the Buddha as well as our evening menus.

"And this is just the start - watch this space!"

For more information visit www.antlernewcastle.co.uk or call 0191 261 1066 or email enquiries@antlernewcastle.co.uk.

The Fat Buddha remains open on the upper level and bookings can be made at www.fatbuddhancl.com or via info@fatbuddhancl.com. Telephone bookings can also be made via the same number as Antler.



TENANTS ARE STACKING UP



As the finishing touches are being made to STACK Newcastle, the list of tenants is increasing daily, with an array of quirky and unique retail units adding to the list of traders.

Heaton based Yoga Therapies, ran by husband and wife team Chris and Deborah Jackson from Whitburn were keen to be involved after they saw an opportunity to expand their rapidly growing business with a move to Newcastle city centre.

Yoga Therapies is a yoga studio offering a range of yoga classes for all ages as well as workshops and free or supported classes to their charitable partners, Active Ageing (former Age UK Newcastle) and The Medical Foundation for victims of torture.

Paul and Lucy Hull's business, For The Love Of The North, which sells unique gifts, all north east linked are excited to be part of STACK. The fledgling company currently trades from their Whitley Bay premises and stems from their passion of all things northern. The company provides a much-needed platform for the regions' creatives and allows them to showcase and sell their works via their brand.

Throwing their hat into the ring are vegan restaurant owners Vicky Tate and Kerry McNaney. Hungry Vegan has been operating successfully now for three years and was a complete change of career for both ladies, having previously worked in bars and music venues. Supplying plant-based food to take-away, Hungry Vegan is currently the only all-vegan 100% sandwich shop/bakery in the region. Vicky told us why she chose STACK as her venue of choice for

Hungry Vegan: "Our hope is that we can eventually get Hungry Vegan on every high street throughout the country, so we're extremely excited to be part of history in the making with STACK.

"Our love of everything vegan, our liking for good food and a determination to make our dreams come true are what drives us and makes us so passionate about our business. We think we will fit in really well at STACK and are excited to become part of this ambitious development, right in the heart of Newcastle."

Staying on the food scene is The Bake One, the mother of Lebanese food in the region has also taken a retail unit in STACK and offers authentic award-winning cuisine from their team of highly skilled chefs. Having recently traded at Hadrian's Tipi over the festive season, the restaurant's owner, Abdullah Aldarwech is keen to see introduce their unique Lebanese food to the city centre diners. Abdullah told us: "We had such great fun at Hadrian's Tipi and it is a pleasure to be part of Danieli Holdings' next big development.

"Lebanese food is healthy, tasty, nutritious and very popular with anyone who enjoys a Mediterranean-style diet.

"My chefs and I are excited to be part of this new

development, it's just what Newcastle has been needing and will be the place to be in the city."

The first of its kind, outside of London, STACK promises to be the social entertainment hub, offering something for all ages.

With the launch to be announced soon STACK houses a range of cafes, unique clothing outlets, bars, exercise studios and other shops across a two-level development. With over 500 jobs set to be created from the build as well as using a host of local businesses, STACK can clearly be seen as a great idea to boost the local economy.

Neill Winch, director of the firm behind STACK, Danieli Holdings said: "It's taken a little longer than we had hoped, however we are determined to get everything 100% right before we open, so we are ensuring that no stone is un-turned before we unleash STACK on to the general public.

"It's such an exciting time for us and an amazing project for the north east, we literally can't wait to launch. We've focused on family-friendly, small, local traders which will make STACK a real community-based leisure hub, perfect for any age. There's literally something for everyone, check out the latest information on our website."

www.stacknewcastle.co.uk



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Most recently we have been working with Levy Leisure, to create a new castle kiosk to sit within Hever Castle's newly opened adventure playground, a bespoke shipping container kiosk, situated in the newly built Giraffe enclosure at the Wild Place Project, Bristol and a new River Cottage Deli kiosk for Glyndebourne, the renowned opera house located in Sussex.

At Hever Castle, our team of design experts worked with the leading sports and hospitality caterer, to build a shipping container castle kiosk based on the Tudor Towers play area. At Glyndebourne we created a Deli kiosk which was in line with the Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall brand, to serve the public during performances at this year's Glyndebourne Festival.



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

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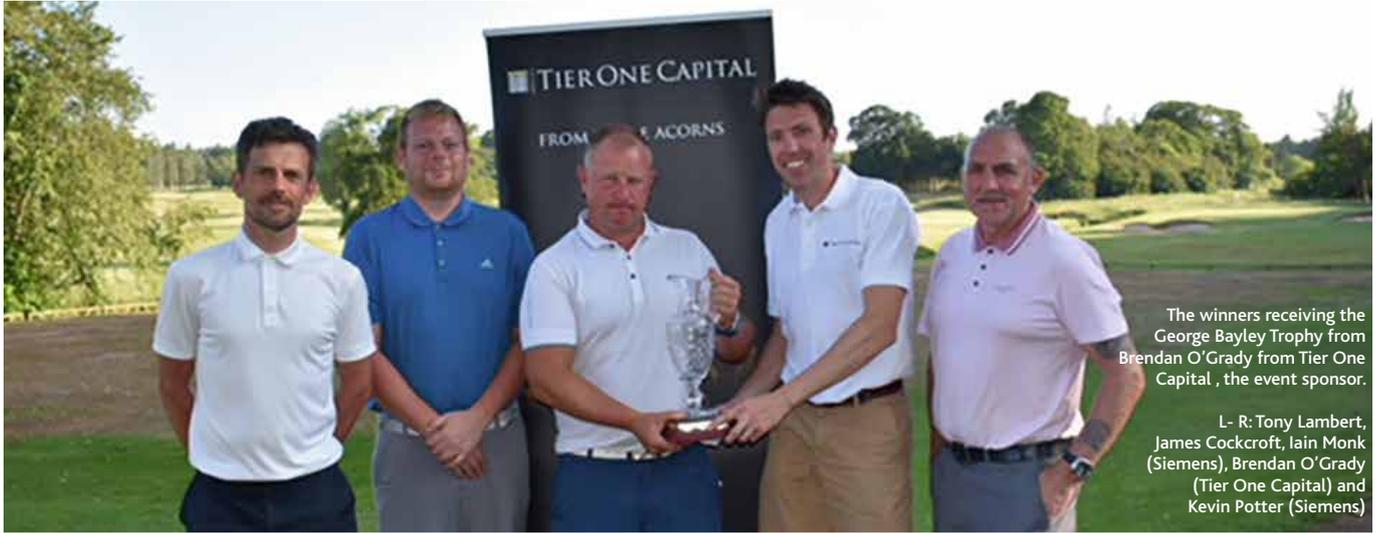
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The winners receiving the George Bayley Trophy from Brendan O'Grady from Tier One Capital, the event sponsor.

L- R: Tony Lambert, James Cockcroft, Iain Monk (Siemens), Brendan O'Grady (Tier One Capital) and Kevin Potter (Siemens)



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POD CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY WITH A BANG

The 10th anniversary year for leading North East architects Pod Newcastle recently went off with a bang. The growing architectural practice, which works with many of the region's housebuilders, held a clay pigeon shoot at Mitford Hall Estate, near Morpeth. Pod, represented by owner Craig Van Bedaf and senior architects Adam Lee and Martin Clay, celebrated the occasion with clients, professional colleagues and close friends. The day-long shooting was followed by dinner at the Tomahawk Steakhouse, Quayside, Newcastle.

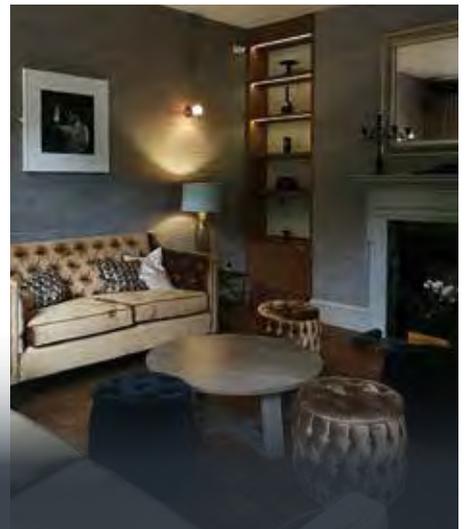




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For further information contact The Events Team on 0191 212 6060 or email events@jesmonddenehouse.co.uk
Jesmond Dene House, Jesmond Dene Road, Jesmond NE2 2EY. www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk



FOR BUSINESS, PLEASURE AND LEISURE

By Michael Grahamslaw

With an important business meeting planned south of the water early one morning, Holiday Inn Washington provided the perfect opportunity for a business stay with my son Jack.

Located just off the A1's junction 64 and only 20 minutes from Newcastle's stunning quayside, the hotel's destination is ideal for any travelling businessperson. With an impressive nine meeting rooms and fantastic working facilities including Wireless Internet and AV equipment, the hotel accommodates for a range of meetings, presentations and conferences, making it the ideal working environment for various events.

Arriving nice and early, we quickly checked into our room and immediately felt relaxed. With the renowned Holiday Inn label, I knew a comfortable stay was in order, so I was delighted by the large bed, flat-screen plasma TV and power shower that was provided. With a few hours graft ahead, the large writing desk, free high-speed internet, comfy desk chair and complimentary coffee facilities also proved very useful.

After a productive afternoon, we decided to take a well-earned break with a drink in the relaxing bar and lounge area. Here, we happened to bump into my old pal and GM Paul Mandeir who informed us of all the unique work that the hotel does as partner of local charity Greenfinger's. The charity helps children who use hospices in the UK by providing them with beautiful outdoor spaces where they can relax and play with their friends and family. The relationship has led to various fundraising events including cake sales and charity golf days in the hope of making a real difference in the local region. This really demonstrated the great level of care and attention to detail that is provided by Paul and the staff at the hotel.



We then headed to the light and airy Trader's restaurant for a much-needed bite to eat - it's not all work and no play, right? With both an à la carte and lounge menu available, there was much choice to sample, with even the option to eat al fresco on the restaurant's adjacent patio area. Providing traditional hotel fayre, the venue offers comforting English classics, as well as tantalising international dishes, to accommodate for various palates and dietary requirements.

After a perusal of the menu, I decided to kick off proceedings with mouth-watering chicken skewers served with tasty salad, whilst Jack enjoyed the soup of the day, a delicious leek & potato washed down with warm crusty bread. As a curry fanatic, I then tasted Thai green curry, a unique blend of spices accompanied by heavenly naan bread and poppadoms. Meanwhile, Jack savoured 7oz rump steak soaked in tangy peppercorn sauce and served with a traditional mix of mushrooms, tomatoes and chips. Delighted by the scrumptious meal, we also noted the warm and friendly service throughout as the staff were attentive and happy to accommodate to our every need.

Not wanting a fuzzy head for the morning meeting, we unfortunately had to swerve the hotel's exquisite gin menu, although I must admit this was a challenge with a wide selection of refreshing, fruity drinks on offer. We did however enjoy a serene night's sleep before a return to Trader's in the morning for breakfast. Eager to try the award-winning Holiday Inn buffet, we were delighted to sample the continental selection of delicious baguettes, buttery pastries and fresh fruit, before devouring a hearty cooked breakfast. After a wholesome, nutritious meal, we really felt ready for the day ahead.

We then left Holiday Inn Washington feeling extremely relaxed and prepared for a day's work. Whether you're a travelling business executive, or simply wanting to try somewhere new, Holiday Inn Washington offers the ideal place.

Holiday Inn Washington can be found at Emerson Road, Washington, NE37 1LB. For more information visit their website www.hiwashingtonhotel.co.uk or call 0871 942 9084.



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CRATHORNE HALL WELCOMES NEW GM

Crathorne Hall and Hand Picked Hotels is celebrating the arrival of a new General Manager, Elizabeth Raine. Keeping it in the family, Elizabeth joined the group in 2013 as Deputy General Manager and has progressed to her new role as General Manager of the stunning Crathorne Hall.

To mark this special occasion, on Thursday 26th June local guests and suppliers were invited to bid farewell to Peter Llewellyn who has managed the hotel for 5 years and to welcome Elizabeth to the north. "I am honoured to have the opportunity to take care of and develop this beautiful property and the wonderful team here who genuinely care about everyone who walks through the door. I have experienced a very warm and friendly welcome to the north and look forward to working with many local businesses, guests, families and suppliers – everyone is very welcome!"



MEET THE GM...

ELIZABETH RAINE

Crathorne Hotel, Yarm

Did you always envision a career in the hotel industry?

No, although I always worked in hospitality during education and on and off during my 20s, it wasn't until I was almost 30 that I decided hospitality was what I actually loved and wanted to do full time.

Tell us about your career path so far?

I had studied art and specialised in sculpture, with economics then cut the studies short and pursued a business idea (that didn't work out!) following this I studied a science degree in ecology and ecotechnology which gave me the amazing opportunity to work and live in the Peruvian Amazon for 5 years. There I was initially a nature tour guide and then set up a social conservation projects to improve the benefit of tourism for a local community so that it was fair and a genuine source of income rather than gold mining or logging. This was endorsed by a UK registered charity TReeS who focus on real conservation. Throughout my life in Peru I returned to the UK to raise money and work at The Feathers Hotel in Ledbury, Herefordshire - a beautiful 13th century coaching family fun independent hotel, conveniently where my parents lived. In 2005 I left Peru and settled into working in this beautiful hotel in a charming town. After 4 years at The Feathers, I moved to Canterbury to be operations manager at ABode (Andrew Brownsword hotels) then moved to India to be a general manager of a 40 bedroom heritage hotel owned by the royal family in Jodhpur. After this I moved back to the UK to work at the creative and forward thinking Greenhouse Hotel, Bournemouth - this hotel has been leading in sustainability in the hotel industry and so many successes come from being unique, creative and engaging people, both working in the hotel and who visit. In 2013 I had the opportunity to join Hand Picked Hotels and after being a deputy to the general manager at 3 hotels; Rhinefield House (New Forest), Grand Jersey (Channel Islands) and Nutfield Priory (Surrey), I have this wonderful opportunity to be general manager here at the beautiful iconic and well loved Crathorne Hall.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Being part of a team who enjoy what they do, who are engaged in their roles and united in our goal to create unique and memorable experiences for our guests. There is nothing better when we get it right; having the opportunity to celebrate successes is the most rewarding part. As we are now more in touch



with our guests, we have a great opportunity to listen to feedback and constantly consider how we can create an even experience.

What is the most difficult aspect?

Just like all businesses and industries there are challenges, all of us face them, I enjoy problem solving and spend time with people involved considering how we can transform a challenge into opportunity, how we can evolve and be a better organisation. We as an industry need to be really creative on how we get the great people out there to want to come and work in hospitality from the UK, Europe and all over the world. We work with local colleges, universities and do what we can to make sure that our team are well looked after.

How has the industry evolved in the past 10 years and what changes do you envisage going forward?

The hospitality industry, like all others is constantly evolving; each company has to have clear branding, be continually creative; who we are, how we present ourselves, how we create better experiences, how we attract and retain our wonderful teams, what makes us unique, this is what we do at Hand Picked Hotels. There are so many aspects to a hotel but generally the biggest change is how everything is done online, we have much better systems now for revenue management, online bookings, online feedback and managing all of our guest enquiries, collating and extracting all kinds of data to help us develop expertise of our business. It is a diverse and exciting industry and this will only increase in the next 10 years.

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

Be yourself and remember that there is always an even better outcome for all involved.

What are you currently working on?

I am getting to know Crathorne, the team, our guests, where we are and what we can do to be even better. The hotel is such an interesting business; perfectly suited for weddings, exclusive use, leisure stays, private dining, special celebrations, afternoon tea, Sunday lunch, but also the corporate side - there are so many businesses in this area and I believe that Crathorne is an inspiring venue for training, team building, meetings and conferences the best place to rest after a hard days work or an impressive choice for delegates travelling from overseas. For whatever reason guests come to visit this beautiful hotel, the team are so warm, welcoming and friendly - from my own personal experience, I have been made to feel very much at home here.

Who are your heroes and mentors?

Mentors have been the general managers who I have had the opportunity to work with, all of them have strongly influenced who I have become as a manager and inspire a drive for me to be even better; Mary Diggins, Olivia O Sullivan, Martin Kelly and Michael McKay.

Describe yourself in 3 words.

Thoughtful, driven and fortunate!

How do you like to unwind?

Walking in nature, cycling with my boyfriend, cooking and making time to think things through.

Please contact Elizabeth on eraine@handpicked.co.uk

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

ROSS GRIEVE

Managing Director,
Seaham Hall Hotel.

What were your career ambitions growing up?

I started out wanting to be a chef and having spent time with Gary Rhodes at the Greenhouse in Mayfair, London, whilst thoroughly enjoying the experience realised that I wanted to be front of house dealing with the customer and be front-facing.

Tell us about your current role?

As Managing Director of Seaham Hall, the role is diverse and changes on a daily basis. One minute you can be speaking with the team discussing how to improve the business from a customer delivery, then you can be reviewing the finances, not only how to grow the business and revenue streams, but also keeping a tight eye on costs. Moving forward you can then be in a marketing meeting, discussing the peaks and troughs of the business for the months ahead and how to launch one of our new capital ventures. To sum up: it is all-encompassing.

What is your proudest business achievement?

There have been many, but one of the most important ones was being awarded hotel of the year in the North East as it demonstrated what we as a team had managed to achieve since taking over the business. Most recently, being recognised nationally by Visit England for the same category.

How has the hotel industry changed in the last decade?

The internet has changed the way the consumers purchase and therefore your marketing and PR and your online representation is key to attracting bookings, as well as looking after your online reputation with channels such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and Google Reviews. Even though the digital revolution has changed the way the consumer books, at our end of the market a significant percentage of our business is taken directly over the phone as the consumer still likes to talk to make their booking, but also to individualise it to themselves.



What are you currently working on?

We have literally just completed the Zen Garden which is a fantastic addition to the award-winning Serenity Spa. And keeping in line with the Feng Shui design this area now allows for the guest to enjoy open spaces, the sense of running water and the coastal air, along with entrapments of the hydrotherapy pool and the cocoon beds to relax, rest and rejuvenate.

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

To take your team on a journey, listen to their thoughts and input and set clear goals so that everybody is ultimately on the same page.

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

To ensure that you maximise all of life's experiences that are presented to you, and where you can, travel either through work or enjoyment.

Who are your heroes inside and outside of business?

Sir Alex Ferguson, former Manchester United manager, and Willie Bauer, renowned London hotelier – both are uncompromising in the desire to achieve the very best but led by example and were great communicators.

How do you unwind outside of work?

Family-time which includes Sarah my wife and two lovely boys, not forgetting our beagle.

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GIANNI'S TICKS ALL THE BOXES

By Holly Grahamslaw



After returning home from university for the summer, I decided to take a visit to Gianni's restaurant for a long overdue catch up with my friends Harriet and Annabelle, and what a time we had.

Situated in the heart of Northumberland's historic market town, the bustling area showcases the charm, history and heritage of Morpeth. Easily accessible by bus or train, the restaurant's location is ideal for those who fancy a few beverages in the town's distinctive pubs and bars before or after their meal.

Upon entering the restaurant, we were immediately impressed by the friendly staff and fantastic service. Greeted with a cheery welcome and lively ambience, we were swiftly ushered to our table where we perused the restaurant's extensive menu. Offering traditional Italian cuisine, the venue provides everything from the classic margherita to a plethora of meat and fish dishes. With Happy Hour and Lunchtime specials also running from Tuesday to Saturday, Gianni's offers the finest Italian dishes at very affordable prices. Family-owned by Andrew and Lisa Dobson, Gianni's also prides itself in personally investing in its customers, with vegetarian and gluten-free options available to suit all tastes and dietary requirements. The classical Mediterranean fayre is also coupled with

a contemporary twist of sophisticated decor and modern adornments.

We quickly kicked off proceedings with a very pleasant bottle of Pinot Grigio blush, which of course soon became two once we sampled its refreshing crisp taste. All famished, we tucked into the fresh bread basket that was provided with gusto whilst we made our choices.

First up were the delicious starters and what a treat they were. With a more conventional palate, I enjoyed mouth-watering potato skins with tasty garlic and spicy tomato dips, whilst Annabelle devoured homemade bruschetta, a scrumptious dish of toasted bread with fresh tomatoes, olives and garlic. As a more adventurous individual, Harriet enjoyed smoked salmon and prawns accompanied by a heavenly marie rose sauce. It's safe to say our taste buds were soon tingling.

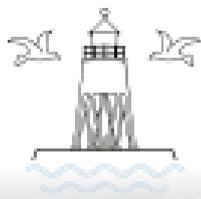
The traditional offering was also extended to the mains as Annabelle sampled one of Gianni's signature pizzas, which really brought to light the restaurant's impeccable service as the

accommodating staff allowed her to choose the specific toppings she wanted on top of the pizza's delicious doughy base. Eager to try something different, I decided to taste pollo principessa, an appetising dish of chicken breast soaked in a divine creamy mushroom sauce and embellished with delectable fresh vegetables. Meanwhile, Harriet savoured warm homemade lasagne which, just like the rest of the restaurant's selection, was presented in a generous, hearty portion.

With the hope of the perfect "Love Island bod" on our minds, we skipped the tantalising selection of exquisite cakes and sweet treats in favour of coffees, although I must admit this was a challenge and a half. We were however delighted by sweet Italian limoncello, which proved a fitting end to the exceptional offering that we had enjoyed.

All in all, Gianni's offered us an evening of high quality Italian fayre, relaxed surroundings and wonderful hospitality. Whether you're wanting to unwind with friends, or perhaps celebrate with family, Gianni's really does provide the ideal place for all occasions. We can't wait to return.

Gianni's restaurant can be found at 1st Floor, 6 Market Pl, Morpeth NE61 1HG. For more information call 01670 513040.



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Lizzy Hodcroft

DECLARING WAR ON THE MUNDANE!

Tyneside food entrepreneur takes the market by storm.

The daughter of the Northumberland based oil tycoon and former Hartlepool Utd Owner Ken Hodcroft has successfully launched her own alternative condiment business, which is proving a massive hit throughout the UK right now.

Spearheaded by the Texas-born young entrepreneur Lizzy Hodcroft and based in Newcastle, The Sweet Beet this summer unveiled its new website and re-branded products as it looks to transform and disrupt the nation's food industry this summer.

Lizzy - a former chef who was awarded Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the North East Business Woman of the Year Awards in 2017 - has overseen massive demand for her company's unique take on household condiments since soft-launching earlier this year.

The Sweet Beet's products are now available in a string of farm and deli stores nationwide as well as the nation's largest online supermarket, Ocado, which signals a busy year ahead for the rising businesswoman.

Speaking at a media tasting event at The Biscuit Factory in Newcastle, Lizzy explains: "The Sweet Beet intends on becoming a leader in the food



industry for innovation in the condiment sector, showcasing our keen eye for taking risks to discover and utilise my unique palate for new flavour combinations."

"We have gone from strength to strength, inspiring home cooks across the country with the confidence to explore in their own kitchens, whilst bringing to myself the excitement and passion of entrepreneurship. I am quickly being recognised as

one of the rising stars of the industry which is a huge honour."

In early May 2018, The Sweet Beet received national airtime when BBC2's culinary expert Nigel Barden put the company's Habanero Lime Jelly through its paces on Simon Mayo's Drivetime show, which regularly attracts 6 million listeners.

It has also appeared on BBC's Farmer's Country Showdown this year and was recently selected as Company of the Month by Food and Drink Matters Magazine.

Speaking about her long-term vision for The Sweet Beet and her plans for the future, Lizzy Hodcroft added: "Ambition and focus have fuelled me forwards quickly and allowed for rapid growth within the business and the opportunity to mentor and help other start-ups.

"Having found my own beat through entrepreneurship, I am now on a mission to inspire and nurture other creative start-ups, building on the success of being awarded North East Young Entrepreneur of the Year for 2017.

"The Sweet Beet is now actively seeking investment to spend on bringing staff into the business. This is only the beginning!"

For more information about The Sweet Beet and the check out their delicious products visit www.thesweetbeet.co.uk



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NUFFIELD HEALTH NAMED PRIVATE HOSPITAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

The UK's largest independent not-for-profit health and wellbeing organisation has once again won the top prize at the Health Investor Awards.

Nuffield Health picked up the award for Private Hospital Group of the Year for the second time at the Health Investor Awards 2018. The award is designed to recognise outstanding contribution to healthcare over the past 12 months, through innovation and excellence in healthcare products and services.

With a network of 31 hospitals across the UK, including Newcastle and Stockton-on-Tees, Nuffield Health has concentrated on enhancing patient satisfaction and quality care across the organisation. In 2017, two of its hospitals – the Nuffield Health Leeds and the Nuffield Health Tees – became the second and third Nuffield Health Hospitals to receive the highest possible rating of excellence with an 'Outstanding' rating from the regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC). To date 94% of Nuffield Health hospitals reviewed by regulators have achieved a rating of good or outstanding.

In accepting the award, Martin Friend, Chief Operations Officer, said: "It's great to be recognised two years in a row as leaders in healthcare excellence. This reflects our hospital teams' consistent drive and focus to be the best."

Matthew Lamb, Hospital Director at Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital, said: "Winning the Hospital Group of the Year Award is an amazing achievement and a great reflection on the teams working across the Nuffield Health network who go above and beyond each day to ensure that our patients receive the highest possible quality of service.

"As we continue to make improvements to our services and facilities and more patients get to know about us and the work we do, I hope that this award becomes just one of many and that the Group continues to receive the recognition it justly deserves for its quality of healthcare and the expertise of its staff and consultants."

Lesley Lock, Hospital Director at Nuffield Health Tees Hospital, added: "Nuffield Health being awarded the Private Hospital Group of the Year for the second-year running is further evidence of the quality of service we strive for at Nuffield Health Tees Hospital.



Nuffield Health hospital directors, Lesley Lock and Matthew Lamb.

"We are one of three hospitals in the group to have been awarded 'Outstanding' by the CQC, and the only independent hospital north of Leeds to have achieved this. Delivering exceptional care is always our first priority and this was recognised by the judges in awarding this accolade to us.

"We are extremely proud of our team who really do go the extra mile – it is a fantastic achievement and one which we are all committed to maintaining in the future."

Nuffield Health was selected from a finalist group of four private hospital groups within the UK. The finalists included a mixture of not-for-profit, privately owned and publicly listed organisations.

For more information on Nuffield Health hospitals visit www.nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals.

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- Your body is approximately 60 percent water, your brain is 70 percent water, and your lungs are nearly 90% water. It is therefore essential to keep your body hydrated to function properly.
- Water can also have an impact on your weight, much of the time you think you are hungry you are thirsty. Also, if your major organs are not working to their capacity your body's metabolism rate can be affected and slow down.
- Your body must replace around 2.5 litres of water a day through ingested liquid and foods, it also helps your body flush out toxins.

Staying hydrated

- Take a pint of water to bed and if you haven't drunk it through the night, finish it when you wake up in the morning. This is a good way to begin looking after your body for the day and will help kick start your metabolism. Adding lemon or lime is a good option for flavour.
- Fruits and vegetables have the highest water content eg watermelon is 92% water, grapefruit

and strawberries are around 90%, celery and radishes contain 95% water, cucumbers contain 96%, spinach and peppers – 92. Make sure you add more in to your daily diet.

- Watermelon is also top of the list containing essential high amounts of rehydration salts calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium.
- Have a half or full litre bottle with you throughout your day, this way you can monitor your daily intake as you refill.

Staying hydrated while exercising

It's essential to keep hydrated while exercising as water regulates your body temperature and lubricates your joints. It also helps transport nutrients to give you energy. If you're not properly hydrated, your body will not perform at its highest level. You may experience fatigue, muscle cramps, dizziness, or more serious symptoms.

Keeping yourself hydrated is vital in all aspects of body and mind from beautiful skin to preventing disease. Check how much water you consume and remember, during this unusually hot summer you will need to consume even more fluids than discussed.

David's summing up

Staying hydrated goes hand in hand with weight loss and health. You must build habits in to your daily life to keep your water levels high throughout the year.

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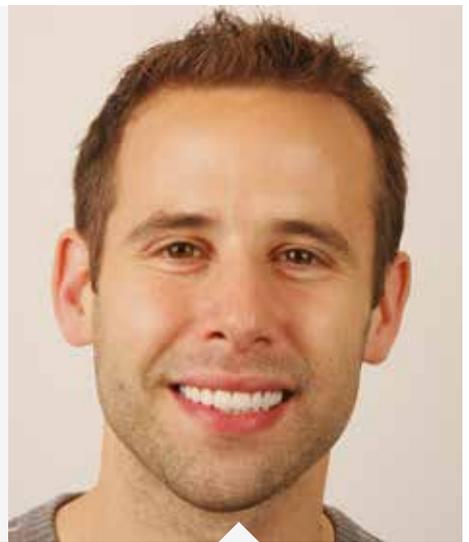
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Emily



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conscious of my teeth.
Lots of people now
comment on how healthy
and neat my teeth look"*

Tom

*"I am literally always
smiling and now have a
much fuller top lip, my
new smile is money well
spent"*

Veronica



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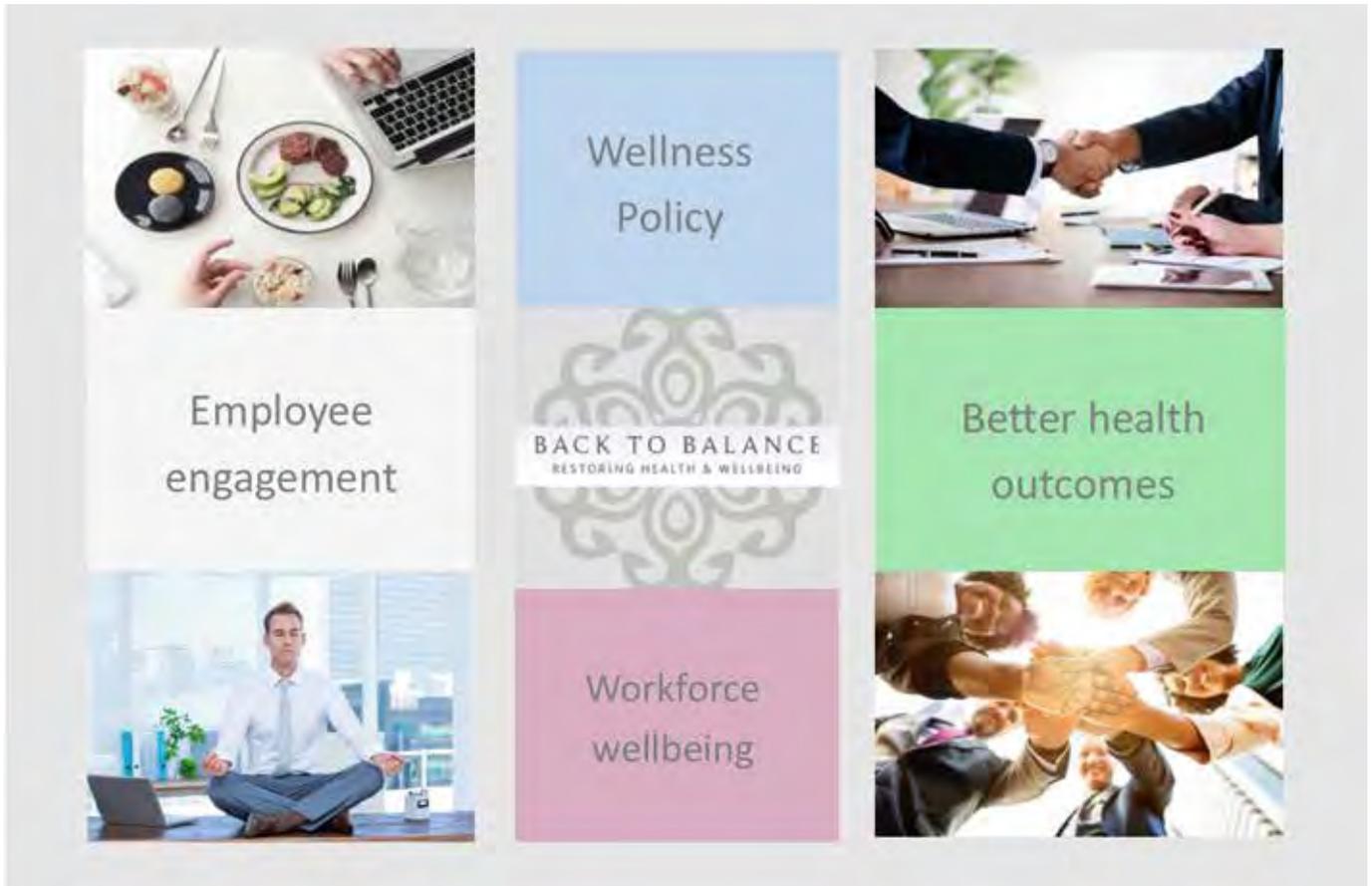
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INCORPORATING A WELLNESS POLICY MAKES SENSE TO BUSINESS

By Claire Hawes, co-director and osteopath



“A wise man ought to realise that health is his most valuable possession” *Hippocrates*

Why is it that although most of us know and agree with Hippocrates famous quote, we still struggle to take our health and wellness seriously and implement the small changes which can make a difference? Why is it that companies can find the money to pay for training, or marketing but can't find the cash to pay for their employees to improve health and wellness? Yet the stats are very convincing; a Price Waterhouse Cooper study (2008) showed significant savings to the bottom line when companies invested in their workforce's wellbeing.

It could be that although we are moving fast into an age where people's minds are becoming more open to the possibility that there are other ways to improve your health and wellbeing than the orthodox patriarchal medical model, people still find that wellness holds a 'fluffy' image in their minds.

We are also moving into an era where people and companies are more willing to pay for health and wellness themselves, and why not? The NHS is struggling with the increase in long-term and chronic lifestyle conditions which could easily be managed through people's investment in their health by seeking out credible and evidence-based health and wellness treatments.

Gone are the days of bone-setters and witch doctors – we are now in a modern setting where there is regulation of professions such as osteopaths (since 1993) ensuring the training quality – degree level minimum, and continuing professional development. Look at the credibility of the training which goes into professions such as reflexology (there is a difference between advanced therapeutic reflexology offered at Back to Balance and the relaxing type often offered in beauty salons) and massage therapy, and other fringe therapies which are built up on knowledge and evidence but have not yet gained popularity – for example neurokinetic therapy, there are also institutes which oversee the development through scientific research of new and exciting approaches to things like weight and diet management such as Psychology of Eating which looks at the mind-body link to detrimental eating problems. You might have guessed already - but we offer all these therapies at Back to Balance.

The key areas that will help your workforce's wellness include: sleep, diet, physical activity and relaxation. When there is balance in these areas things like fatigue, concentration and memory problems, emotional instability as well as a host of physical health problems can easily be reduced. We're not

suggesting that you allow your staff to sleep at their desks – but are they, practising good sleeping habits, or are they stressed out and finding falling asleep a problem at night, or waking repeatedly with a painful back? This is where your wellness policy comes into its own, because if you can help that employee have a better night's sleep, then you will find their work output very much improve.

Whilst it is no mystery that taking care of your physical and emotional wellbeing is extremely important to your happiness and health, most of us struggle making this a priority when we lead busy and stressed out lives. If you can incorporate through your health and wellness policy small changes to your workforce's wellbeing then you will reap the benefits. Some of our (local) clients offer time out of work to attend mindfulness classes, or a monthly wellness appointment, or treatment sessions for specific health problems, others prefer onsite delivery depending on what the objective is. What you can be assured of though is that at Back to Balance we offer high quality therapies, classes and workshops and that our approach to helping your company is bespoke and tailored to meet your needs.

Claire Hawes and Nicky Robertson are directors at Back to Balance and are happy to discuss any of your corporate wellness queries. contact@back-to-balance.co.uk, www.back-to-balance.co.uk, 01914661441

BACK TO BALANCE

RESTORING HEALTH & WELLBEING



Back to Balance focusses not only on the holistic wellness of the body, mind and soul, but also authentic values and a personal approach to wellness. Your care is delivered by highly trained and experienced therapists who are experts in their fields, from the still and nurturing surroundings of Back to Balance on the banks of the River Tyne.

We offer massage, reflexology, osteopathy, neurokinetic therapy, intuitive wellness therapy, psychological therapies, aromatherapy, Psychology of Eating coaching, reiki and Bach Flower Remedies; Pilates, yoga and mindfulness and meditation.

Our workshops from our studio offer thought-provoking informative talks with skills to take home and incorporate into your life.

Our corporate and workforce wellness strand of the business offers a tailor-made approach to meeting company wellness needs, looking at their individual requirements, helping to decrease sickness absence, increase productivity and boost staff morale.

TREATMENTS - CORPORATE WELLNESS - WORKSHOPS - EVENTS - CLASSES

Call us to discuss your wellness on 01914661441 or email: contact@back-to-balance.co.uk www.back-to-balance.co.uk



UK'S FIRST PROTON BEAM THERAPY PATIENT HERALDS A NEW ERA FOR CANCER CARE IN BRITAIN

The course of British cancer care was changed earlier this year when it was announced that the first patient to receive high energy proton beam therapy here in the UK had commenced treatment – a landmark moment for cancer patients in this country.

Simon Hardacre received treatment for prostate cancer at the Rutherford Cancer Centre in Newport, South Wales, which is currently the only clinic in the UK where high energy proton beam therapy is available. Its sister site, the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East, is due to open in Northumberland this summer.

Mr Hardacre said: "When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, I wanted to research the best possible form of treatment for me, which is how I came across proton beam therapy. I am delighted to say the treatment has gone exceptionally well in that I have been given intensive cancer care without suffering any gruelling side effects.

"It will take some time before I know that the therapy has been a complete success but what I know is, that my body has been spared damage to healthy tissue and I have been able to go about my daily life during treatment. I was told to expect that my body would show signs of improvement in terms of how I was feeling within three months and that has already happened in even less time. I realise that protons are not the answer in every case – and I still have to wait to see how things finally work out but I genuinely believe we are in a new era of cancer care in this country now that proton beam therapy is finally available."

Mr Hardacre, aged 56, from Woolaston in the Forest of Dean, was treated for another form of cancer a few years ago with chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and found recovery tough.

He said: "Being treated at the Rutherford Cancer Centre South Wales meant that I was only a half-hour drive from home during treatment, and I could go about my daily life."

"It's brilliant that we now have a world class facility



here in the UK where patients like myself can be treated. This was a game changer for my own cancer treatment, and I'm sure that this will transform the outlook for many other patients up and down the country."

Dr Jason Lester, the consultant oncologist who treated Mr. Hardacre at the Rutherford Cancer Centre, said: "Treating the first person in the UK with high energy proton beam therapy is a significant event, and it opens up a new frontier for treatment in the UK.

"In the case of Mr. Hardacre, we feel really positive about the way he coped with treatment. He will need regular check-ups in order to monitor his progress, and it was great to see him benefit from having treatment so close to home with minimal disruption to his daily life. We hope Mr. Hardacre is the first of many to see the benefits from proton beam therapy treatment here in the UK."

Proton Partners International is building eight centres across the country over the next few years to provide a treatment centre within 90 minutes of 75% of the population. Centres in Reading and Liverpool are under construction, with the Northumberland site opening this Summer for treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and immunotherapy.

The Rutherford Cancer Centre North East is situated at the Earth Balance wellness site in Bomarsund and is due to treat its first proton beam therapy patient in Spring 2019, meaning that those in the area will not need to travel far for crucial treatment.

There are more than 90,000 cancer patients in the UK every year who are treated with radical radiotherapy. Proton Partners International believes around 10% of patients treated with radical radiotherapy – the figure accepted at European level – could be better treated with proton therapy.

Proton beam therapy is particularly effective for tackling hard-to-reach tumours, as well as the treatment of children, as it reduces damage to surrounding healthy tissue.

Mike Moran, chief executive officer of Proton Partners International, said: "For us, it is hugely important that patients are treated as close to home as possible, and it's great that this year the country will have significant facilities available to patients. The NHS is opening a proton beam therapy centre soon in Manchester and our own facility will be operational shortly after in Northumberland."

At present, treatment at the Rutherford Cancer Centres is open to self-funded and insured patients, as well as NHS patients should the centre be commissioned to provide proton beam therapy for them.

More information can be found at www.therutherford.co.uk

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