

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

NOVEMBER 2018

ISSUE 41

NORTHERN INSIGHT - YOUR EYE ON THE REGION

NOVEMBER 2018



RSM AND SUNDERLAND SOFTWARE CITY PARTNERSHIP
BENEFITS NORTH EAST GROWING TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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

issue 41

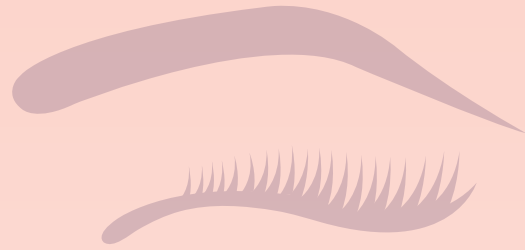
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FOREWORD

Welcome to the November edition of Northern Insight.

At 188 pages our 41st issue illustrates the continued growth of the magazine over the past year. Our wide content is often commented on and we continue to strive to bring you a publication that showcases some of the best businesses in the region whilst retaining our reputation for friendliness and flexibility.

This month's cover stars are tax and consulting firm RSM who have recently partnered with Sunderland Software City to support the region's technology sector. Look out for our Entrepreneur interview with Rosa Talai and Roya Irving of Sorella Sorella who talk in depth of their journey in the restaurant industry so far.

A hugely popular aspect part of the magazine is our social event photography and there is a great selection on show this month.

Look out also for reviews of our visits to the lovely Vermont Hotel and Hilton Double Tree.

All in all a very strong edition and one we hope you enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support.
Till next month.

M-J Grahamslaw
Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher



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Editorial

Editorial contributions should include a stamped addressed envelope. No responsibility is accepted for drawings, photographs or literary contributions during transmission, or while in the Managing Directors or Printers hands. Editorial must be received by the 15th of the month or no responsibility is accepted for errors.

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NORTH EAST BIC LAUNCHES NEW ROUND OF INNOVATION FUNDING



A programme designed to unlock the innovative potential of North East SMEs has been relaunched by the North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC).

The new programme will build on the success of the BIC's previous SME Innovation Programme and will assist businesses in the region to become more innovative, enabling them to increase their competitiveness and exploit more opportunities.

The BIC has received £899,250 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

And over the next three years, the programme will support over 70 SMEs by providing the advice and funding required to outsource innovation experts who will help SMEs to develop new products, services and processes and help bring them to market.

Innovation Manager at the North East BIC, Elizabeth Shaw, said: "North East SME's have a growing appetite to invest in research and development, so I'm delighted that we have the opportunity to continue putting the region on the innovation map. We take pride in the relationship we build with SMEs and partners."



BOWEL CANCER SURVEY COULD SAVE LIVES

Healthwatch Newcastle has released their research findings about bowel cancer screening in the city.

The firm champions the rights of users of publicly funded health and social care services for both adults and children and holds the system to account for how well it engages with the public.

Every year about 28,500 people aged 60 and over are diagnosed with bowel cancer in England, making it the fourth most common cancer in the UK.

In light of recent news that less than half of the people aged 60-64 who were sent a home screening kit in 2015 returned their samples, Healthwatch Newcastle is urging the government and local health authorities to act in order to save lives.

The Healthwatch Newcastle survey focused on the Faecal Occult Blood (FOB) test. People eligible for FOB screening receive an invitation letter around their 60th birthday which describes the screening programme.

Amongst those surveyed, it was said that although the kit was easy to use, it was unpleasant to do due to the nature of the test. However, a new faecal immunochemical test (FIT) is due to be rolled out this year with tests requiring just one sample rather than the present three that are needed.

DUO OF AWARD NOMINATIONS

Alnwick businesswoman April Bowden has been shortlisted for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year and Rising Star awards at the 2018 North East Business Woman of the Year Awards.

The Rising Star award, which is sponsored by Gateshead College, acknowledges the significant contributions that young people make to businesses across the North East. The Young Entrepreneur of the Year award recognises the talents prevalent in the young people of today and is keen to showcase their successes and support growth in this sector in the future.

As founder of digital marketing agency Play the Field, and with over 4 years

running her own business, April set up her business in 2012 with the aim of raising the profiles of some of the region's 'best kept secrets'. Since then, she's helped over 40 businesses to tell their stories, with clients including insurance broker Lycetts, 138-year-old butcher Turnbull's, the Jolly Fisherman in Craster and property developer Cussins.

Commenting on her shortlist, April said: "This year has been a whirlwind. I've celebrated my fourth year in business, expanded the firm to offer social media training to businesses and individuals, and now I'm looking forward to offering more and expanding further."

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LAST NIGHT LTD PURCHASE STAKE IN UP- AND-COMING FASHION RETAILER

A local urban street fashion brand is now worth more than £140k after attracting fresh new investment.

SEEK Attire has recently received a cash injection of £35,000 after 25% of the company was bought by a local investor. The fresh boost of capital will go towards developing the business and take it to the next level as it looks to attract new brands to collaborate with the growing fashion company. As a result of the recent investment, the company is now valued at £140,000.

The stake in the fashion retailer, who stocks a variety of brands including their own clothing line, was purchased by Last Night Ltd.

Scott McAlpine, Managing Director of SEEK Attire, said: "I'm so happy to be able to announce the recent investment in SEEK Attire. It will now enable me to really develop the business and hopefully attract new brands to work with."



BEDLINGTON FC VIPERS - SUITED AND BOOTED!

Bedlington FC's high-flying premier league under 16 side has partnered with newly established local business TrainBase to keep them playing the beautiful game in style.

A newly established premium training centre, TrainBase provides training and testing across multiple awarding bodies, including an extensive range of CPCs categories, NPORS, Short courses, Street works and Level 2 Plant NVQ's.

FC Vipers Team Manager, Jeff Pogson, said: "Keeping the lads in the right quality strips is important as we go around the region representing Bedlington at the highest level. Finding local support to do this is so important to allow junior football to continue to thrive in our area. I would like to say a big thank you to Bedlington-based company TrainBase Ltd for their valuable and much appreciated support for the 2018-2019 season. I'm sure we will enjoy a fantastic season ahead!"



FW CAPITAL CELEBRATES NORTHERN POWERHOUSE INVESTMENT FUND MILESTONE

FW Capital has invested in 100 SMEs through NPIF – FW Capital Debt Finance, part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF), according to the latest figures.

100 SMEs from across the NPIF region, which includes the North West and Tees Valley, have been supported with loans between £100,000 and £750,000 to help boost business growth across the area.

One company that has benefitted is Manchester-based property management business Urbanbubble. The firm has secured a £400k investment to support growth plans through investment in people, systems and processes to ensure strong operational structures.

Another business that received investment was Tees Valley firm Communicate Technology PLC. The fast-growing company installs and maintains IT, telecoms services, cyber security and cloud-based services to companies across the UK. The team has secured a £500k investment enabling it to complete its plans to hire additional staff and purchase equipment.

EXECUTIVE CAR SERVICE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN



A Sunderland-based executive car company is expecting to see turnover exceed £1 million next year following a period of rapid growth.

Park Executive, which is Sunderland's only dedicated executive car service, was founded six years ago by entrepreneur Kevin Potts after he noticed a gap in the market for a professional, corporate taxi service in the region.

Starting off with just one car in 2012, the company now employs 17 people and boasts a fleet of nine high-end Mercedes Benz vehicles ranging from S350s to high-end V-Class minivans.

The service has been so successful in fact that it has led to clients requesting a more high-end chauffeur service which now runs side-by-side with the corporate taxi business. This has seen Park work with a number of high-profile celebrities such as Eammon Holmes, Sir Geoff Hurst and even royal families from across the globe.

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ARE YOU FIT FOR GROWTH?



Andrew Silver with Sharon Coull.

Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.

— James Cash Penney, Founder of JCPenney

Your business is now up and running. You should definitely celebrate that achievement but the next challenge is creating long term sustainable growth. Whatever type of growth you're considering strong foundations will be key to your future success.

Building Scalable Technology & Systems

Investing in the right technology and systems can be a daunting and lengthy process and is best started before your current systems start to fail.

Consider your future business needs and make sure you are clear on what challenges you're looking to overcome. Talk to your people, they are often best placed to offer insight into making key improvements.

Assess what technology you have in place and establish the gaps to prioritise where to focus first. Investment in new technology needs to be scalable. Consider how it will integrate with current technology or systems and your future plans.

You might need help and support. Talk to other businesses who have had similar experiences or bring in specialist knowledge. Whilst an upfront investment, specialist expertise can help you navigate the process quicker, mitigate risks and get you up and running on better technology faster, to improve your business's performance.

Building Scalable Processes

The challenge for growing businesses is getting information that sits in people's heads into the hands of those that need it now. Also the processes that work for you now may not be fit for growth. Reviewing processes can often be bottom of your list of things to do. Set time aside early on and you'll save time in the long run.

Consider the business you are looking to become. What systems will you be using and what processes will you need? Be clear about the need for any process and the value it brings to your business, and then focus on the most efficient way of applying it.

Instil in your people a focus on continuous improvement. This will help both your efficiency and effectiveness whilst enabling you to innovate and stay ahead of the competition.

What resource do you need?

Growing can often mean bringing someone in to help manage the financial side of the business. This can be a difficult transition for many business owners but one that is possibly essential to take the business to the next phase of growth

Evaluate what your business needs are and bring in the right level of specialist expertise; this may mean recruiting a member of staff or outsourcing tasks and/or functions.

Identify a few key areas which can be delegated and get them running successfully. Have the right financial controls and reporting in place to provide visibility of what's happening in your business. This will provide you with some comfort and keep you close to the financials on a daily business, without having to do all the work yourself.

Ensure you free up your time to focus on what only you can do.

Data and insight

Growing your business means making tough decisions and taking action; have the right data and insight to underpin those decisions. Reporting should track business performance on a daily, weekly and monthly basis enabling you to take swift corrective action when needed.

Start by capturing the right data at source. Then develop the best way to transform that data into reporting and insight.

The Tortoise or the Hare

Pace v process is a key challenge for growing businesses. Talk to people who have been on your journey. It's a finely tuned balancing act between investing in key areas of your business and managing your cash and profitability. Know your vision and build your foundations with that in mind.

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

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SUPPORTING THE NORTH EAST'S GROWING TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Leading audit, tax and consulting firm, RSM, has recently partnered with Sunderland Software City to provide support and guidance to the region's growing technology sector.

Richard Urron, partner and head of technology at RSM's Newcastle office, caught up with **Jenny Lang**, Programme Engagement Manager, at Sunderland Software City (SSC), to discuss the North East's technology sector and what the launch of PROTO: The Emerging Technology Centre means for regional businesses.

Richard: 'With recent reports estimating the tech sector in the North East to be worth almost £1bn, it's a rapidly growing area. What do you think has been behind this growth?'

Jenny: 'There are many factors that have contributed to the growth of the technology sector in the North East over the last few years – access to talent from the region's five universities; fully-funded business support from organisations like SSC; and an active local venture capital marketplace providing access to finance. The creativity and drive within the business community also plays a huge part; companies of all sizes are constantly looking to innovate. Our team works with everyone from start-ups developing emerging technologies (through the SSC business support programme) to corporates looking at internal innovation projects (through Digital Catapult NETV) – it all contributes to the sector's growth.'

Richard: 'Throughout this growth there have been some real success stories involving technology businesses in the North East. What are some of the most interesting businesses you've been involved with?'

Jenny: 'There are so many interesting businesses working with emerging technologies. Middlesbrough-based Animmersion used our mixed reality green screen facility to produce a teaser trailer for one of its virtual reality experiences, which it launched at Semi-Con China earlier this year. The team wanted to make sure delegates understood how dynamic, fast-paced and exciting the experience can be for the player and using our facilities provided them with a way to do this. Wordnerds is another great example of a tech company doing something really interesting and was actually set up as the result of a Business Challenge we ran on behalf of one of our corporate clients.'

Richard: 'PROTO: The Emerging Technology Centre, in Gateshead, offers fantastic new facilities and is a great addition to the North East's offering in the technology space. How can businesses access these facilities?'

Jenny: 'Just by getting in touch. PROTO exists to help businesses of all sizes innovate. Companies can access innovation programmes, demonstrators, research and development facilities and get hands on with the latest hardware. PROTO, which is owned and managed by Gateshead Council, is part of the Digital Catapult NETV network and is also home to the North East Tees Valley Immersive Lab, which we launched late last year. The Lab is a state-of-the-art facility equipped with a range of the latest augmented and virtual reality hardware. We offer businesses tailored sector-focused workshops designed to help their organisations explore the application of immersive technologies for their business. Aside from the Lab, the centre has a huge R&D space with sound recording studio and specialist 3D character and motion capture equipment for hire.'

Richard: 'With PROTO being all about emerging technology, how are you seeing this kind of technology implemented in businesses?'

Jenny: 'We've been supporting businesses of all sizes and sectors to explore the ways in which emerging technologies can positively impact upon their productivity, processes and efficiencies. For example, we recently worked with Northumberland National Park which has started to use virtual reality in its exhibition space. It is also using photogrammetry to capture historical artefacts digitally. By using advanced digital technology, the Park can enhance and expand the visitor experience, allowing more customers to enjoy exhibits both in person and online. The technology is being used in so many ways – it's not just limited to the games industry or digital companies.'

Richard: 'So, what would you consider to have been the most popular technology so far?'

Jenny: 'Virtual reality experiences still remain a firm favourite amongst businesses, with a growing amount of content and applications.'

We've seen examples where companies have used VR to help train new staff to do difficult jobs in high-pressure situations (like at the top of wind turbines). Or where controllers have been adapted to teach people, in a VR set up, to operate heavy machinery.'

Richard: 'We're increasingly advising businesses on how to claim back R&D credits in relation to their development work. With such advances in emerging technology being achieved do you feel the tech sector is taking full advantage of the innovative reliefs available?'

Jenny: 'I think that the awareness of R&D tax credits is still fairly low, with many businesses unaware of how they can benefit when they are implementing emerging technologies. This is one of the reasons we wanted to work with RSM, to bring its expertise in this area to the tech sector.'

Richard: 'Was this one of the triggers behind deciding to work more closely with professional services firms?'

Jenny: 'Sunderland Software City runs several projects designed to support technology businesses across the North East (Digital Catapult NETV being just one of them). In the last 10 years of supporting start-ups we've seen how important expert advice can be, especially for companies that are developing new products and services. By working closely with professional services firms, we're able to offer a wider range of specialist support to SMEs; for example, RSM will draw on its extensive experience working with tech businesses to deliver strategic accountancy and business advisory services. This might cover tax, financial reporting, funding options, transactions, fraud and key consultancy support – our team doesn't have this expert knowledge, so it makes sense that we work with firms, such as RSM, that do.'

'We believe this partnership will complement our existing suite of business support services, providing more opportunities for tech start-ups to access specialist advice at the point that they need it. We look forward to working with RSM to help facilitate the growth of the technology sector in our region.'



For more information on how RSM and Sunderland Software City can help your business, please contact Richard Urron at richard.urrone@rsmuk.com or Jenny Lang at jenny.lang@sunderlandsoftwarecity.com



HOW TO COMMUNICATE SUCCESSFULLY IN A CRISIS

Communications experts from Newcastle-based Karol Marketing, share key principles to help your business successfully manage a crisis

Few will have failed to spot the headlines concerning the recent tragic events surrounding Pret A Manger. However, the food chain's handling of recent events, in particular its statement following emergence of the news that a second person has died from a suspected allergic reaction to food bought in one of its stores, has left many in the communications industry asking questions of Pret's response and whether an apparent lack of empathy could cause irreparable damage for the company.

Here, Karol Marketing's Head of Corporate and Crisis Communications, Victoria Ross shares some introductory principles on how to effectively communicate in a crisis:

1. Know the three C's of crisis communications -

Communicating in a crisis situation will always feel daunting – due to its very nature, you're unlikely to know all of the facts for some time and you will probably never know as much as you would like. The natural reaction of many businesses is to say nothing or wait for more answers, and whilst this is understandable, in an age of 24/7 news and social media, we don't have the opportunity to spend hours carefully crafting and honing key messages. So, even when detail is scarce, remembering the three C's of crisis communications can be invaluable:

- **Concern** for those affected and the impact of the crisis - putting people at the start of your response, and demonstrating you understand the severity of what has happened, will demonstrate compassion.
- **Control** over the situation – explaining what you are doing to remedy the issue, who you are working with - for example the emergency services - and the resources you are putting in place to support efforts will demonstrate control over the situation in hand.
- **Commitment** – to doing everything you can and ensuring that the issue will not happen again.

2. Have a plan – By its very nature a crisis is unanticipated and it would be impractical to plan a crisis response for every scenario. But ensuring you have an agreed way of working helps you to activate your response in a timely manner should a crisis occur.

The crucial thing to remember when developing a crisis communications plan, is that it is impossible to predict every possible scenario. So often communications teams will develop crisis communications plans that contain numerous pre-prepared statements for very specific scenarios. But you can guarantee that when a crisis hits, it won't be one you anticipated.

A good crisis communications plan doesn't need to be long - in fact often the shorter and more user friendly they are the better - but it must include key policies and processes. Checklists of actions to take in the initial stages of a crisis can be particularly useful and help ensure key steps are taken. The plan should include clear roles and responsibilities, and these should be allocated with deputies assigned so individuals can familiarise themselves with their responsibilities and what will be expected of them ahead of time. Template communication statements that can be adapted to work in a variety of scenarios can save valuable time, and login details or information on who to contact to update your company website and social media channels are also key assets when in a crisis situation.

3. Identify your spokespeople ahead of time –

Crisis management and crisis communications are just like any other strategic management discipline – they're skills you need to develop and practice. Essentially, your crisis team needs to be able to get to know their roles and test their response in a 'safe space'. This can be through coaching and taking part in regular crisis exercises and simulations, helping to ensure that the response becomes almost second nature. This is as true for your CEO as it is for your social media manager or HR lead.

As with any media opportunity, identifying someone who can communicate clearly and confidently is vital, but a crisis spokesperson also needs to convey both empathy and sincerity whilst occupying a senior enough position to demonstrate that the organisation is taking the situation seriously. This is usually a CEO or MD but for a variety of reasons it may not be and you need to think carefully about the roles your organisation's senior team will play in your crisis response procedures and what this will mean practically for their availability. The important thing is to ensure that as part of your crisis planning, you have identified a team of potential spokespeople that you are confident could communicate compassionately and knowledgeably and that you have provided each individual with the opportunity to practice and develop key skills ahead of time.

Karol Marketing's crisis team has a proven track-record of working with some of the world's biggest and best-known companies to help them prepare for and manage threats to their reputation and can deliver a range of crisis management and media training for senior and board level clients, including full-scale simulations, crisis media training and crisis HR training.

To discuss your crisis preparedness or find out more about how Karol can help you assess, strengthen and validate your crisis management and crisis communications procedures please contact Victoria Ross or Stefan Lepkowski on 0191 2657765 or Victoria@karolmarketing.com/Stefan@karolmarketing.com
@KarolMarketing



MICHAEL OWEN

The Life & Times of a Man That Stopped Waiting

We each get 1,000 months. That's it. So when Michael had used up 540 of his, he reflected.

He and partner Lisa had houses, businesses, awards, money, dogs and cats. Some mattered. Some didn't. By month 600, Michael had stopped doing everything he thought he 'should' - to do only what he felt he 'must'.

"When I was building brand, marketing and design agencies I was swimming hard. And I was ahead. But I was swimming in pretty much the same direction as everyone else. And that's not me."

At the age of 46, Michael began to dismantle his world in preparation for building a new one.

"I realised I was doing what I and others thought I 'should'. I wasn't 'doing my thing'. I was waiting for something. Fulfilment. Purpose. My 'why'."

Then, one day, Michael stopped waiting. He sold a house, closed businesses, started a new one – and had a baby.

What Happens When You Stop Waiting & Start Doing?

"So far I've been paralysed with fear, felt completely lost, wondered at the generosity of strangers, been proud of my own resilience and pushed my creativity and curiosity to the limits. I've cried with happiness, cried with sadness and embraced wholeheartedly the heady, unique mix of anxiety and adrenaline from not having a clue what I am doing."

"But I am doing what I love now. Always Wear Red is selling globally. And 50odd.co.uk is telling my personal story."

Michael's 50odd.co.uk blog narrates how this 50-odd year old man searches for and delivers on his purpose. 3,650 diary entries. 1 each day. For 10 years.

Do What You Were Born To Do

"Always Wear Red knows what it is for. We change people."

Michael plugs into the relationship between what we wear, how we feel and what we do.

"If you wear amazing, you feel amazing. And if you feel amazing, you do amazing. Confidence transforms you. Confidence can drive you to do what you're born to do. That's why Always Wear Red exists."

Best Or Nothing

A brand that promises to change you can't compromise. AWR's 100% British makers make for Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Hermes. As well as Mick Jagger, Kate Moss and the British Monarchy.

91% of the world's cashmere is rejected from the AWR supply chain before they knit from the remaining 9%. And it's the same discerning approach for the merino wool, bridle leather, solid pewter belt buckles, 100% natural cloth caps, 100% silk and real gold thread. Everything is edgy design, Limited Edition and handmade in Britain.

"I focus on how clothes make you feel. You should feel you can do anything. Because the truth is – you can. And, naturally, I couldn't tell this brand story if I myself did not follow my dream. Wish me luck."



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PHOTOGRAPHY: Alex Wright, Reece James Morrison, Iain Jamieson and Graeme Rowatt.

“

*I focus on building my
own brands now.*

*Brands that people
care about.*

*Brands that
matter.*

”



Say hello at www.alwayswearerred.com, email michael@alwayswearerred.com or search [@alwayswearerred](https://www.instagram.com/alwayswearerred). Also www.50odd.co.uk



KINGSTON PARK SET TO HOST LIVING NORTH NEWCASTLE CHRISTMAS FAIR

Festive extravaganza takes place from November 1st - 4th

The 13th year of the Living North Newcastle Christmas fair sees the event embrace a new home as it brings a whole heap of festive joy to Kingston Park Stadium from 1st-4th November.

The biggest festive extravaganza that the North East has ever seen, 250 hand-picked designer-makers, local food producers and fashion retailers will be offering gifts galore all in one place for the best way to kick-start your Christmas shopping.

With an incredible list of unique exhibitors from across the North East and beyond, the event is spread across the Kingston Park Stadium site.

In the sensational shopping marquee that has been specially erected for the event, visitors will find exhibitors who have been working hard to create handmade decorations, gorgeous home-ware, gifts and accessories.

In the adjacent West Stand, foodies will be delighted once again with our ever popular Festival of Food.

With a vast array of festive treats and tempting tipples on sale and to sample, there will be plenty of ideas to make cooking up your Christmas dinner a truly magical experience as well as chefs from across the region on hand to show exactly how to handle this produce with love and care.

These experts will be sharing their culinary knowledge with popular live cookery demonstrations in the events kitchen, while in an exciting addition for 2018, some of the best mixologists the North has will be sharing their tips on creating the perfect Christmas cocktail.

Visiting the fair is also a great way to unwind from the planning of this notoriously busy period. Relax

with friends and soak up the festive atmosphere in the Lodge Bar - back by popular demand.

You can also enjoy sumptuous snacks in our on-site Forest Café and lazy lunches and indulgent afternoon tea in the restaurants throughout the venue.

With 250 hand-picked exhibitors, let Living North wrap up your Christmas by bringing you everything you need for the festive season.

Advance tickets are on sale now. Visit livingnorth.com to book your tickets online for £6 (£8 on the door).

Want to know more? Visit our website to meet some of the exhibitors, read product reviews and prepare your shopping list.



For more information please visit www.livingnorth.com

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HOWIE WHITE GOLF DAY

On Friday 5th October, Howie White hosted their 3rd annual golf day. 16 couples descended on Matfen Hall for what was going to be a brilliant day all round. The format was as unusual as ever. The men went out to enjoy an 18 hole stableford competition on Matfen's Douglas and Standing Stone courses whilst the ladies got shown the ropes with lessons in putting, chipping and long game before a competition of their own on the par 3 course. The day was a great success and we would like to extend thanks to everyone who attended as well as Matfen Hall and their pro team.

The winners of the coveted Howie White trophies this year were as follows;

Men's nearest the pin - Ken Pearce

Ladies nearest the pin - Alex Taylor

Men's Winner - Gary Ramsey

Ladies Winner - Lynn Wilson

Winning Couple - Lynn & Colin Wilson



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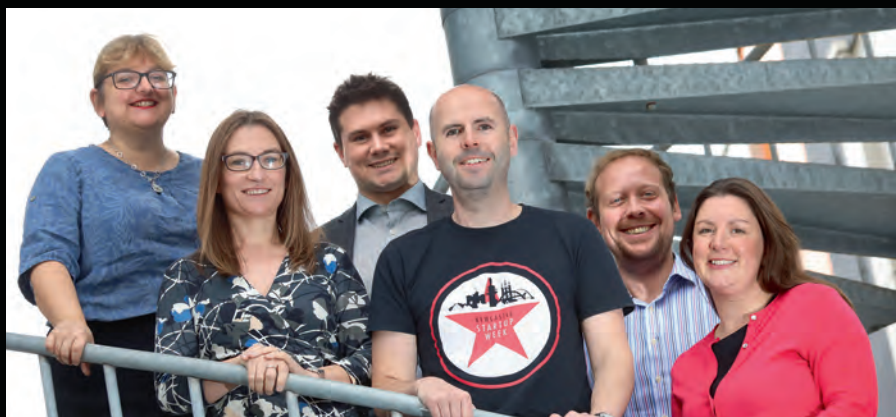
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SINTONS ANNOUNCED AS SPONSOR OF NEWCASTLE STARTUP WEEK 2019



A high-profile North East event which helps and inspires hundreds of people each year to start or grow their businesses has secured law firm Sintons as a new premium sponsor.

Newcastle Startup Week will return next year for a third time, with its two previous five-day festivals each attracting over 600 people from across the UK and as far afield as the US.

The 2019 event is predicted to be the biggest yet, with a host of inspirational speakers already secured and interest expressed from across the world.

The event, which will kick off on May 13 in the Boiler Shop, will this year be supported by law firm Sintons, a leading advisor to startup businesses.

Specialist lawyers at Sintons have a wealth of experience in advising businesses on the full spectrum of legal issues they will experience in the journey from pre-startup to scaleup and beyond.

Sintons' sponsorship of Newcastle Startup Week, founded and run by 'SuperConnector' Paul Lancaster's business Plan Digital, is the latest endorsement of the team's capability in this field and will see them delivering highly engaging, informative and practical content.

MUCKLE LLP EXPANDS SERVICES FOR PRIVATE CLIENTS



Following a significant increase in demand, Muckle LLP, the North East's leading independent law firm for businesses, has expanded its Private Client team, from just two lawyers to a team of six in the last 12 months.

The Private Client team, led by Partner and Head of Private Client Keith Hatley, provides a dedicated service for business owners, executives, landowners, senior professionals and other wealthy individuals, and has recently seen growing demand from people wishing to plan for their families' future.

Senior associate Julie Garbutt, solicitor Olivia Colbeck and Keith specialise in all aspects of estate planning, including wills, succession, inheritance tax, family trusts, power of attorney and probate.

Keith said: "Through a number of new client wins, the establishment of our Agriculture, Estates and Rural Property team and working closely with our other specialist legal teams, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of people seeking personal legal advice. Discrete, sensitive and effective, we believe the service we offer is second to none and we're delighted to see an increase in this area of our business."



WATSON BURTON SUPPORTS ITPS ON MAJOR ARRIVA PLC SERVICE AGREEMENT

IT managed solutions and services specialist ITPS has entered into a long-term service agreement with leading European passenger transport provider Arriva PLC, with legal support from commercial law firm Watson Burton.

ITPS, which is based in Gateshead, will provide telecommunications services to Arriva PLC over an initial three-year period. The firm's services will include consultancy, design and project management services on Cisco Meraki networking solutions, as well as input and design of several technical deliveries to be implemented by Arriva PLC.

Newcastle-headquartered Watson Burton provided ITPS with legal advice on the data communications agreement and supported ITPS in the negotiation of the agreement's terms.

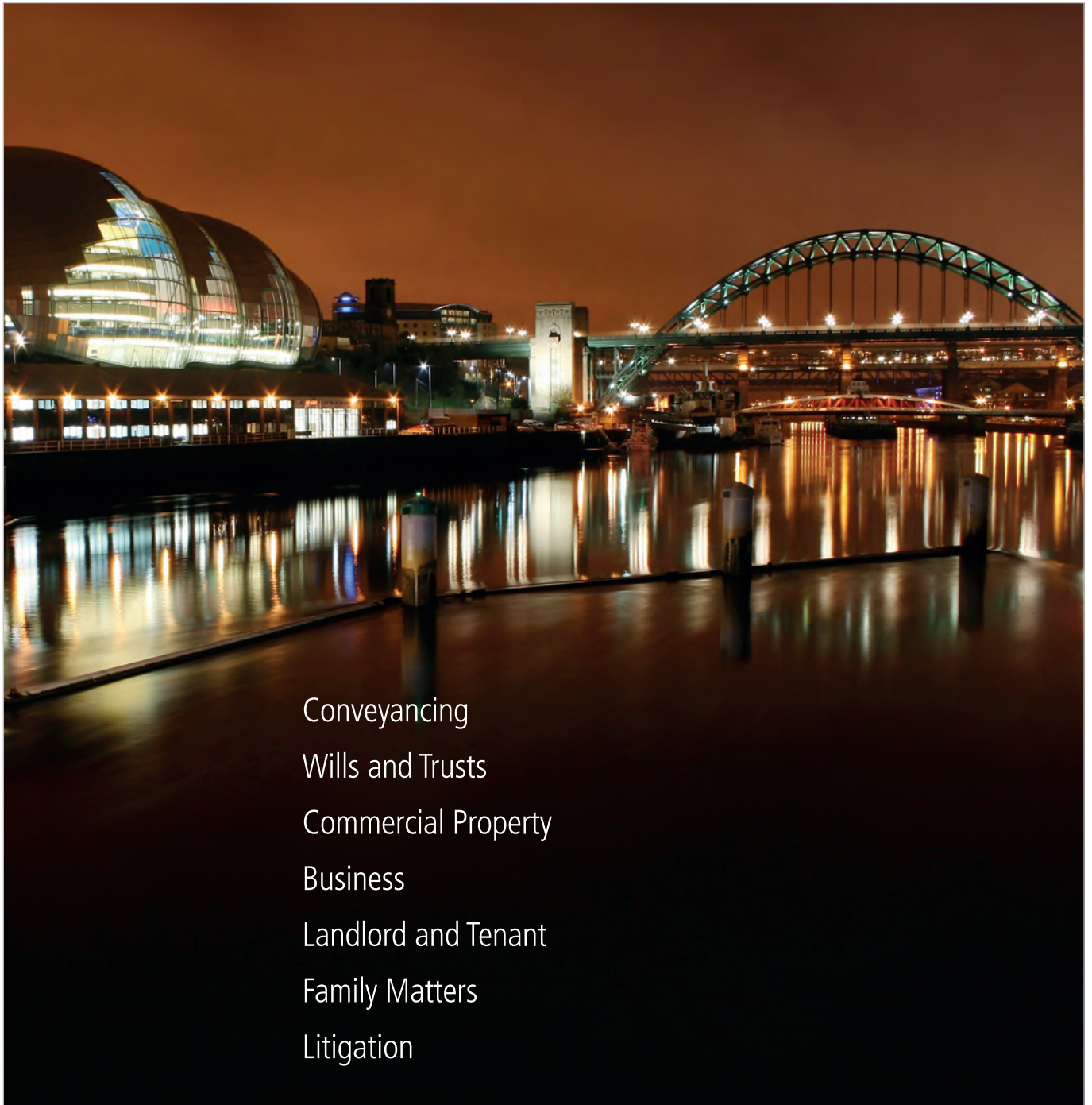
Watson Burton has substantial experience in working with companies across the technology and telecommunications sectors and has acted for companies ranging from start-ups and SMEs to multi-nationals.

Duncan Reid, Partner and National Head of Corporate at Watson Burton, said: "It's a pleasure to see ITPS, one of the North East tech sector's shining lights, bringing its expertise to multi-national companies such as Arriva PLC and we are proud to be playing our part in supporting its continued success."

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AVOID THE CHRISTMAS PARTY HANGOVERS

Whether you are more inclined to mutter “bah humbug” than don a turkey hat, many of us will be enjoying some workplace festivities in the weeks ahead. Whilst the majority of these will pass without major incident, situations might arise that could leave you with a headache – and we’re not talking about too much Gluhwein. We remind you of the issues below.

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY...

Many Christmas parties will involve food and drink (they would be pretty poor if they didn’t!). When planning where to go, it’s important to be mindful of any dietary requirements based on religious beliefs and to ensure that they are met. Whilst the government has suggested it does not believe veganism would constitute a philosophical belief under the Equality Act 2010, this is by no means certain and it would be sensible to cater for vegans. Likewise, if providing drinks, ensure that both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are available. This will ensure everyone is able to attend and enjoy the event and avoid any allegations of discrimination.

Formal parties involving alcohol are of course fine but problems can obviously arise if excess alcohol impacts on the behaviour of your employees. General drunken behaviour, abusiveness, licentiousness, and violence may all be matters you wish to avoid or to deal with if they occur. That will be particularly the case where the behaviour occurs in front of customers or clients. But can you?

Clearly, if a party was held on work premises during working hours, then this would fall within the employer’s remit to discipline. For obvious reasons though, most parties take place outside of working hours and usually at a hired venue or restaurant. In those cases, there must be a clear link between the misconduct and your interests as an employer for you to take action. The focus needs to be on how the behaviour impacts on the employee’s ability to do their job and any reputational issues to the employer.

Where the behaviour takes place in front of clients or customers and damages or could damage your reputation, this is more likely to result in a

fair dismissal so long as a fair procedure has been followed.

Likewise, where there are more informal gatherings after which employees return to work, where an alcohol policy is breached or if the safety of employees, customers or those for whom the employee is responsible (such as patients or service users) is potentially compromised, again, dismissal is likely to be justified.

However, allegations of misconduct must be investigated and you must act reasonably taking into account all the circumstances (including the seniority of the employee where relevant) and any mitigating factors (such as if you, as the employer, have provided an excessive amount of alcohol, and also the employee’s personal circumstances).

HARASSMENT

Another potential issue that may arise at a work Christmas party is harassment. Legal action can be taken in respect of harassment on the basis of any of the protected characteristics under the Equality

Act 2010 (sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, disability, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation). However, sexual harassment is more common, perhaps due to the involvement of alcohol. Whatever the form of harassment, the employer is potentially liable unless the employer has taken reasonable steps to prevent the harassment from occurring.

TIPS

- Restrict the availability of alcohol or at least free alcohol;
- ensure you have up to date policies and procedures on discipline, equal opportunities and harassment/dignity at work;
- ensure managers and staff are trained on the above policies and that any complaints are dealt with appropriately;
- for client events, be clear beforehand as to the standards of behaviour you expect;
- investigate any allegations of misconduct; and
- ensure disciplinary outcomes are consistent.



Claire Rolston and Yvonne Atherton are employment law solicitors at Rolston Lant Law Firm (formerly CLR Law). Get in touch with us on 0191 6030061 or hello@rolstonlant.com for any employment law or HR queries.

EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATION

By Lucy Gray, partner in the Dispute Resolution and Intellectual Property team at Hay & Kilner Law Firm

The focus of dispute resolution is, just as it says, achieving a resolution.

That means that negotiating, manoeuvring and strategising on behalf of clients are key attributes of most "litigators". Those skills also enable us to help clients conducting highly tactical discussions in non-litigious situations.

My recent negotiation of a client's multi-million pound contract to develop new technologies eventually came down to the details of a single clause (the limitation of liability clause – as is often the case!). The various strategies we employed to resolve those last remaining issues got me thinking about exactly what it takes to be efficient and successful in negotiations, particularly where the contractual relationship in question has vast potential in relation to the development and exploitation of Information Technology and Intellectual Property.

Here are my tips for negotiating and getting those most important contracts across the line:

1. Maintain your focus - Remember exactly what it is you want and identify your best route towards achieving those outcomes. There is always a bigger picture so try not to get hung up on tactical point scoring but do know your limits and where you can (or should!) compromise.

2. Anticipate, plan and react - Consider what the other side is thinking, and why. Understanding their rationale makes it easier to challenge their logic, and, ultimately, to persuade them.



Lucy Gray

3. Understand your bargaining position - Be realistic about what you can and cannot expect to achieve in negotiations, but don't underestimate the value of your goods and services to the customer – as we say in the north east, "shy bairns get nowt" – ask the question, in the right way and at the right time.

4. Timing – Is there strategic merit in holding something back (perhaps an additional 'sweetener' or an area for further compromise), which could bring additional rewards later in the negotiation process?

5. Management - Time pressures, personalities, aims and the all-important documents should be carefully managed. Understanding and appealing to particular personalities can help you make real progress.

6. A fresh pair of eyes – Interpretations differs so speaking to a colleague or peer and putting some

wording before them can make all of the difference. Indeed, the legal profession probably wouldn't exist if everyone read everything in the same way!

7. Alternatives – Make sure you regularly review your stance on any perceived 'deal breakers'. Is there another way of achieving what you want? If they are truly deal breakers, hold firm but consider other potential areas for compromise.

8. Change the contacts? Might getting different, trusted parties involved be a good idea? A different voice, tone or approach can make a big difference.

9. Is it all about the money? Well, yes, usually! But are there other aspects you could use to your advantage in negotiations – could you offer some non-monetary added value in one area that enables you to make progress in others?

With quality advice and some careful strategic thinking, there is always a resolution to be found.



FIZZ IN THE CITY

Mincoffs Solicitors recently held another popular Fizz in the City ladies networking event at the Crowne Plaza, Stephenson Quarter. The increasingly successful event sees ladies from all over the region attend to connect with like-minded businesswomen over a glass (or two) of prosecco. The October event raised over £190 for Teenage Cancer Trust.

The final Fizz in the City of 2018 will take place on Friday 30th November. Contact marketing@mincoffs.co.uk to book your place.

@mincoffs #fizzfriday
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TO REPORT, OR NOT TO REPORT? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Data protection expert Gillian Scribbins, of Muckle LLP, examines if we are now too quick to report data breaches.

It feels like a good time to congratulate ourselves for stepping up to our responsibilities, and complying with the GDPR. We've published our privacy policies, we've updated our marketing consents, we've deleted old data and set up new data protection procedures. And by keeping our, slightly apprehensive, eyes on the ICO enforcement actions, we've learnt from the non-compliance mistakes of other organisations.

We're so thorough and focussed on our compliance in fact, that we're actually, possibly, being too good at it. I am talking specifically about complying with the GDPR obligation to report personal data breaches.

ARE WE OVER-REPORTING?

James Dipple-Johnstone, deputy information commissioner, told attendees of the CBI Cyber Security Business Insight Conference last month, that a third of data breach reports received in the past few months don't meet the ICO's reporting threshold. We are over-reporting our data breaches. Hardly surprising, given the rhetoric pushed out by the ICO over the past year or so. We've been urged to be transparent, to build a relationship and to co-operate with the ICO rather than hide our mistakes (and our breaches).

So when big breaches make big headlines, and the roll call of fines to companies great and small continues to grow, it's no wonder we're erring on the side of caution. We have the added time pressure of reporting (reportable) breaches within 72 hours of discovery, and we've had few place holders for what constitutes a likely risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons – the criterion of a reportable breach.



Gillian Scribbins

WHAT MAKES A DATA BREACH REPORTABLE?

The ICO held a webinar over the summer on data breach reporting, in which they explained that risk means "more than remote chance of harm or damage taking place."

The European Data Protection Board (EDPB) guidance on reporting breaches provides some further assistance in determining whether a breach is likely to result in a risk. Factors to take into account are:

- the nature, sensitivity and volume of personal data affected;
- the type of breach;
- how easy it is to identify the individual data subjects;
- any special circumstances of the data subject(s) or the controller; and
- the severity of possible harm, for example

whether it could result in identity theft or fraud, physical harm, psychological distress, humiliation or damage to reputation.

There is a higher threshold for the requirement of controllers to communicate personal data breaches to the data subjects, which is that the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons. A high risk should be assessed by the same factors as above, but the risk is high if the breach is more likely to impact data subjects, or the severity of the potential impact is greater.

STILL NOT SURE WHETHER IT'S WORTH REPORTING?

Despite this guidance, which has been available since before May, there remains a fair amount of uncertainty. The deputy commissioner said in his speech at the CBI conference that they "will be working with organisations to try and discourage this [unnecessary reporting] in future once we are all more familiar with the new threshold".

We may be treated to a code of conduct for reporting breaches in future, but in the meantime the ICO has issued a personal data breach reporting guidance page, at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/report-a-breach/>.

OUR ADVICE?

Avoid knee-jerk reactions and use your 72 hours wisely. There are no brownie points for reporting within the first hour of discovery rather than the 71st. Determine the facts and carry out a thorough risk assessment. Once arrived at this stage, it's likely that you will know whether it is something you genuinely need to report.

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



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Sarah Crilly

FINANCIAL NEEDS IN DIVORCE – HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

Sarah Crilly, a Partner in the Matrimonial law team at Ward Hadaway, looks at the latest thinking on the issue of how much money divorcing couples need.

Depending on the length of the marriage, the starting point for the division of assets on divorce is equality.

Although this may provide a fair outcome in what are known as the "big money" cases, where the equal division of assets will provide each party with finances beyond their needs, what happens where the equal division of assets provides for an unfair result? What if one spouse is to look after the children whilst the other spends £2,000 per month on socialising? Are these both classified as financial needs?

There are two types of needs which may persuade the court to depart from the provision of equality: income needs and capital needs.

What constitutes a need in family cases, among other factors, will depend on the available income of the parties, the length of the marriage, the age of the parties and the lifestyle prior to the marriage. As a result, spending £2,000 per month on socialising could very much be a need depending on the circumstances of the case as a whole.

In April 2018, the Family Justice Council published the second edition of its useful guide on the making of orders to meet financial needs following divorce

and the dissolution of civil partnerships.

The guidance was first published in June 2016. The aim of this was to promote a consistent definition in the courts and also assist the growing number of people in the family courts who are appearing without legal representation. The guidance addresses the fact that the needs of both parties must be considered and must be fair to both parties.

The definition of "Needs" came under scrutiny this year in what was named the "End of the meal ticket for life" case after Kim Waggot lost her joint lives maintenance award. However, it is clear from the guidance that the Court should "tend eventually not towards life-long support but towards independence".

Financial orders such as maintenance, which seek to provide one party with a dependence on the other, either for life or until remarriage, are viewed unfavorably under the guidelines because they ignore the aim of self-sufficiency and independence for both parties. It is important to note that this particular analysis is not relevant to the provision of child maintenance as this is dealt with through separate provisions.

The guidance also states that "the court will strive to stretch finite resources and where resources are modest the children's needs may predominate".

In practice, this will affect families where a 50/50 split of the assets and income will not work due to one parent taking on the role of the primary caregiver. In these situations, the court will recognise the ability of the breadwinner to offset any disparity in a divorce settlement with future earnings potential. The aim is to ensure that financially dependent children are cared for by the primary caregiver in the short-term with the least disruption to the independent lives of either party.

Since publication of the first edition of the guidance, it has been used as a tool by solicitors in order to assist in advising clients on this difficult area of the law. It has also helped to direct the Courts to a fairer settlement by encouraging judges to consider a wider range of factors than they had done previously. As shown from the case of Waggot, it is however still an area of wide judicial discretion and it is essential to obtain advice from a practitioner at an early opportunity to assess whether your needs will be taken in to consideration.

For more information on the issues raised by this article please contact sarah.crilly@wardhadaway.com or call 0191 204 4463.

A NEW ERA IN LAW

■ Dispute Resolution ■ Restructuring and Insolvency ■ Real Estate Residential Property
■ Real Estate Commercial Property ■ Debt Recovery ■ Corporate and Commercial Services
■ Employment and HR ■ Sport Services

PLAN AHEAD WITH AN LPA TO HELP FUTURE-PROOF FINANCIAL DECISIONS

We all like to look after our own money. It's a characteristic that stems from our childhood from the pennies, or now pounds that the tooth fairy brings us, to our first wages, saving for our first home and beyond.

Here, Rebecca Harbron Gray, who heads up the wills, trusts and probate team at Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF) shares her insight and hopes people feel empowered to make positive steps and give clear direction to loved ones about finances should they ever need such support.

The thought of handing over responsibility to others to look after our money in later life is something we all want to avoid. Indeed, I see many clients who view it as a failing or a weakness to find in their later years to even contemplate they may need help from their nearest and dearest.

Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA) are not only now much easier to create for clients who have a clear direction they can prove invaluable support to your relatives in any time of need. Taking the worry away off your children or friends by having an LPA at the ready for such an eventuality means they can concentrate on you rather than the administrative difficulties they would otherwise encounter. An LPA is a legal document that enables you to choose people to manage your property and finances or your health and welfare. Here, we discuss the property and finance LPA in more detail.

In a data protection and security heightened world, you need to choose who should manage your affairs rather than leave it to chance. Leaving no one as an attorney for property means you are at risk more than ever of stalemate, delays and financial exposure to your detriment. Even simple tasks like dealing with a utility account can become a burden and a frustration for people genuinely trying to help. But they find themselves unable to

pass security so fail and feel like they are failing you.

I hear people say, "I don't need an LPA because I will just add my relative/friend to the account with me if ever I need to then they will have the same authority as me".

Sadly, what is rarely publicised is that upon any death that account becomes the surviving owners. So, it will not pass in accordance with your Will and can go an entirely different direction and result in significant inequality. Such ill-preparation of not making an LPA in your lifetime can then create a dispute post-death which could have been entirely avoidable.

Similarly, please do not presume that if you are married or in a civil partnership that LPA's are unnecessary. They are still needed. Banks are entitled to freeze joint accounts when they become aware of the loss of capacity any person. In addition, sole accounts cannot be viewed or accessed. Even

if the couple may have classed the monies in that account as family monies. It becomes frustrating and difficult without proper preparation. It affects property sales in the same way. It can restrict the sale of a property and prevent moves for genuine reasons to be closer to family.

Making an LPA now in no way changes, restricts or removes your authority on your accounts/property. The power of the use of the LPA remains with you whilst you have capacity to manage your affairs. Place yourself in the position of your loved ones and ensure you have an LPA in place to help them to help you.

If you choose not to make an LPA you have no say over who the Court appoints for you as a deputy. The delay and financial expense of such an alternative are to be avoided at all costs. Take control and choose the people you trust to act for you now.



Rebecca Harbron Gray, Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP

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PROPERTY FRAUD

Property fraud remains a hot topic.

Since the Land Registry opened its doors to the public it has become relatively simple for anyone to make a simple search of the Register to find out who owns a property and what, if any, mortgages are registered against it.

Property owners may be aware of the measures to take to prevent their possessions being stolen but may not realise that the house or land that they own could also be at risk. In days gone by one of the main proofs of ownership of land was the production of title deeds – in today's digital age this practice is almost obsolete, and we now rely on the Land Registry to hold all such information.

It can be extremely difficult to steal land however fraudsters are inventing ingenious methods all the time. Title theft works in essence when the fraudster assumes false identities in order that they can pass themselves off as the landowners.

This allows them to offer the land as security for a loan, or sell the land to a third party, then pocket the money and disappear leaving the owner to deal with the distressing and costly consequences.

When the landowner discovers the crime, the property is usually already in mortgage or the land is registered in someone else's name.

The Land Registry can rectify the Register and restore the title to the innocent landowner however this may not be possible if an innocent third party has bought the property from an imposter or lent money to that imposter with the land as security.

You're more at risk if: -

- Your identity's been stolen
- You rent out your property
- You live overseas
- The property is empty. For example, if the owner is in a care home
- The property isn't mortgaged
- The property isn't registered with HM Land Registry
- Where there are family problems.

You can however take steps to protect your property from being fraudulently sold or mortgaged



Nicola Bennell, Richard Reed Solicitors

and minimize the risk of becoming a property fraud victim.

Measures you can take to protect yourself against property fraud include making sure your property is registered at the Land Registry. If you become an innocent victim of fraud and suffer financial loss as a consequence, you may be compensated.

Once registered it is important that you ensure that the Land Registry has your up to date contact details, so they can reach you. You can track changes to the Register in relation to the property(s) or put a restriction on your title if you think you're at risk. You can also provide the Land Registry with additional addresses to ensure that any notifications or other correspondence actually reaches you, this also includes supplying an email address.

The Land Registry allow you to sign up to get property alerts if someone makes an application to change the Register of your property.

It is important to note that this won't automatically block any changes to the Register, but it will alert you in case you need to take action.

The benefits of property alert: -

- It can provide an early warning of suspicious activity
- It allows you to take immediate action if something happens to your property that you are not expecting.

You are able to get alerts for up to 10 properties and this service is free from the Land Registry.

You can stop HM Land Registry registering a sale or mortgage on your property unless a conveyancer or solicitor certifies the application was made by you. This is achieved by a simple restriction being placed on the register.

We at Richard Reed are able to help you by updating the Register or putting a restriction on the Register.

For further information and advice please contact Nicola Bennell, Gemma Brown, Abbey Tyrrell, Joanne Wallace or Vikki Hill in the Richard Reed Conveyancing Department, Richard Reed Solicitors, 3-6 Frederick Street, Sunderland, SR1 1NA, Telephone number: 0191 5670465, www.richardreed.co.uk

Email: nicola.bennell@richardreed.co.uk gemma.brown@richardreed.co.uk abbey.tyrell@richardreed.co.uk joanne.wallace@richardreed.co.uk vikki.hill@richardreed.co.uk

'SMALL' DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE A SMALL IDEA



Carina Lawson with Helena Peat

When Carina Lawson, founder of lifestyle and boutique stationery brand Ponderlily met Helena Peat, Chartered Trade Mark Attorney at IP attorneys Murgitroyd, the seeds were sown for major business growth.

Here, Carina and Helena discuss how a close working relationship can pay dividends...

The beginning of Ponderlily founder Carina Lawson's story is not unlike that of many working mothers: juggling work pressures with family life and trying to maintain a social and gym schedule. Over the years, she had tried various means of managing her time, before realising that she didn't need more time to plan, she needed more time to reflect and recharge. This sparked a journey which led to the creation of Ponderlily, a lifestyle and boutique stationery brand that delivers on-trend, functional and eco-friendly products for mindful living.

Carina spent a lot of time designing a planner that would be fit for purpose – ensuring, for instance, that it was not ring bound so it would be easy to carry in a handbag. After trialling a few ideas, she created a planner that would empower people to take control of their time.

Carina explains the history of the brand name: "Before setting up the company I did the usual checks of looking on Companies House, but being risk averse I decided to run further searches and found a stumbling block in the name – it was at this point that I decided to consult legal advisors

on the company name.

"I approached Murgitroyd as I was looking for a North East-based firm and instantly from the first call I had with Helena I knew this was the company I wanted to work with. Helena, even before we were officially working together, talked me through the process and not only answered all my questions but I could tell straight away how genuine she is in helping small businesses; she wanted us to succeed from day one.

"It was agreed that the name as it stood would carry risk, so I went back to the drawing board and Ponderlily was born – and actually, the name now means more to me."

Since the initial engagement Carina has continued to work with Helena Peat at Murgitroyd on trade marks, registering both 'Ponderlily' and its company slogan, 'Make Space For Meaning'.

Helena Peat talks about working with small businesses like Ponderlily: "I understand that for a small business, resource management is a key consideration, which is why I talk often with my clients about not only their current projects, but what is in the pipeline so that we can prioritise activity. It is equally important for a small business to protect its rights as it is to ensure it doesn't fall

foul of anyone else's. I work with clients to strike the right balance between due diligence activities, such as trade mark clearance searches, and seeking registration of intellectual property, in accordance with their budget and availability of resource.

"I feel an extra responsibility to help start-ups and work with them on activity that can be built upon and as such we've worked on ensuring that key designs and trade marks are protected."

Carina adds: "I couldn't be more happy and thankful for working with Murgitroyd and as our company is growing Helena is able to put me in touch with relevant colleagues at Murgitroyd to support our expanding needs, which is great, as it means I can rely on the skills and expertise of the team without having to move around to different firms."

Ponderlily is working with Murgitroyd to explore additional protection as its business goes from strength to strength.

Now in its 10th year the Murgitroyd Newcastle office has a team of patent and trade mark attorneys with a mix of private practice and in-house experience, and provides strategic portfolio management advice to both local and global companies.

If you would like to discuss protecting your brand, 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.

INSPIRATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS AGREE THAT FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE.



A number of business innovators are lined up to inspire North East entrepreneurs as part of an event appropriately titled Fortune Favours the Brave.

Organised by the Entrepreneurs' Forum, it will reinforce the message that those who stick to their beliefs often succeed in delivering huge benefits to their businesses.

Guest speakers at the all-day event include: renowned businessman Bob Keiller of AB15; Chris Hulatt, one of the founders of Octopus Group; Tamara Roberts of English sparkling wine producer Ridgeview and Mark Inglis, who is a fascinating blend of rugged adventurer and entrepreneur.

James Robson MBE, chairman of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, said: "This promises to be a truly inspirational event and it will be fascinating to share in their leadership experiences."

Fortune Favours the Brave is an opportunity to hear how the speakers have been able to lead and grow their dynamic and successful businesses, while defining their 'make or break' decisions.

A separate panel discussion will be held on the challenges of scaling up a business using different funding strategies. Led by Graham Robb, senior partner at conference sponsor Recognition PR, it will include Kevin Brown, managing director of Pacifica Group, and the chief executive of Learning Curve Group, Brenda McLeish.

Fortune Favours the Brave is being held at Wynyard Hall Hotel, Stockton-on-Tees, on Thursday 8th November from 8am to 5pm.

It will be hosted by BBC Newcastle journalist

and presenter Charlie Charlton and forms part of the activities taking place during Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Of the speakers already confirmed, Bob Keiller has an extensive history in business, whose career-defining achievements include completing the management buy-out of PSN from Haliburton in 2006, scaling and selling PSN to Wood Group in 2011, then spearheading Wood Group's operations in more than 50 countries.

He stepped down as CEO of what was the world's largest oilfield service company in 2015 to set up the consultancy AB15 to provide entrepreneurs with affordable access to his vast business experience. Through this, Bob - who is a chairman of the Entrepreneurial Exchange, Scottish Male Business Leader of the Year and Entrepreneur of the Year - hopes to uncover the next generation of business leaders.

Chris Hulatt co-founded Octopus Group during what was described as a "lightbulb moment" in his living room in 2000. Together with Simon Rogerson, the pair built up a group dedicated to innovation and focusing on customer needs.

Since then, it has spread its tentacles into six distinct sectors: Octopus Investments, Octopus Healthcare, Octopus Energy, Octopus Ventures, Octopus Property and Octopus Labs. It currently has more than 150,000 customers and its investments have injected £8.3bn in the UK economy.

Chris, who is responsible for Octopus Group's financial strategy and assessing new opportunities, was named EY UK Entrepreneur of the Year in 2017.

Tamara Roberts is the second generation to head the family business and as CEO is responsible for overseeing Ridgeview's growth in the production of English sparkling wine to almost 300,000 bottles a year from its South Downs winery.

Ridgeview won the trophy for 'Best Sparkling Wine in the World' in the 2010 Decanter World Wine Awards, and exports to 12 countries around the world, including the USA, Scandinavia and Japan.

Mark Inglis is a truly inspirational figure, whose mantra is 'Attitude Determines Your Altitude'. At the age of 23, he was forced to radically reassess his life after losing both legs to frostbite after being trapped in an ice cave for 14 days on the summit of New Zealand's highest peak.

He went on to become the only double amputee to summit Mount Everest and has carved out diverse careers as a scientist, wine maker, business innovator, trekking guide and leading international motivator. Mark also lifted New Zealand's first Paralympic Cycling Medal in Sydney 2000.

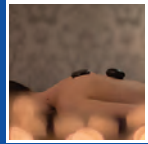
Tickets for Fortune Favours the Brave are £99 +VAT for Entrepreneurs' Forum members and their guests. They are available from www.entrepreneursforum.net/conference.

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



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Rosa Talai and Roya Irving are members 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...

ROSA TALAI & ROYA IRVING

Sorella Sorella

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUNDS IN BUSINESS?

Roya: We had rather unconventional backgrounds to running a restaurant as we both studied law. I attended Durham University and went into commercial property law with a big Newcastle firm, while Rosa graduated from Newcastle University and joined a large management consultancy company in London.

However, our parents had run a number of food-related businesses and we have always been involved, so it is in the blood!

Although we are both qualified solicitors, Rosa and I had always talked about opening our own restaurant – although it took two to three years to pluck up enough courage to quit our jobs to follow our dream by opening Sorella Sorella in 2012.

We both worked for reputable companies and had successful careers, but somehow it felt we should be elsewhere. In the end, it was about the passion as our hearts were always in the food and hospitality industry.

The advice and support from our parents was invaluable in setting up the restaurant.

We were always involved in the running of their restaurants, but going it alone was completely different, especially as Sorella Sorella is a large establishment and requires a great deal of hard work to run successfully. So, we were fortunate to have the know-how available within the family.

WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Rosa: We both have a passion for food, in particular Italian food and for Italy itself. We love eating out so knew instinctively the essential ingredients required to run a popular restaurant. We wanted to create somewhere that customers could return to time and again and be assured of the same consistently high levels of quality in terms of food and service.

TELL ME HOW YOUR BUSINESS HAS PROGRESSED?

Roya: The restaurant used to be a pub called The Rose, Shamrock and Thistle, which dates back to 1880. It is a big building in Sunnyside, Gateshead.

We took over the premises in March 2012 and completely renovated it, putting our own ideas into every aspect of the design. The renovation was completed in October 2012 and we opened for business soon after. It sits 115 diners and there is more seating in the lounge. We still have the pub's original sign on display as a reminder of those early days and its past history.

Since we opened six years ago, we have learnt a lot about the business and, more importantly, our customers. Whenever we tweak our menus or any aspect of the business, it is done so with the customer firmly in mind.

Sorella Sorella has grown financially year on year and we are forecasting further growth over the coming years. We now employ around 30 members of staff.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?

Rosa: On Sunday, October 7, we won the English Italian Award for Best Team in England for our staff and food at a ceremony in Manchester.

It is a national award so we are incredibly proud – as running a restaurant, especially one as large as ours, really does rely on great teamwork. To hear our name called out and to pick up that award was just amazing.

However, we have proud moments all the time, in fact whenever the restaurant is full and has a buzzing atmosphere. It always makes us feel proud because our customers have chosen to dine with us rather than our many competitors.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR MISTAKE YOU HAVE MADE IN BUSINESS AND HOW DID YOU LEARN FROM IT?

Roya: Fortunately we have not made any major mistakes. As and when problems arise, we resolve them and always remember our dad's original advice to learn from it, move on and try not to let it happen again.

WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINT?

Rosa: We are a family-run restaurant and we treat our staff and customers as though they are part of the family.

Our USP is excellent quality food and service and one of us is always there to welcome our customers and see to their needs. We have a large, regular customer base and our team ensures that every time they dine with us they receive friendly, personal service.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR BUSINESS?

Roya: The two most important elements are our customers and staff. Rosa and I have both worked for major companies and we know how important it is for people to be happy at work and to achieve a good work-life balance. We put both our staff and customers at the heart of everything we do.

DO YOU LIVE BY A CERTAIN MOTTO?

Rosa: We don't have a specific motto, but we always try to remain positive – which means remaining motivated whenever something challenging happens.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Roya: When the time is right we would like to open another restaurant. I feel everything we have learned here can be transferred to another venture. We want to continue to grow Sorella Sorella and aim to make every service as busy and efficient as possible.

We both recently joined the Entrepreneurs' Forum and have attended a number of inspirational events, which is helping us formulate our plans for the future.



LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR PROMOTIONS & HIRES

Winner of the 2018 Northern Law Awards' Law Firm of the Year, TLW Solicitors, has recruited five new starters and promoted two team members.

The North Shields based law firm, headed by partners John Burn and Peter McKenna, has made the hires in response to an increasing caseload. Helen Walker joins as a fee earner in the Personal Injury team, with Ryan Butler, Sophie Hardy, Shannon Watson and Jade Doran each joining as paralegals in the firm's First Response Unit. Paralegal Matthew Jefferson has also been promoted to the position of trainee solicitor. Wayne Christie has been promoted to become TLW's first Operations Manager.

TOP NORTH-EAST CHEF JOINS THE REGION'S LEADING BOUTIQUE HOTEL

One of the rising stars of north-east chefs has taken over the kitchens at the region's leading independent hotel with a promise to put guests first. Danny Parker, regional finalist in this year's Great British Menu and formerly Head Chef at Newcastle's Michelin-star restaurant, House of Tides, is now bringing his talents to the city's Jesmond Dene House Hotel.

Danny, 28, believes the secret to a successful restaurant isn't flashy food or starry accolades but a kitchen team who give guests what they want. "A restaurant should be about the guest, making sure they have a good time," he says, adding: "I want guests to look at our menus and be spoilt for choice, to find things they can relate to."



NEW DARLINGTON BUILDING SOCIETY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ANDREW CRADDOCK

Darlington Building Society is delighted to announce the appointment of Andrew Craddock as its new chief executive. Andrew will join the Society, subject to regulatory approval, on December 1st and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge with him.

Andrew has over 30 years of experience in the industry and joins directly from Buckinghamshire Building Society, where he has been the chief executive for the past four years. Prior to that he spent time with both Allied Irish Bank and Barclays Bank.

Andrew will succeed Colin Fyfe, who has been chief executive since 2014. Colin, who announced his departure in March this year, will leave the Society at the end of September.

SPECIALIST BUSINESS AND PROPERTY BARRISTER JOINS TRINITY

Leading senior Business and Property barrister, Jonathan Rodger has joined Trinity Chambers.

A recognised specialist in the Business and Property Courts in the North East and across England and Wales, Jonathan will be based at Trinity's historic Custom House on Newcastle's Quayside. Home to nearly 80 barristers, Legal 500 Tier One Trinity, also has a Chambers in Middlesbrough supporting its clients across the North and beyond.

Jonathan is instructed in cases involving commercial, contract and partnership disputes, company litigation including shareholder disputes, directors' duties and disqualification proceedings, contentious probate and Inheritance Act claims, Insolvency, commercial and residential leasehold disputes, licensing and professional negligence.



BERNICIA APPOINTS JOHN HOLMES AS NEW CHAIR

Social housing provider Bernicia has appointed highly respected business leader John Holmes as its new chair.

John brings extensive experience of executive and non-executive roles to the post as Bernicia launches a £190m investment programme over the next five years.

He is joined by three new board members – former Bond Dickinson partner Claire-Jane Rewcastle, Avril Gibson, former Northern Learning Trust chief executive and Marie Roe, director of business and development at Gateshead Housing Company.

Their appointments further strengthen Bernicia's governance structures which, together with its financial viability, have just been given top marks by the government's Regulator of Social Housing.

Bernicia, with its head office based in Ashington, employs 550 staff across four North East sites, with a £70m annual turnover.



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FROM START UP TO SCALE UP

Newcastle-based learning and development company Gradvert has been on an exciting journey.

Established in 2012, Gradvert has grown organically by helping organisations to improve business performance by improving people. We spoke to Gradvert's founder and MD Michaela Reaney about her own personal experience of scaling a business.

Gradvert has gone through a period of significant growth over the last year. What key lessons have you learnt?

As most founders know there is a pivotal point when scaling a business and the most important thing is not to do so chaotically. Being an entrepreneur, I am comfortable with a certain amount of ups and downs while we grow organically but it is vital that we learn from our experiences and focus on providing the best customer journey possible.

At Gradvert we have developed an agile and flexible business model which allows us to forecast and respond to client needs. This has been important to us, as it is much easier to win repeat business from existing clients than it is to gain new ones.

We've also been lucky enough to attract some great new talent, strengthening our learning solutions offering and working on our key point of differentiation, our approach. We now have over 10 core employees at our HQ in Newcastle, an extensive network of coaches and key strategic partners.

What regional scale up support did you receive and how did this help you?

We were officially invited to be a part of the RTC North Scale Up programme which gave us access to the skills of a business support adviser.

This has led to an incredibly useful journey for Gradvert, addressing key infrastructure, technology and back office areas of the business to bring operational efficiencies to help cater for growth.

What has been your key focus over the last year?

We acquired registered apprenticeship training provider status and have developed our offer with our strategic partner Kate Temple-Brown. Our latest product, Optima, allows us to work with organisations to maximise their Apprenticeship Levy spend so they can focus on talent, not tax.

Through this we have seen organic growth within



Michaela Reaney

our existing client base, helping companies like British Athletics to leverage their levy spend. It has also helped us access new global clients such as Diageo, Multiplex and Net-a-Porter.

Another addition to our learning and development services is our strategic alliance with destination management company Madventure, through which we offer tailored CSR leadership, training and development programmes overseas. These experiences offer an amazing opportunity for companies to show how they can build wealth while benefiting society at the same time.

What technological innovations are you involved with?

We have been working on a number of exciting technology solutions for our clients and are about to launch our own blended learning system, which is a Smart Lab platform to help clients on their learning journeys.

We're also exploring the use of virtual and augmented reality in our programmes. Advances in areas such as AI will mean that humans will work

alongside advanced robotics, and this will happen sooner than you think.

What is your top tip to business owners during scale up?

Allow yourself time and space to think about the bigger picture. It is important to have regular strategy sessions to work 'on the business' not 'in the business'.

Having these processes and systems in place ensures that when you do start scaling, it's not disorganised and it makes the change manageable. Like many businesses we support flexible working and have a number of partners and employees who work remotely; to do this we need the right technology to support our team.

I naturally want to collaborate with people, however you have to be very mindful about who you want to join your team and who the right partners are. I've learnt to be very clear about the values and behaviours that underpin the business. In many regards the journey has been tough, but I have never regretted it for one minute.

Find out more at www.gradvert.com



Bryony Gibson

'HIRE SLOW, FIRE FAST' IS OUTDATED ADVICE

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, talks about the likelihood of losing out on the best people if you drag out the recruitment process.

A bad hire can be catastrophic for your business so it pays to be thorough but "hire slow, fire fast" may no longer be the smartest way to recruit; especially if you're working in an industry where talent is in short supply.

Leaps in technology and changing trends have transformed the modern workforce into one which is much more mobile and flexible. People are happier than they've ever been to switch jobs and working models which are constantly being adapted to complement our lifestyles.

Home working, company culture, staff perks and a desire to align with your values all rate highly as staff motivators, so if you're slow to respond to a potential new recruit you'll convey the wrong impression from the start and it won't take long for them to find something else.

In truth, there are two main reasons why the majority of recruitment processes grind to a halt - one is poor internal processes and the other is a lack of urgency.

A lot of employers have a view that people are queuing up to join them, but that couldn't be further from the truth. We are in a candidate's market and, if you're good, you will have plenty of options open to you.

So, while it might go against everything you've been told, creating a faster recruitment process could be

the secret to hiring the best candidates; and there are several things you could be doing to speed things up.

Start by writing very clear and honest job adverts and descriptions. The more transparent you are, the better suited your applicants will be.

Be more selective about the people you invite for interview so you don't waste anyone's time, including your own.

Create a talent plan to match your long-term business goals. By identifying future people needs you can always be on the lookout for the right people to help you grow.

Build a clear picture of the perfect member of staff by considering your best employees' characteristics and traits. If you know what makes a good team player, it will be much easier to find more of them.

Commit to the recruitment process and give it your full attention. Once you engage in a candidate led market you need to find time and make quick decisions. Everyone is busy, but the more time and importance you place on the process, the better results you will see.

Get expert help by finding the right recruitment partner that will allow you to capitalise on their market knowledge and expertise. A good recruiter will show you a constant duty of care, keeping the process moving, updating you and providing realistic

guidance on the market and how you can attract top talent.

In my experience, the best people aren't always actively looking for a new role and by building a strong partnership with an industry expert, you will be the first to know about the right people when they become available.

When it comes to finding a new job, great people always have options and there's nothing worse than sending out a negative message during the recruitment process. If you like someone, don't hesitate in inviting them for interview or making an offer.

If you've been able to attract strong candidates, the worst thing you can do is go quiet after an interview. It doesn't take long for someone to feel disengaged and look closer at other opportunities and silence often leaves people feeling like they weren't the right person for the job, even when that's not necessarily the case.

There's no doubt that hiring managers are very busy, and often under added pressure from covering the job they need to fill but by prioritising hiring activity - and making it fast and effective - you will get the right candidate in a short time frame, which will free up a lot of valuable time to focus on other business-critical issues.

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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Andrew Calder of Calder's Kitchen

GO>GROW TRAINING DRIVES SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

Small businesses and start-ups never have enough hours in the day. They have a dream, an ambition to grow and succeed but face daily obstacles that must be overcome.

Widely thought of as the backbone of the region's economy, the growing army of small businesses enterprises – SMEs – meet local needs and create jobs. But many struggle or fail at an early stage, often because they can't access a helping hand at key times in their development. Attracting the right people and finding those with the right skills is often a huge issue for growing businesses.

Business owners rarely have enough time to devote to training their own people. They're time starved, often busy at the coal-face of their business. That's where the Go>Grow training and enterprise programme can help. Established by Gateshead College after they secured £21 million from the European Social Fund, Go>Grow can help a business at a critical stage of growth, taking away much of the hassle of staff training.

The wide partnership of training providers within Go>Grow means that free courses can be developed across various business sectors and tailored to specific company needs. Trainers can visit and work on site, at the premises of SMEs. Their initial and medium-term input can prove invaluable, usually leading to enhanced workplace efficiency and effectiveness.

Ivan Jepson, director of business development at Gateshead College, said: "SMEs are the driving force behind a strong, vibrant regional economy. Many of these small businesses are looking to recruit or enhance their workforce with the skills that will help them grow and strengthen their business. Go>Grow



Kickstart Your Summer, Floriane Rodriguez and Barbara Tennet

has proven to be a flexible partner, providing free training that's designed specifically for them."

Among those to have already seen a positive impact from Go>Grow are:

MOD PIZZA

Staff from Gateshead pizza restaurant, MOD Pizza, undertook specially designed mentoring, customer service and sales courses served up in house. The training helped staff focus on their own personal development as well as future business growth. Due to their new skills and increased confidence, all employees who completed the course have seen tangible career progression, including Ben Meynell, who earned a promotion to assistant manager.

CALDER'S KITCHEN

Andrew and Anne-Marie Calder run Calder's Kitchen

in Sunderland, which is renowned for its piccalilli – an English interpretation of South Asian Pickles. They completed a social media and digital marketing 'Boost Your Business' skills course which has had tasty impact on the business, helping the couple's online trade rise by 10%.

AVERY'S ANGELS

North Shields-based holistic therapist and sole trader, Alison Avery of Avery's Angels, also completed a 'Boost Your Business' course in a venue local to her. She used her newly found website marketing skills to full effect, driving additional sales of her holistic treatments which has resulted in an impressive 40% increase in trade.

KICKSTART YOUR SUMMER

North East entrepreneurs Floriane Rodriguez and Barbara Tennet met whilst attending a 'Boost Your Business' course. The pair launched a new fitness boot camp venture, Kickstart Your Summer. Due to using their newly acquired skills they've doubled the number of boot camp participants in under a month.

THE PERCY HEDLEY FOUNDATION

Staff from The Percy Hedley Foundation, which provides specialist and personalised care and education to disabled people, completed Go>Grow training in BSL (British Sign Language) to help break down communication barriers and improve staff confidence. Staff are now better equipped to support individuals who can't communicate through speech.

For more information on Go>Grow and the courses on offer visit, www.gogrow.org.uk



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WASTE FOOD- RECYCLING PIONEERS WORK TOWARDS A CLEANER, GREENER TOMORROW



North East food waste recycling company and sustainability pioneers Warrens Group have announced another first for the industry and the North East. As a third-generation family business of over 70 years, Warrens have grown from humble beginnings to become one of the region's foremost providers of agricultural and food waste recycling services.

In recent years, Warrens have forged a place for themselves at the forefront of the industry, having recently recycled over 115,000 tonnes of food waste to generate over 100 million kWh of clean, green energy every year, which is enough to power 19,000 homes.

Now Warrens have announced another first. They are about to take delivery of the first of a new fleet of trucks powered by biomethane gas, making them the first food waste recycling company in the UK to power their waste collection vehicles with biogas converted directly from their own food waste customers.

The new biomethane powered truck will be in operation six days a week, with refuelling carried out at Warrens Group's on-site facility at Newton Aycliffe. This means the trucks will collect food waste from a wide range of existing Warrens customers including pubs, restaurants, schools and supermarkets across the North East.

REPROTEC GROUP CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS



County Durham-based Reprotec Group, an award-winning surface repair and protection specialist, is celebrating 30 years in business.

Founded in 1988 by MD John Holmes, Reprotec was originally set up as a sales agent selling high-tech surface engineering, covering Scotland and Ireland. Based in an office at Gateshead Business Centre, this work led the firm to introduce resins for engineering and maintenance repair compounds and Reprotec as it's known today was born.

Reprotec Group consists of Reprotec UK that specialises in providing innovative, environmentally-friendly repair and protection solutions, using resin-based products to protect the fabric of buildings.

The firm works nationwide across all industry sectors including automotive, food production, chemical, engineering, pharmaceutical, education and aerospace, offering a one-stop-shop for all types of surface repair and protection solutions. Reprotec's reputation and breadth of experience has led it to work with clients such as Nissan, Northumbrian Water and Sir Robert McAlpine.

John said: "I'm delighted to be celebrating our 30th year in business. I would like to think that our continued success can be attributed to our core values which have never changed in 30 years: quality, honesty, integrity, respect, care and hard work."

KOMATSU BECOMES EXHIBIT FOR NORTH CELEBRATION

Komatsu UK recently opened its doors to the general public for the first time in its 30-year history to welcome 75 visitors as part of the Great Exhibition of the North celebrations.

Three free packed tours were enjoyed by visitors who claimed their places after the Behind the Scenes of Komatsu UK event was advertised on the GEN website.

They were given presentations on the history of Komatsu, a showcase of the firm's products and then enjoyed a guided tour of the site, as well as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to drive Komatsu's world-famous excavators.

The Great Exhibition of the North celebrates

everything magical about the North of England. The family-friendly event created a summer of vibrant exhibitions, performances and technology showcases influenced by innovators, artists and designers past and present.

Komatsu advertised the tours on the Great Exhibition of the North's website and quickly filled the 75 spaces with families keen to visit the UK base of the world's second biggest manufacturer of mining and construction equipment.

Komatsu also manned a week-long stand, inspiring the community about careers in the company and the products manufactured at Birtley.



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HORIZONWORKS

HORIZON WORKS HIGHLIGHTS THE SUCCESS OF MURGITROYD'S NEWCASTLE TEAM



Samantha Davidson, MD of Horizon Works with Keith Jones, Director, Patents at Murgitroyd

Samantha Davidson, Managing Director of leading B2B marketing agency Horizon Works, talks us through how they are helping global firm Murgitroyd celebrate its 10-year anniversary of its Newcastle office by implementing a regional profile-raising campaign.

Murgitroyd is a global firm of European patent, trade mark and IP attorneys which consists of over 270 staff across 13 offices throughout Europe. The business prides itself on supporting innovation due to its ongoing and continued relationship with its clients and its attorneys being there at every stage of the innovation journey – from start-up businesses to multi-national corporations.

Based in the heart of the city, the Murgitroyd Newcastle team works with North East based businesses of all types and sizes in getting the most out of their intellectual property. The organisation supports a diverse range of clients across multiple sectors including education, law and technology who are innovators and leaders in their fields. The team are experts and can advise on patent, trade mark, design and copyright issues and offer a free consultation.

Building on years of continued success, Murgitroyd appointed Horizon Works to work closely with its Newcastle office. Through operating in similar

complex industries, Horizon Works was able to quickly grasp Murgitroyd's markets and possess the local knowledge, resource and connections to help cement the organisation as leaders in its field regionally.

We are delivering a profile-raising campaign through the creation of press releases, case studies, thought leadership pieces, team profiles and social media content. The activity will help to emphasise the passion, skills and expertise of the Murgitroyd team and the complete focus and time it dedicates to both the individuals and the companies it works with. This work will also support Murgitroyd with its future growth ambitions along with increasing its international reach.

The campaign is helping to showcase the success of the Newcastle office and illustrate how Murgitroyd has been working with companies and innovators at the cutting edge of the sector for 10 years. We will also be supporting its anniversary celebration event this month, to truly commemorate the business and the team.

Keith Jones, Director, Patents at Murgitroyd commented: "We've really seen the benefit of working with Horizon Works in 2018, with increased local press coverage and access to Horizon Works' network of local contacts for business development purposes. We've enjoyed working with Samantha and the team thus far, and are looking forward to further building on our relationship with them."

Horizon Works has a diverse portfolio of clients including US-based AmeriWater, a premier provider of water treatment equipment, The Expanded Metal Company, an expanded metal mesh manufacturer, INVISTA Performance Technologies, one of the world's largest integrated producers of chemical intermediates, polymers and fibres, Industrial and Marine Hydraulics (IMH), a leading hydraulic engineering company, Crabtree, a designer and manufacturer of metal decorating and coating equipment and Fera, which works across plant and bee health, crop protection, sustainable agriculture, food and feed quality, and chemical safety in the environment.

To find out more about Horizon Works visit www.horizonworks.co.uk

LET US BE YOUR TaDaR MOMENT

Deciding what to do after you finish school is a big decision. Do you go to college, sixth form, do an apprenticeship or even get a job, what's the right thing to do? Well, first and foremost, you have to think of what's best for you, not just what your friends are doing.

Whatever route you choose, this is the stepping block to your career so don't make any rash decisions and talk about your options with those closest to you, with a careers advisor or even with ourselves here at TDR Training. We can literally be your TaDaR moment, your inspiration and your route to happiness.

The college versus apprenticeship debate is a long-running one and choosing your next educational move requires careful consideration. Higher education continues to be a popular option despite the rise in tuition fees, however, attitudes to apprenticeships have also evolved and they are now recognised as an equal alternative to education. After all, continuing classroom learning full-time isn't for everyone!

Through structured engagement with schools and TDR's family learning programmes, at TDR Trust we make learning a positive and enjoyable experience for all. We encourage young people to take an interest in how things work, help develop enthusiasm for lifelong learning, and provide encouragement, support and guidance to help you achieve your full potential.



The objectives of our charity are to promote and provide learning, vocational education and training to, and retraining of, employees and individuals in pursuit of employment in the fields of science, technology, engineering, manufacturing, commerce, enterprise and professional services in industry and commerce.

If full-time classroom-based lectures and studying aren't your thing, why not look at an apprenticeship for on-the-job training and support with exams and textbooks, giving you a real insight into the world of work before you're fully qualified? You'll get to train and work with some of the biggest and best companies in the North East, all whilst gaining

yourself a qualification in your chosen sector; quite a refreshing change to the college and university style learning that many have chosen to steer away from.

With a recent 98% conversion rate on our Apprenticeship Access Programme, you know you're in good hands whilst you work towards your chosen diploma. If you know anyone who's struggling to decide on their future career path, and are struggling with their TaDaR decision making, then head to www.TDRTraining.co.uk to check out our latest vacancies and how we could help. Let us be the next step in your career path...

www.tdrtraining.co.uk

PAINT DONATION TRANSFORMS OUTDOOR SPACES AT NORTHUMBERLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

A Northumberland primary school has seen its outdoor spaces transformed thanks to a generous donation by AkzoNobel.

AkzoNobel, which has just celebrated the first anniversary of the launch of its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Ashington, provided 70 litres of paint in a variety of different colours to Shanklea Primary School in Cramlington to enable the school to transform its outdoor spaces into a bright, fun environment for the children to enjoy.

The global paint manufacturer was approached about the possibility of donating paint to the project by one of the school mums, Angela Spedding, whose son and daughter both attend Shanklea Primary School.

"I read in the school newsletter that the teachers were looking for items and resources to enhance the school grounds and outdoor play areas," Angela said.

"I knew that AkzoNobel had been involved with similar community projects so I decided to approach them to see if there was any chance they could provide some paint for us."

Since opening its flagship manufacturing site in Ashington in 2017, AkzoNobel has been committed to bringing colour into people's lives through a variety of community engagement projects as part



of its Dulux Smarter Spaces initiative.

Kay Laughton, early years manager at Shanklea Primary School, said: "The outdoor spaces around the school were simply looking tired and a bit tatty as they hadn't been painted for a few years so we decided to put a call out to parents to see if anyone could donate a few tins to help us spruce the place up.

"When Angela got in touch to say that she had managed to get AkzoNobel involved, we were completely overwhelmed. The site provided more than enough paint for us to re-colour the fences,

sheds, the trellises in our vegetable garden and the children's play area, including the mud kitchen. The area has been completely transformed!"

Jill Johnston, site support coordinator at AkzoNobel Ashington, added: "We were delighted to be able to help Shanklea Primary School with the rejuvenation of its outdoor spaces.

"The new colourful playground and fences are really striking and make such a difference to the overall look and feel of the school. We hope that the staff and pupils will continue to enjoy the spaces for many years to come."

For more information about AkzoNobel, visit www.akzonobel.com



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

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





CHRIS SHALLIKER

Global Head of Colleague Training, Development and Welfare

What is your role in Northern Gas & Power?

Wow, where to start....as well as overseeing the Global Colleague Training, Development & Welfare Department. I also work as a therapist in the organisation. I am a qualified trainer, NLP Practitioner, Advanced Clinical Hypnotherapist, and Mental Health First Aider and trained in Suicide Prevention, which provides a whole host of dimensions to the work I do and services I provide to our family.

Never before have I been approached by an organisation and asked to provide these services for an entire workforce! That's what the Executive Team of Northern Gas and Power did. They head hunted me from a top north-east online sales company and asked me to look after the NGP family. The Executive Team realised that their team members work so hard that they needed someone around to look after their mental well-being which is a premise ahead of its time in comparison to other businesses.

How have you found your time at Northern Gas & Power?

My time with NGP has been exciting! My role has developed dramatically and is still evolving as the company keeps expanding. Our goal is to be the best and over this year alone we have developed an amazing new coaching team and induction programme which includes life coaching, motivational speakers, focuses on sales rather than the industry and has an enviable follow up support network for our new family members with an individual focus. We deliver out of hour's development sessions, expanded our influence across the organisation and aided in the setup of our Global offices. I head the team up and I still have the time and space to help our family members on a daily basis with my skill-set. All of this has been fundamental to my happiness in the organisation and an example of just one aspect of how and why our colleagues love the company and how their work-life balance is promoted so well that we won Company with Best Work Life Balance in 2018.

The therapeutic work I carry out is now a natural part of

everyday life whereby we challenge mind-set and limiting beliefs daily. I have regular 1 to 1 sessions with any of my NGP family members that ask for my time, the sessions are 100% confidential. The people I work with are very open and honest with me and my work can vary from aiding with large life problems or decisions, overcoming phobias and fears, helping fight depression, anxiety and other negative mental states to helping developing strong good mental states of confidence, calm, acceptance and happiness. NLP is very fast acting and having the hypnotherapy alongside that can produce dramatic results for our colleagues exceptionally quickly. The effect this can have for, not only the individual, their families and the organisation is amazing, as individuals feel better, more able to cope their productivity and happiness at work is increased meaning a win-win situation for us all. I will do whatever I can to help our NGP family members with issues they have anywhere in their lives, this family culture across the global organisation is one reason we won Best Place to Work in 2017.

We have a family feel here at NGP and our quarterly events help develop that. Our annual conference is a perfect example of the global NGP family getting together under one roof. It was a magnificent event which carried on into the early hours. I really feel that the Northern Gas and Power attitude leads us to living in a more caring culture. Yes it is a tough job, but our NGP family comes through every time. This was certainly evident this week as we gained yet another award showcasing our work ethics. We are very proud to have gained the "Leadership and Culture at Work: The CMI/Glassdoor Top 20." Number three in the whole of the U.K. up against some huge names. I know the next few years will be even more exciting and bring many new opportunities for us all as we continue to expand and innovate. A new global recruitment drive will start us off in 2019 and I can't wait to be part of that!

Most people are held back because they don't fully commit to what they want to achieve. Decide what you want to achieve and commit to doing that. You can deal with anything life throws at you in the future; you've already dealt with everything else so far.





COMPANY CULTURE IS NIGEL FREEMAN'S PASSION

Manufacturing Director for the 130-strong TT Electronics site, in Hartlepool, he currently has a fascinating challenge.

The company had traded as Stadium Group since 1989 before being acquired in April this year by TT Electronics, a global provider of engineered electronics for performance critical applications with over 4800 employees operating from 27 locations worldwide. The acquisition means absorbing a new culture.

At the Hartlepool site the company delivers fully integrated manufacturing solutions for the industrial Internet of Things (IoT) serving global OEM customers with connected technologies in vehicle telematics, wearable technologies and healthcare.

TT already has an existing electronics manufacturing site in the North East based in Bedlington, this presence in the region is now strengthened further with the addition of the Hartlepool plant and across both facilities the head count stands currently at 430 staff.

TT is dedicated to maintaining the fundamental principles of fairness, honesty and common sense, which are the heart of the company's philosophy, values and corporate standards. Strong business ethics form the basis for all its relationships with employees, customers, partners, competitors, suppliers and colleagues.

Nigel said: "Our core values are how we act when we are at our best. It is all about doing the right thing. In terms of our internal culture, we must aim to bring out the best in each other. To listen, respect diverse views and to treat people fairly. We need to actively support each other to work safely, develop expertise and be successful. We need to cheer on each other's success."

It is a task that Nigel is well prepared for. He has witnessed the powerful impact a positive culture can have on the work environment when he was manufacturing director of Thorn Lighting in Spennymoor and operations director of its Swedish operation. His advocacy of culture is more than matched by his expertise in manufacturing. He was introduced to the principles of lean manufacturing in 2005 and is now a member of the Manufacturing Institute Fellowship of Lean. Then, in 2009, he became a Six Sigma black belt. Six Sigma is a disciplined, data-driven approach and methodology for eliminating defects in any process from manufacturing to transactional and from product to service.

"Having a clear strategy and business plan is very important for any company, as is the need to continually invest in new technology and processes. However, the return on investment will never be fully realised unless a company has a strong culture in which the contribution of every single member of staff is valued and rewarded. When all colleagues are engaged and understand where a business is headed, how it plans to get there and the vital role that they play in making it happen, you then have every chance to be successful."

Driving cultural change through a business cannot take place overnight and Nigel understands the need to take time to communicate with every employee. Earlier in his career he delivered the corporate values for a company he worked for to over 700 people. He dedicated four

hours to each member of staff and the project took 16 months of Nigel's time.

"It was a huge task and it was time exceptionally well spent. Every single person knew where the company was going and how important they were to the process. Staff were empowered and from all parts of the business colleagues were stepping forward with ideas and solutions knowing that every contribution was valued."

Where Nigel is concerned, developing a strong company culture is not confined to staff. He is highly aware that to be seen as a great place to work and to attract high quality staff, the company must reach out into the community.

With full integration of the two businesses complete, Nigel sees this as the perfect time for the business to reach out more into its local communities.

"TT Electronics has a clear set of core values that we are embracing, central to which is the commitment to work in the best interests of our people and our communities and to ensure our actions have a positive impact on society and the environment.

"We are very aware the success we have achieved to date at Hartlepool is down to the loyalty and dedication of the people we employ, the vast majority of whom live within the locality.

"It is important we put back into the local communities that have supported us so well over three decades.

"One of the objectives we are currently reassessing is how best to reach out to schools, local community groups and worthy causes to assess how we can help and support them and, indeed, how we can learn and benefit from them. Our involvement could be in a number of different ways but the key is that we become more involved and viewed as a good neighbour because of the things we do in the community.

"At the same time, we want to have a stronger voice within the business community and we are looking at forums and bodies such as the Tees Valley Partnership and the Economic Regeneration Team at Hartlepool Council that can assist us do just that.

"Developing the next generation of the workforce is a challenge for most companies. TT Electronics is a keen supporter in the local communities in which it operates and encourages young people to pursue STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). At Hartlepool we are in discussions with Gateshead and Hartlepool Colleges to assess how it can help us engage with and provide dedicated training courses and apprenticeships for young people looking for a career in the exciting world of electronics."



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FROM PRIMARY TO PROSPERITY



PROSPERITY



The programme, developed and delivered by employers, offers free professional support to individuals to enhance personal profiles and job prospects.

A five day mini-MBA is offered, delivered by academics and professionals providing theoretical and practical enterprise advice.

The Big Learn is a fully funded campaign that provides an opportunity for businesses to support lifelong learning by accessing accredited industry recognised qualifications. Using a recognised distant learn model which ensures participants learn at a pace and time to suit them.



Working with those most distant from the labour market, including long-term unemployed, the two-week boot camp delivered by Asian Business Connexions (ABC) holistically addresses barriers to employment including improving self-confidence, problem solving, team working, resilience, alongside professional skills to enter the world of work, consider training or even self-employment. The programme is delivered by employers and offers volunteering and work experience opportunities.

PEERZ Academy is a secure online learning platform that allows verified mentors to deliver lesson content created by expert teachers for GCSE and A'Level Students. PEERZ provide an effective and affordable alternative to costly private tuition; pairing the latest online technology with high impact educational strategies.



Cadet Apprenticeship Pathways (CAP)

CAP seeks to align 'work ready' cadets aged 16-18 with employers, supportive of their continued progression as a cadet and at 18 years old as either an Adult Volunteer or Reservist, whilst satisfying an employers need for a reliable, respectful and trustworthy young employee.

The initiative provides an honest brokering service to join up young people to employers, including offering Degree Level Apprenticeships.

PIE introduces the world of work and local businesses to young people. Connects businesses to education, provides volunteering opportunities for parents, and upskills teachers in enterprise. Linked to various initiatives including Enterprise Advisors, Gatsby Benchmarks, Engineering and Coding, PIE helps realise ambitions and raises aspirations to address industry skills shortages.



PRIMARY

The Primary to Prosperity Campaign aims to help realise ambitions and raise aspirations through a cohesive and collaborative practical approach. There are a whole host of organisations and individuals that have come together to make an impact on helping transform lives. To get involved or see how the campaign can help you please email info@ammarm.com



Ammar Mirza

MAY THE FORCE'S BE WITH YOU

One hundred years ago the Great War ended with an estimated death toll of 15 million people alongside being the likely cause of a further 100 million deaths due to an influenza epidemic.

Communities from across the world including Asians came together to fight for a common cause laying down their lives to help make the world a better place.

Our Armed Forces are incredible, selflessly, with immense courage and conviction going to war, even now as they did so many years ago. Yet all too often we do not see them as being an integral part of our communities, but expecting them to protect and serve, without really getting to know them or fully appreciate them.

We (Asian Business Connexions) hosted our 9th anniversary dinner and awards ceremony last month at the County Hotel. The event brought together the whole community to celebrate the significant and sustained contribution of the Asian community across all sectors. Alongside the worthy finalists and winners, the highlight for me was hearing from Maj Naveed Muhammad MBE National Liaison Officer and Mandeep Kaur Armed Forces Sikh Chaplain. Both shared wonderful stories of integration and impact but more importantly clearly demonstrated regardless of colour, creed or

religion there is a place for you in our Armed Forces.

One of the most influential experiences within my own life was when I joined the Army Cadet Force in Slatyford Newcastle. Every Tuesday and Thursday evening I would get the No 1 bus from Heaton. This was the longest bus journey that would take me through some of the more challenging areas within Newcastle where I would occasionally suffer abuse being Asian, wearing a uniform and sitting on the top deck of the bus. But the positives far outweighed the ignorance, and I learned some very worthy life skills, teaching me discipline, respect, resilience amongst various other experiences. Whilst wearing that uniform with pride I was equal amongst my fellow cadets, and had the opportunity to progress through the ranks like anyone else. My only regret was being a cadet for a short period but the positive memory has lasted forever.

Roll forward a couple of decades and rekindling my relationship with the Armed Forces is one of the many things I now truly enjoy. Over the past few years I have been fortunate to work with members of the Armed Forces to develop and deliver

initiatives that make an inclusive difference. The Cadet Apprenticeship Pathway recognises the skills Cadets develop and can offer to employers looking for work ready young people. The Armed Forces help deliver the PIE Charity BIG PIE Challenges that deliver much needed Enterprise and STEM activities into primary schools in a holistic manner. And more recently I am the very proud recipient of the Armed Forces Covenant's Employer Recognition Scheme being one of only 22 organisations in the North East being presented with a Silver Award this year.

The Armed Forces offers an immense range of opportunities for everyone to develop themselves – whether volunteering, as a reservist or a regular there is a space and place for you. Whilst we cannot change the past, we can look to the future and only through understanding, appreciation and recognition will the world become a better place. As we reflect upon the 100th Anniversary of the end of the Great War, May Our Armed Forces Be With You.

Love, peace and harmony.

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.

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"Thank you for a great mix of people and a relaxed event"

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enjoyed Peter Barron's insightful talk"**

"Loved it! Thank you very much, I will be back"

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MONDAY 26TH NOVEMBER – JESMOND DENE HOUSE
JON CHADWICK - DURHAM DISTILLERY, DURHAM GIN LTD

MONDAY 28TH JANUARY – JESMOND DENE HOUSE
SIR PETER VARDY IN CONVERSATION

MONDAY 3RD DECEMBER – WYNYARD HALL
TONY ROBINSON OBE – ENTERPRISE ROCKERS

MONDAY 7TH JANUARY – WYNYARD HALL
ALISTAIR WAITE – ALTEC ENGINEERING LTD

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



EXCLUSIVE EVENT AT WYNYARD HALL

Mike Gramshaw and Linda Hitman welcomed guests to the first Tees Valley Business club at Wynyard Hall. Guest speaker, Peter Barron, MBE was both hugely entertaining and thought provoking. With thanks to Harvey & Hugo PR for their support.





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Booking now for Monday 26th November

Speaker - Jon Chadwick, Durham Distillery, Durham Gin Ltd

Venue - Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle upon Tyne

Date - Monday 26th November, 12 noon

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

Experienced Managing Director and founder of Durham Distillery.

Passionate about food and drink, and small businesses in general. Jon founded Durham Distillery after enjoying craft spirits along America's East Coast. Returning home Jon was inspired to create the North East's first distillery in Durham and Durham Gin was the result.

We look forward to learning how Jon exchange corporate life for Gin.



Booking now for Monday 3rd December

Speaker - Tony Robinson OBE

Venue - Wynyard Hall, Stockton-on-Tees

Date - Monday 3rd December, 12 noon

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

Tony Robinson – Micro Business champion, writer, broadcaster and multiple business founder/owner.

Curator and presenter of the one hour show "Micro Myths & Magic" how to start and grow an enterprise. Tony will be a lively and very entertaining speaker for our December lunch.



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

Diary Dates: Monday 7th January - Alistair Waite, Altec Engineering- Wynyard Hall
Monday 28th January - Sir Peter Vardy DL, The Vardy Foundation - Jesmond Dene House

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY – WHAT’S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?



The work Christmas do... what is it really all about? Far be it our desire to play Scrooge, but employers so often cause themselves more harm than good, and importantly fail to gain from the boost the party gives to staff.

Photocopying bums, badmouthing the boss, illicit office affairs, offensive secret santa gifts and drinking way too much. Christmas party season is upon us in the North East and for some it'll be a night to remember – but for others, one to forget.

It's a great time for staff to blow off some steam, bond outside of work and get to know each other without targets and deadlines looming. But it can end up with uncomfortable conversations afterwards if it gets out of control.

So, let's consider your party. You mightn't be an expert party planner, but you'll have an idea of the sort of event your staff would like to have. It's important that it's relevant to your workforce. Just as with your other reward schemes and employee benefits, if they're not what your employees want, your money is wasted.

What you're doing will earn you plenty of brownie points with the staff. It'll bring your team together (some of whom may never have spoken!), and will reinforce a positive working environment going into 2019. Expect the best to come from it, but we think it is sensible to prepare for the worst...

9 out of 10 employers have suffered employment issues from a Christmas party. Drunken behaviour, use of banned substances, harassment, arguments – whether online or off (we have all seen drunken facebook posts!). It's all a far cry from Christmas spirit, and your company policies.

Dealing with the fallout from Christmas parties is the bread and butter for our Newcastle HR team through December and January, with fights being the most common complaint. After a few



drinks, people can become a lot more honest and sometimes professional disputes escalate into a physical fracas.

We know of a business who sent out a memo saying the company wouldn't bail anyone out of jail. So they could be home for Christmas, the Director had previously bailed out several staff who were arrested for drug use – but they wanted to make it clear that it mustn't happen again! #namingnonames

Here are a few useful HR tips to help you get the best out of your Christmas party:

Remind everyone about their behaviour – You aren't a horrible boss for doing so; you're just making sure you reinforce the rules.

Make sure everyone is included and invited

– They can be great team building events and a good way to say thank you for staff efforts over the previous year.

Ensure under-18s aren't drinking.

Be aware of religious sensitivities.

Drinking the bar dry shouldn't be the stated objective of the evening.

If there is an issue, use common sense – Note down what's happened and take appropriate action. Regardless of the situation, don't sack someone on the spot!

Be mindful that Christmas can be a difficult time of year for some people.

Swap out Secret Santa for a Christmas Bake Off.

No mistletoe – It just asks for trouble!

Most events go without a hitch. But if you really are worried about potential workplace incidents, don't ban the party altogether. Why not host it after the New Year is in? You'll still give your team a morale boost, and hey, many will be doing Dry January by then!

Good HR practices can help you to prevent them – have clear policies in place and ensure staff understand that the event is an extension of the workplace.

If tensions do boil over, we suggest you seek professional advice and support when launching your investigation.

For advice on having a successful and incident-free Christmas party, or indeed how to unravel the mess of an unsuccessful one contact our team of Advisors at The HR Dept Newcastle.

SAFEGUARDING YOUR BUSINESS WITH DAJO

Introducing **dajo**, your business' new best friend. The brand-new integrated health and safety and HR support service launched just four weeks ago and is ready to help you make the most out of your business.

Dajo believes that HR and health and safety go hand in hand when managing staff and so, they offer a much-improved management package to small companies, ensuring that you're safeguarding your business.

The joint services will offer an off-site assistance to your business, either remotely or by telephone/email communication meaning you get the benefit of peace of mind, without the expense of in-house experts.

Dajo was formed by health and safety expert Dave Clough, founder of The Way Forward North East Ltd and HR specialist Joanne Howe, founder of Howe Consultancy. Combined, Dave and Joanne have over 50-years' experience within the industry and have provided both regional and national businesses with the support they need to make the most out of their workforce.

The health and safety aspect of dajo will assist your business in ensuring that your workplace is abiding by all health and safety legislation. Dajo will provide you with a health and safety management system including policy, procedures, and documentation, as well as training power points and support to ensure that your workplace is a safe place for your employees.

On the HR side, dajo will be your virtual HR department, ensuring that you are compliant and practising best practice when managing difficult staff headaches – As the famous saying goes, a happy workforce is a productive workforce.



If you're interested in finding out more about dajo's services, give Dave and Joanne a call on 03300552625 or send an email to info@dajo.uk.com. For regular updates and more information, follow dajo's Facebook page @dajoHRandsafety.

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Contact Jayne Hart

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THE HR DEPT NEWCASTLE

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS AT WORK

World Mental Health Day which was celebrated last month (10 October 2018); aimed to raise awareness of mental illness, fight the stigma surrounding mental health and increase workplace support.

Here Hadrian HR's Luiza Robson looks at mental health in the workplace and shares her insights for supporting both employers and employees.

A recent UK study from the Mental Health Foundation estimated the cost of mental health issues such as depression, stress and anxiety costs the UK economy £70 billion each year; impacting upon employee wellbeing and business performance.

The 2018 survey of 4,619 people within the UK show 74% of adults have felt unable to cope at some point in the past year. The highest percentage was amongst women aged between 18-24 years old. A worrying 32% of people involved have experienced suicidal feelings with 16% of adults admitting to self-harm highlighting the importance of employers addressing mental health issues within the workplace. Given millennials are the future recruits for organisations, employers need to consider promoting wellbeing in the workplace and be aware of the importance of this as a selling point when recruiting in order to become an employer of choice.

Research by Mind, the UK mental health charity, indicates 1 in 5 people will call in sick rather than admit to a mental health issue, with 3 out of 10 people feeling they are unable to talk to their manager. The research also highlights over half of employers would like to do more about employee wellbeing but are unsure as to what to do or where to start.



Luiza Robson, Hadrian HR

Employers need to take steps to reduce stress which in turn will lead to a happier workforce, reduce days lost to the business due to absence, improve overall business performance and create a culture that encourages employees to be open and honest about their mental health.

In order to tackle stress employers can encourage employees to take up more exercise. If office-based this could be a walking group at lunchtime or a subsidised gym membership or classes. There are also various fully funded support mechanisms available, particularly from the NHS. Employers can highlight the importance of good nutrition for individuals' wellbeing for example introducing free fruit and healthy snacks within the workplace.

A poor work life balance can lead to a variety of poor mental health conditions. Flexible working

is one measure that can help such conditions. Where practicable, this can encourage healthier working hours and thereby allow employees to manage personal commitments, for example caring responsibilities.

Fostering a positive culture that values employees will build employee trust, commitment and productivity. Commitment does however need to be driven by senior management and become a cultural ethos, backed up by well written policies and procedures. This then sends a message to all employees that mental health and wellbeing is important to the business.

If you require any further support or advice in relation to the implementation of mental health policies, procedures and practice please contact our team of specialist advisors.

AVOIDING SALES RECRUITMENT NIGHTMARES

Ask a room full of entrepreneurs if they've ever made a recruitment mistake and everyone will raise their hand before regaling you with multiple horror stories of recruitment nightmares, none more so than when expanding their sales team.

Assuming we all follow some basic recruitment principles why then is this a recurring issue?

I can only speak from a place of expertise when recruiting for sales competence, but one thing I do know about good AND bad sales people – is they're all excellent at selling themselves, so over the years I've developed my own fairly robust process to weed out those who will tell you they're the right person for the job, from those who are the right fit.

STEP 1: COMPETENCIES

Be crystal clear on the competencies required in the role, bearing in mind there are multiple steps in your sales process, which will depend on your industry, your market and your customer's preferred buying journey. Sales is not a one size fits all model, and the 1990s strategy of building an army of Field Sales reps, rarely works in today's world, so be clear what is it you need in your next recruit.

STEP 2: BUILD YOUR OWN PIPELINE

Don't wait until you have a vacancy before you go to market. The best people will never be out of work, so ensure when you do meet excellent candidates in everyday life, that you connect on LinkedIn, invite them out for a coffee every now and then, and keep them ticking over. Always ensure you've maximised your own network (and that of your teams) before you go out to the cold market.

STEP 3: DRAW UP A SHORTLIST

In sales there are some obvious (and less obvious) indicators to look for on the CV. Regardless of the seniority of the position I look for someone who is open-minded or curious (what was the last book they read or training course they invested in for themselves?), intelligence (perhaps in an area of transferable skill) and ambitious. In sales, candidates who list any form of sport and/or amateur dramatics always rise to the top of my shortlist.

STEP 4: THE SHADOW

Before I've even formally interviewed anyone, I invite a handful of candidates to shadow our organisation for a day (not all at the same time mind you!). And yes – before I've interviewed them. In my world this usually sounds like, "Meet me outside Victoria tube at 6.30am & wear comfy shoes." I want to see how

they show up. Do they come prepared? Are they presentable? How fast do they walk! Do they ask intelligent questions as they follow in my wake? Are they going to be a good cultural fit?

STEP 5: THE FORMAL INTERVIEW

The first part always takes the form of a role play, of which the brief will have been issued in advanced. I don't care if they get our product knowledge wrong – we can teach that, but what is harder to teach is that natural sales instinct. They must be able to do these four things instinctively;

- Build rapport and control the flow of the meeting
- Deeply question and qualify
- Relate benefits (not just features) of the recommendation/s they suggest, to something meaningful that we will have revealed during the qualification process
- Naturally close the meeting and gain commitment of the logical next step in the sales process

The second part of the meeting is a formal Q&A, against our competency framework and associated questions, and the candidates are scored on their answers.

STEP 6: THE TEST

Next, we set them a test. In our case we ask them

to read some of our published material and to come up with ten tweets we can use on social media. Not only do we want to see if they do the work, but we're also setting a precedent – that it's their responsibility to learn, not just ours to teach AND I'm starting their induction process before they're on my payroll!

STEP 7: THEIR PLAN

If relevant, we would invite them to share their sales strategy, or their proposal on how they plan to achieve their sales objectives and revenue targets.

STEP 8: REFERENCES

We always ask for more references than they list. Again, it's a test.

STEP 9: REJECT THEM!

WHAT...I hear you shout! Oh yes, but ONLY if I need to test this specific competence, in which case I will say something like, "here's the thing. At CS we're exceptionally proud our team of A'Graders and if I'm honest I'm just not hearing A'Grader...." – then pause and see how they respond.

A true salesperson will want an opportunity to convince you otherwise. If they crumble, then you've just saved yourself six months of pain and thousands of pounds in burnt cashflow!



Nicola Cook. CEO of Company Shortcuts.

A REGION-WIDE APPROACH TO IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NORTH EAST



Michelle Rainbow

Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the North East LEP, explains how North East schools, colleges and employers are coming together to improve outcomes for all young people.

Every term the North East LEP coordinates a day for all schools and colleges in the region to come together and focus on driving up standards of careers guidance and attainment for young people.

The fact that 151 secondary schools and all 9 colleges in our region were present at our most recent meeting is testament to the commitment we have here in the North East to creating a real community of good practice.

When we began work with 16 schools and colleges on a pilot project three years ago, our aim was to help the group to embed the Gatsby Good Careers Guidance Benchmarks, which are recognised as highly effective for top quality careers guidance. The pilot was hugely successful, with the participants reporting a transformational impact not only on their careers guidance but throughout the culture of the organisations, and the pilot had national impact, resulting in the Benchmarks forming a central part of Government's Careers Strategy.

However we are not resting on our laurels. As my Chair Andrew Hodgson reminds me often, our focus now is on rolling out the Benchmarks to every school and college in the North East and on supporting the national roll-out, using what we learnt from the pilot.

We are continuing to partner North East schools

with Enterprise Advisers – local senior business leaders and employers who volunteer their valuable time to forge closer links between education and industry – and we want every school and college to have an Enterprise Adviser partnership to help shape their delivery of careers education and employer engagement.

Over the past three years we have been consistently working to share our learning with the wider North East region and beyond. Everything we do is available to be shared with all schools and colleges and we're already actively engaging with nine tenths of schools and colleges in our region, with the ambition to be working with every one.

To support this region-wide work, we are expanding the Skills Team at the North East LEP, with the recent appointment of Neil Willis as Education Challenge Project Manager, spearheading the Next Generation Learning project, focussing on the integration of careers into the curriculum and bringing the world of work to life in the classroom, with the aim of improving social mobility for young people.

In the next few weeks we will be announcing the appointment of a Careers Hub Facilitator and a College Hub Facilitator to work alongside schools and colleges as part of the new North East Ambition: Careers Hub – not only will the Hub support schools

and colleges in achieving the Benchmarks but the North East has also been chosen as the location for a prestigious Cornerstone Hub, providing support to other UK regions through learning visits to the North East, as the Benchmarks are rolled out across the UK.

We'll also be increasing the number of Enterprise Coordinators who provide crucial support to schools, colleges and Enterprise Advisers.

Working closely with our local authority colleagues is key. These relationships and all our regional education sector networks mean we can work together to move in the right direction, with the ultimate aim that every young person in the North East can identify routes to a successful working life, has the opportunity from an early age to have exposure to the world of work and meets people along the way who inspire and motivate them.

We want our young people to understand, alongside formal academic skills, the value of life and work experiences and build abilities such as self-management, team working, business awareness, problem solving, presentation and interview skills.

Being prepared for the world of work, having clear options and support from parents, schools and businesses will deliver successful outcomes and destinations for our young people.

Find out more about the North East LEP's work at www.nelep.co.uk/skills

A woman with curly hair is looking at her phone on a train platform. She is holding a yellow pole. The background is a blurred train and platform.

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HOW CAN TECH EMPLOYERS ATTRACT AND RETAIN DEVELOPERS FOR THE RIGHT COST?



Over the past two to three years, while monitoring trends between tech businesses and developers in the North East, we've noticed a significant increase in salary levels.

The region's tech sector is growing at a huge rate, leading skilled developers to be in high demand. This has created a lack of emerging talent across the region, creating a problem for employers, especially those wanting to attract and retain the best talent for themselves.

As a business owner, whether you have a digital business, SaaS product or any kind of tech company, you can likely agree that deciding on salary is becoming increasingly difficult, so here's some advice on how you can retain your developers and keep them happy.

1. MAKE SURE YOU DO A FAIR SALARY REVIEW

As mentioned above, you can compare developer salaries within the region - through your own findings or by engaging with an expert like Ronald James* who can provide this data for you.

2. OFFER ATTRACTIVE BENEFITS

Unlimited holidays, flexi-time and work from home are almost standard among employers now - and it's a great way to create job appeal without increasing salary - anything that will save on the



James Blackwell

employee's commute or give back flexibility.

3. BE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK!

This is becoming increasingly important as lots of tech companies and digital agencies now have cool places to work with things like table tennis, break out areas, kitchens and free lunches, so for

a developer moving on they will be used to these facilities and looking out for them.

4. LANGUAGES AND FRAMEWORK

Technology-driven devs want to be working with the latest tech - if you have set frameworks, giving them the opportunity to implement new tech or having a side project to expand their skill set will keep them engaged and interested.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Do you have a designated project manager? This will help developers to see their progress through to the end goal of their tasks which will help to keep them motivated at work.

Another problem lies with the range of salaries being offered to developers, posing the risk of you paying 'inflated salaries' compared to other businesses. Advertised salaries through job adverts with other companies aren't necessarily what the developers actually getting paid once they accept a job, so it's very important you have a clear, true reflection of what you are offering.

We can help...

If you'd like advice on the above or to receive a **FREE bespoke developer salary report to benchmark developer salaries in your business please contact james@ronaldjamesgroup.com**

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L-R: Emily Duff (CoMusica), Professor Charles Harvey (Newcastle University), Sandra King (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland) and Jason Wainright (Muckle LLP)

BE MORE GENEROUS THIS NOVEMBER

This November, the GeNErosity Festival of Philanthropy and Giving, the first of its kind in the UK, will celebrate the philanthropic past, present and future of the North East

From 7-27 November, the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland and Newcastle University are presenting the GeNErosity Festival of Philanthropy and Giving, the first of its kind in the UK.

There will be 50 events from Berwick to Teesside celebrating what philanthropy has done for the North East, from the middle ages to today, as well as looking what giving money and time could do for the region in the future during increasing times of austerity. The festival will launch on 7 November with an event in The Great Hall of the Discovery Museum. For the first time Professor Charles Harvey, Director of the Centre for Research on Entrepreneurship, Wealth and Philanthropy at Newcastle University, will tell the North East Philanthropy Story, which he and his team have been researching for three years.

Many landmarks, buildings and parks were donated by acts of giving across the North East. Places like Jesmond Dene in Newcastle, Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, and the Hospital of God at Greatham wouldn't exist today, if it hadn't been for philanthropists giving their money and time.

But the festival isn't just about the past. Philanthropy and giving continues to inspire the region today. Wealth from land, mining, shipping, industry and trade has been invested philanthropically over hundreds of years but Modern-day philanthropists and givers are just as vital to north east England

as their forebears, now more than ever. The festival will ask what philanthropy can do for the region now, with several events showing attendees how to get involved either as individuals or through their businesses.

On 14 November, Newcastle University will host four of Britain's most dynamic and committed practitioners of transformational philanthropy: Bill Holroyd CBE, founder and chair of OnSide Youth Zones; Sir Paul Marshall, chair of ARK Schools; Fran Perrin, founder and director of the Indigo Trust and chair of 360Giving; and the North East's own Sir Peter Vardy, chair of The Vardy Foundation and Safe Families for Children. Each of them will set out their future vision for philanthropy, highlighting the lessons they have learned during their entrepreneurial careers and philanthropic journeys, particularly with respect to how we might improve the impact and effectiveness of private contributions for the public good.

For those who want to give time rather than money, volunteering a few days a year as a trustee is a powerful way to support and develop the work of charitable organisations across the region. On 12 November, the First Time Trustees event at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art will demystify the role of a trustee and encourage attendees to sign up.

It's not just about individuals either. On 22 November, Generosity Festival Gold Sponsors

Muckle LLP, will lead a session on how businesses can establish a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy called 'Make a difference: Game-changing Corporate Social Responsibility ideas for businesses'. While leading author and expert on philanthropy and technology, Rhodri Davies, will be in Sunderland Software Centre on the 16th November, looking at the effect disruptive technologies like AI and blockchain will have on philanthropy in the future.

As well as these insights, throughout the festival thirty local charities will show the many ways philanthropy makes a positive difference in the North East every day, through fantastic events where you are invited to join them for special one off events, with activities ranging from a walking tour in Jesmond Old Cemetery to a ukulele workshop in Darlington, opera in Middlesbrough to breadmaking classes in Newcastle. With at least 50% of their income from philanthropy, these charities truly are #poweredbyphilanthropy.

The festival will close on 27th November with the organisers encouraging everyone to pledge to be more generous with their money or time in whatever way suits them, and to publicly share these pledges across social media on the last day of the festival on 27th November, which also happens to be International Giving Tuesday. Pledge cards can be downloaded from the festival website or picked up at events throughout the festival.

To see the full line up of events and to book go to www.generosityfestival.co.uk



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For further details or to arrange a viewing appointment, please call 0191 2819100 or visit www.eothenhomes.org.uk



A WINNING TEAM

After spending some time with St Martins Care Group and listening to the staff and managers from all levels I have come to find that this is more of a vocation than a career. The statements below are from a few of the staff who sum up an absolutely amazing team of people across the whole of St Martins Care and the industry. I thought about writing a piece on my thoughts and observations, however that would not have justified the planning and work that goes into the delivery of making such a difference to people's lives, residents and families alike. So I thought I'd leave it to the stars of the show themselves, the staff!



LISA PARRY – DEPUTY MANAGER

Park View Care Home, Forest Hall, Newcastle

"Growing up I always wanted to go into some form of care, when I was young it was children's care, which I achieved working for Percy Hedley Foundation after leaving school. After leaving Percy Hedley I got speaking to a lady in the Forest Hall community who was a resident at Park View Care Home, this changed my whole view on where I wanted to go with my career. I went along to visit her again and whilst there dropped off my CV which led to a job offer just a few weeks later. I was so excited when I started and have worked my way up from being a carer when I first started to now being the Deputy Manager. I can honestly say I love my job with the home, and with St Martins Care, it's like being part of a family. I love being around the residents and knowing their little quirks. I live by the rule that as long as I have made a difference to one of the residents' days I have had a successful day myself. I adore them. If I was to give an example of some of the satisfaction I achieve every day it would be seeing residents who have been living alone for some time are often quite introvert when they've joined us in their new home at Park View. After working with them, they've really come out of their shells and love being part of our Park View family. They quickly develop a lovely set of new friends and feeling that this is their home and that their opinions matter. In the care industry our biggest hurdle is perception, people often form their own views based on what they hear from others and more often than not those perceptions aren't positive. It's really not like that. Ask any of our residents and you would find that we are always thinking of new ways of improving our care and listening to their feedback."



NATALIE COOLEY – CARE ASSISTANT

Willow Green Care Home, Darlington

"My ambition growing up was to work with the elderly, which I have achieved working as a carer at Willow Green. St Martins have assisted me in achieving my NVQ level 2 in care and I'm now moving onto my level 3. I am so proud of the job I do, promoting independent and active living. This is the residents' home and we want it to be a happy experience for them. Whether a resident has dementia, a disability, or is reaching the end of their life, I feel it's part of my role to not just to make this as easy and comfortable for the resident, but also to support the family as well. Every one of our residents have different requirements and all have their own ways of doing things. Because St Martins Care promote people centred care it's always about the residents needs, which I enjoy doing on a daily basis. The industry has changed for the better in that our jobs have been made easier with new equipment assisting the residents more with their independent living. I love coming to work every day to new challenges and helping solve them in the interest of the residents. To unwind I enjoy spending time with my animals and watching TV. If I were to give advice to anyone looking for a career, come into care if you have a caring nature, be prepared for the challenges, and the rewards of knowing you are making a huge difference."



CLAIRE GUNN – NURSE

Woodside Grange Care Home, Thornaby

"You could say from a young age I always had nursing in me, all of my teddies as a child used to be bandaged from head to toe. My mentor was my Nanna who was the most caring person you could meet so, with these two things combined, nursing in care had to be my career choice and I love it. I don't see what I do as complicated, I think as long as you keep at the forefront of your mind 'treat people as you'd want to be treated yourself' you can't go wrong. If I were to give advice to the trainee nurses coming into the profession, I'd say try care! Getting experience with the elderly and infirm gives you a wealth of experience and whilst doing so we can make a world of difference to peoples lives with the smallest of touches. There are challenges along the way but at St Martins we get an abundance of support within the homes and from the Head Office team who are always willing to help. One of the things I always stick by is having a positive attitude, this is infectious and can make a residents day. The most important things to me are caring for my family, friends and my work. I certainly made the right choice coming into the industry as its so rewarding on a daily basis."



MEGAN FORSTER – ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Washington Manor Care Home, Washington

"All through school I had ambitions of becoming a vet, however I ended up as an admin assistant at a mortgage brokers. As much as I enjoyed my job, it was stressful and I didn't feel like it was for me. I applied for the role I hold at Washington Manor and was successful, this is where I feel I fitted into my comfort zone. My daily routine consists of supporting our residents in many different ways alongside our amazing team and manager, Margaret. One side of the job I love is the assessment process involved with bringing a new resident into our home. I am the first person to meet a potential new resident, and sometimes it's upsetting when you can see they're lonely and unable to support themselves. When they come into the home it's amazing how quickly they adapt to their new environment, make new friends, they thrive and become more sociable. I also get to hear their life history which I find really interesting. One lady always springs to mind when thinking about making a massive difference with a small gesture. This lady had dementia, liked to isolate herself and could become aggressive. After assessing her needs we thought a dementia doll may help, these dolls are life size and realistic and are used by those suffering with dementia to reduce stress and anxiety. She has now settled down and lives a perfectly normal life with some assistance from the team. In the future I would like to go into the management side of the industry but never lose sight of the care service we offer, which my manager has taught me. I think coming into the industry, you can come from any walk of life, we have had hospitality managers to factory workers. With the training and support you are offered through St Martins Care, you could build a fulfilling career."

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

COLIN WILKES

Managing Director, Durham Markets

Describe your career path so far?

I suppose much of it has been contained within a one mile radius of where I am now! I was educated at Chorister School and Durham School before studying Law at the wonderful Grey College at Durham University. I had a spell as a Commercial Solicitor at what was then Dickinson Dees before leaving to join the family engineering company. Whilst there I became non-executive Director at Durham Markets before moving to Managing Director some 28 years ago...although it feels like yesterday!

Could you give some background to Durham Market?

Following incorporation by an Act of Parliament in 1851, we have gone on to be the longest continuous trading private business in Durham. We are a private company owned by 35 shareholders. The Market was initially open just on a Saturday but finally extended to 6 days per week in 1990 following a hugely successful upgrade and another necessary Act of Parliament!

What services do you offer?

We are home to 40 independent businesses which pride themselves on individuality, they are niche businesses. On any given day you could buy a lovely pair of Loake shoes or a single button. We are home to the only live fishmonger, butcher, poulterer and cheesemonger in the City Centre and are certainly not part of the pre-packed economy. We pride ourselves on being different and making shopping 'an experience'.

What has been your best achievement to date?

Difficult to single out one but I love the fact we are



a focal point of the City. It is a constantly evolving business and great to be associated with.

What is the biggest challenge you have faced?

Naturally the rise of online shopping makes for a more challenging retail environment for small independent businesses in the City Centre. However people still like to physically see what they are buying and that is shown by the wide dynamic of shopper we attract which ranges from the more mature through the week to the young professional and student at the weekend.

What are you currently working on?

The 25th Durham Christmas festival which has a charity preview evening on the 29th November and then runs over that weekend. It is 11 months in the planning and hugely popular in the City.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

Anyone from a market trading background such as Alan Sugar or Wayne Hemingway. Small

independent businesses are the lifeblood of the economy.

Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

Try to see everybody's side of any situation and not pre judge.

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

Do what you enjoy and follow your own dreams and not outside expectations.

How do you like to unwind?

Spending time with my wife and daughter and following the fortunes of Sunderland FC and the England/Durham cricket teams.

Favourite Book: Anything cricket related

CD: I like both punk and classical music!

Film: Very rarely have time to watch them but looking forward to the opening of the new Multiplex in Durham in January.

For further information contact Colin on colin@durhammarkets.co.uk



DURHAM CITY'S
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2018
Celebrating 25 years

**Friday 30th - Sunday 2nd
December 2018**

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- **Special Charity Preview Evening in aid of St Cuthbert's Hospice*** (Thu 29th Nov, 3-7pm)
- Craft & Gift Marquee with over 185 stalls* (Fri - Sun)
- Regional Producers' Market in Durham Cathedral Cloisters (Fri - Sun)
- Durham Market Hall over 40 quality independent retailers (Fri - Sun)
- Children's Lantern Procession** (Sat)
- Festive family entertainment and music throughout the City (Sat/Sun)
- Cathedral 'Carols for All' services (Sat/Sun)
- Festive outdoor market in Market Place



Children's Lantern Parade

Saturday 1st December – Purchase your lantern
via www.durhamchristmasfestival.com now

For further details of events, maps, traders, transport
and tickets visit the website.

*Entrance to Craft and Gift Marquee priced at £4 per adult. For advance tickets,
saving 50p per ticket, see website for details.

**Advance booking recommended – see website for details.

www.durhamchristmasfestival.com



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BUSINESS STUDENTS HELP NORTH EAST COLLEGE MAXIMISE DISTANCE LEARNING SERVICE



L to R - Louis Duncan, Technology and Innovation Manager at Derwentside College with Business Clinic students Chris Ayton, Peter Birkett, Alex Allen and Robert Collins.

With over 6,000 distance learners studying apprenticeships across the UK, Derwentside College in Durham and its team of external assessors rely on ICT systems to deliver a first-class educational experience to students and their employers.

With competition for funding growing, FE organisations are also increasingly competing against each other to recruit more students and contribute to the Government's target of 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020.

Derwentside College is a leader in apprenticeship provision in the North East. In order to maintain and build on its position, the College recruited a group of final year business students from Northumbria University to investigate how its ICT systems could be better utilised to enhance its external assessment processes and identify where efficiencies and improvements could be made.

Louis Duncan, Technology and Innovation Manager at Derwentside College explains: "We provide education and training to thousands of apprentices working in a vast range of job roles with different employers and industry sectors around the country. This presents huge challenges around communication and logistics for our external assessment team.

"I approached the Business Clinic team at Northumbria University to see if some of the region's brightest business minds could review our approach and ask them if there are ways we could better maintain contact between assessors and learners through improved use of IT.

"The students' report and presentation provided strategic recommendations on how to achieve this. In essence, they said we have the right technology in place but there is more we can do to aid the user experience which we are now planning to roll-out during the new academic year.

"Working with the Business Clinic has been a great experience. The students were professional and organised throughout the process. They conducted interviews with programme assessors, learners and employers to gain a thorough understanding of how each group uses our ICT systems. I think the Business Clinic programme is an extremely innovative initiative that many organisations could benefit from."

The Business Clinic at Northumbria University's Newcastle Business School, is an education scheme whereby a group of business students participate in a 'consultancy firm' to provide advice for clients.

The service is available to all types of businesses from SMEs and multinationals through to not-for-profit organisations. Students are encouraged to get to the root of the problem, deliver results and provide a detailed report and presentation of their recommendations.

In 2017, the Business Clinic was 'Highly

Commended' by the British Academy of Management Education Practice Awards Panel for its role in bringing students and businesses together to identify and deliver genuine solutions for real businesses.

Since the Business Clinic started five years ago, the total value of the students' free consultancy advice and reports has been estimated by 220 client organisations to exceed £1.2million.

Nigel Coates, Director of the Business Clinic, said: "The Business Clinic initiative strengthens University-business collaboration, which is one of the most powerful drivers for business success. It also gives our business students a valuable opportunity to gain hands-on experience working for a real client on a real issue.

"Whilst more universities in the UK are emulating the Business Clinic model, Northumbria University Business School is different due to the sheer scale of our operation in terms of the number of clients and students who engage with us.

"Our students have helped many organisations through the scheme, and those clients have been instrumental in helping our students to gain a crucial competitive edge before entering the world of work."

To find out more contact the Northumbria University Business Clinic at: www.northumbria.ac.uk/businessclinic



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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

DAVID COPPOCK

Head of UK Regions, North East,
Department for International Trade



David Coppock

What is your job role, and what is the role of DIT?

I'm the Regional Head for the North East at the Department for International Trade (DIT). My job is to support North East and Northern Powerhouse businesses to begin or expand their sales to customers overseas. I help address some of the myths about exporting, and help firms build more resilient and profitable businesses by selling overseas.

The support we offer local firms here in the North East is underpinned by DIT's wider policy and advocacy work. DIT drives inward and outward investment from the UK by negotiating trade deals and market access, and championing free trade around the world. We encourage UK businesses to export to drive sustainable growth for the UK and global economy.

DIT's approach to growing UK exporting is set out in the recently published Export Strategy – a collaboration with UK businesses, which includes a new ambition from government to increase exports as a proportion of the UK's GDP to 35%. In the months ahead, DIT will lead work across government to assess what more can be done to support UK businesses to expand abroad.

Why should North East firms consider exporting?

Businesses across the North East are already selling overseas, responding to the demand for the North East's goods and services abroad. In the year to June 2018, North East exports increased by 7.5% compared with the prior year.

The business case for exporting is clear: exporting can help firms boost profitability and increase

resilience. For example, Gateshead-based design agency Blue Kangaroo increased its turnover by 30% over the last three years by tapping into Australasian and Asian markets. Similarly, Durham toy-maker Big Little Toys saw its revenue jump 120% in its first two years of business, thanks to demand from overseas customers.

Regardless of your size, sector or exporting ambition, other businesses just like yours are already tapping into overseas demand. In fact, 89% of registered exporters have a turnover of less than £5m.

What are some key export considerations that companies should keep in mind?

Research and preparation is essential when exporting. This means anticipating barriers like cost, logistics, tax and legislation, as well as language and cultural differences that new markets may present.

For example, food and drink manufacturers exporting to the US must ensure they're registered with the US Food and Drug Administration before they begin exporting their products into the country. Labels in the US must reference the product's weight in both metric and US imperial units.

Local business customs can also vary significantly from market to market. In China, it is key to understand the concept of *guanxi*, which relates to the strength of interpersonal relationships. Having strong *guanxi* is an important part of successfully conducting business. To develop this, Chinese partners will expect their British partners to invest in personal, as well as business relationships and be conscious of how their

actions affect the wider relationship networks of their Chinese partner.

What support is available to help firms start or grow their exports?

To have the best chance at success firms should seek advice before beginning the export process.

DIT offers a wide range of support to help businesses navigate potential barriers and to start, or grow, export activity. Our assistance is accessible to firms of all sizes and types.

From support on trade missions to overseas markets, to one-to-one export guidance from our team of 17 International Trade Advisers (ITA) based across the North East, we can help. ITAs can support with everything from tax and customs procedures, to direct introductions to business contacts in overseas markets.

One firm that has benefitted from the support of an ITA is Newcastle educational film production company Trylife. To help them break into the US market, Trylife's ITA set up meetings with US film industry influencers and is currently helping organise three events to promote TryLife's interactive films across the US.

What advice would you offer businesses looking for success overseas?

Don't hesitate to make the most of the support available from our team.

Many businesses across the North East have already taken their first export steps and are reaping the benefits of the hundreds of opportunities still available. If they can do it, you can too.

To find out more, firms can visit great.gov.uk, or give us a ring on 0345 136 0169.

LOCAL TECH FIRM SECURES MAJOR CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH LEADING OIL MANUFACTURER

Trade Interchange has secured a five-year contract renewal to provide its innovative supplier management software to global oil and fat manufacturer, AAK.

Trade Interchange's ARCUS® Supplier Information Management (SIM) module helps AAK manage key supplier data, including production, quality and technical information, and has recently started monitoring site level information to ensure complete transparency and compliance associated with supply chain risks. SIM will be used in the UK, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Turkey and Singapore.

AAK has worked with Trade Interchange for over five years, implementing its ARCUS® eSourcing software in 2012, followed by the supplier relationship management modules, SIM and Supplier Contract Management (SCM), later in 2017 across its European manufacturing sites.

San Tickle, ESC Procurement manager at AAK Belgium NV & AAK Netherlands, said: "Trade Interchange's SIM module allows us to effectively manage compliance risks in our supply chains worldwide, such as quality and Corporate and Social Responsibility.

"We are always committed to enforcing best practise in all aspects of the business and we are confident that the ARCUS® platform fulfils all our requirements.

"We look forward to building on the success of our relationship with Trade Interchange and we are excited to see what the future holds."

The central source of supplier information and configurable questionnaires that make up SIM ensures that AAK are able to collect key supplier data that they require, including accreditations and policies such as GFSI, Codes of Conduct and sustainability and allergen information – all of which are key pieces of information for the food manufacturing sector.

Mike Edmunds, co-founder and managing director at Trade Interchange, said: "We are delighted that AAK has renewed their contract for several more years and continue to utilise the ARCUS® SIM module to manage their supply base efficiently.

"SIM has been developed further to include product level information, and we are thrilled to be working closely with AAK to ensure the software meets the needs of the industry."

The contract renewal with AAK is another example of how Trade Interchange is expanding and providing its solutions to global brands such as Sodexo, Whitbread, Domino's and PizzaExpress.

The ARCUS® supplier management platform is developed in-house in Teesside, and recruits talented individuals from across the region into its expanding team.



Mike Edmunds

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MOBIBUD SECURES STRONG FUTURE

A Middlesbrough based business start up has secured its future growth strategy, getting well prepared for when it expects to create at least another 10 jobs.

Mobibud is a real time business generation tool, that introduces a great new way for local micro and small businesses to generate business between themselves.

The company's app Biz-Buddy has been designed in Middlesbrough and it is being piloted in the Tees Valley. Wanting to plant further roots, the company has become the latest tenant to join the business community at Commerce House.

The Mobibud team comprise of Andrew Cannings, Simon Williamson, Siobhan Henry and Stuart Davies. They are keen to promote local business with the app being initially promoted in the North East and North Yorkshire. He said: "Our biz-buddy app is a perfect platform for businesses to interact, find other local businesses to partner with or use as a supplier and all in real time. Although the app has global scope, our heart is in Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley so our head office will always be here. Over the coming year, Mobibud will be targeting the whole of the UK, so it is a very exciting time in the company's development.

"Ourselves are now a team of five, set to grow by at least another 10 if not more very quickly, therefore it was important to me to sign up to a tenancy that not only reflects the quality of our product, but that also accommodates our growth. Commerce House is just perfect for us. It is prestigious, smart, has all the facilities required and fits the Mobibud business model."

Commerce House is a Grade II listed building in the heart of TS1 that has just had £1.2m poured into its redevelopment to create a high end business community. As well as office space, Commerce House offers board room facilities, a business lounge, meeting space, virtual tenancy and hot-desking, including co-workers arrangements.

Christine Huntington, facilities manager at the building, said: "It is wonderful that we attract such high quality tenants as Mobibud. The Biz-Buddy app is an innovative idea that will support lots of local business and lead generation – two things that are also at the heart of the Commerce House Business Community!"

The biz-buddy app is due to go live mid November. The app will eventually be rolled out on a global scale, concentrating on individual localities.



More information is available at www.commerce-house.co.uk and www.mobibud.biz

PENDOWER HALL WELCOMES SCHOOLS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY ONSITE

Pendower Hall, a stunning 18th Century Grade II listed building in Benwell, Newcastle, has welcomed over 150 children onsite in a bid to help children learn about the local archaeology and hear about onsite safety.

The primary school children from years 4, 5 and 7, visited from St Joseph's RC Primary School, Wingrove Primary School and Canning Street Primary in Benwell.

David Redhead, project director from Pendower Hall Ltd, said: "Work is progressing well onsite and we were keen to share what we are doing and what we have found. We also want to instill safety into children in the area, so they understand the dangers of building sites."

The children's visit included a sneak peak at what Pendower Hall will look like once renovations are complete.

More importantly, a health and safety talk from David Charlton of New Forrest Developments, the main contractor on site, was given. He talked about the dangers of building sites and how to stay safe. He reinforced the message they are not a place for children to be unsupervised.

Tony Liddell, from Vindomora Solutions Ltd, is leading the archaeological dig onsite and he unveiled to the children what has been found so far and what



it reveals about the surrounding area. He said: "The children were very excited to learn the history of the local area and loved being able to see and touch part of history gone by.

"This excavation has unveiled some interesting facts about urban life here in Roman times. It has produced a number of pottery fragments, most from the mid-2nd century, which would have been cooking vessels, Roman fineware, imported pottery from the continent and even the remains of a cheese making dish. There is also strong evidence of use of stone flagging, wooden posts, kilns, blue glass window panes and tiles.

"This gives us the overall picture of sturdy stone buildings with tiled roofs and blue glass windows, with a cobbled road in between. To add to the story further, it is believed the inhabitants had a certain

wealth due to finds including a fragment of a child's bone comb, wine jugs and bronze and iron items including gaming tokens and coins."

The excavation has been ongoing for around four months now. It is anticipated it should last another three weeks, when the full sequence of the Roman occupation can be fully understood.

Work ongoing on the Hall currently includes reparatory works internally and externally. A new Grand hall will also be added, turning the building into much needed office space and a wedding, conference and banqueting facility large enough to host events up to 450 people.

The children from all three schools have now been set a task to design a poster encouraging people to stay off site, preserve our heritage and stay safe. Judging will take place later in October.

More information is available on Pendower Hall's Facebook page.

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CASCADE AMONGST 2018 FINANCIAL INNOVATION FINALISTS ANNOUNCEMENT



Cascade Cash Management Ltd (Cascade) has been shortlisted for a national innovation award at the London Institute of Banking & Finance's annual Financial Innovation ceremony.

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

The service has been shortlisted alongside just four other competitors in the group of Best Customer-Facing Solution within the Best Technology Initiative category.

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

The awards, being held on Thursday 6 December at Hilton London Bankside, recognise some of the most innovative companies in the banking and finance sector. This year's awards have 17 categories covering: products & services; marketing & customer experience; finance in the communities; technology; and the best financial start-ups.

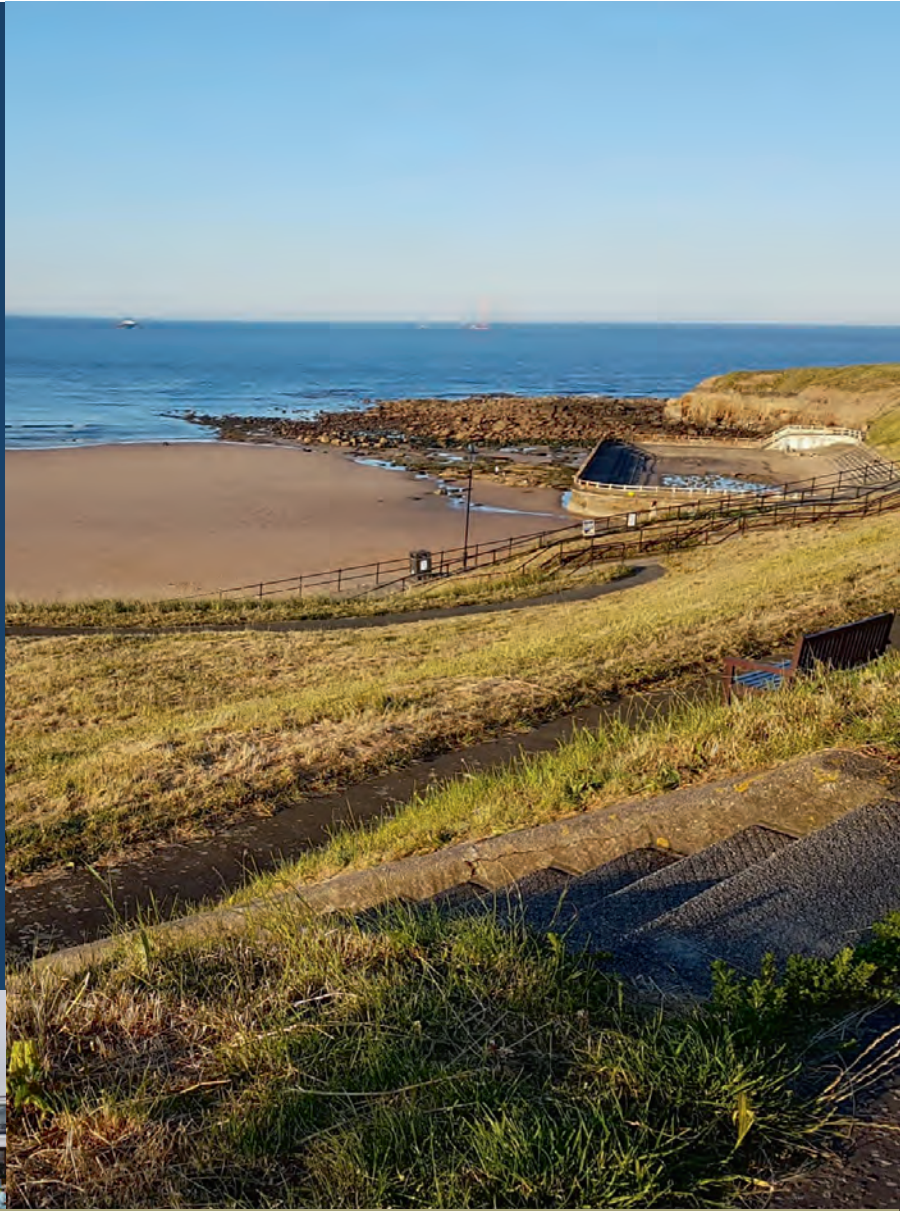
Managing director of Cascade, Dr Emma Black, said: "Cascade is honoured and delighted to be shortlisted at such prestigious awards. Cascade is unique within the market and having now administered over £650 million of deposits, we are thrilled to have been recognized at the Financial Innovation Awards. Our category has stiff competition, but we are hopeful we will bring the title back to the whole team!"

The Cascade team of eleven administer cash savings on behalf of clients and depositors can also use the portal to administer 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.

Alex Fraser, Chief Executive at The London Institute of Banking & Finance, said: "Congratulations to all those organisations shortlisted for this year's Financial Innovation Awards. These finalists are being recognised for their development of innovative products and projects that empower consumers, communities and businesses around the world. We are looking forward to celebrating with them on the night."

More information is available at www.cascade.co.uk and <http://fia.libf.ac.uk/finalists-2018>

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Mike Miller Oakwood Cars,
Matthew Flinders and Anthony Andreasen of RMT Accountants.

OAKWOOD SPECIALIST CARS CHANGING GEAR WITH MAJOR PREMISES INVESTMENT PLANS

A North Tyneside car dealership has invested £100,000 in expanding and improving its showroom facilities - and is now looking at the next stages of its development.

After buying the building on the Foxhunters Trading Estate in Whitley Bay in which it trades at the start of last year, Oakwood Specialist Cars has now completed work on creating a 4,000 square foot indoor showroom and office area, as well as on the first phase of expanding its forecourt and extending its workshop.

Further development of the forecourt area is now being planned, as well as the development of a new preparation area opposite the dealership on the other side of Foxhunters Road which will help to improve the efficiency with which cars are made ready for sale.

Established in 2005, Oakwood is an RAC-approved dealership specialising in sports cars, performance diesels and 4X4s which are hand-selected from across the UK.

It currently employs 12 people, and is expecting to

create a number of new jobs as it continues to work towards increasing its annual turnover to around £5m.

Gosforth-based RMT Accountants & Business Advisors is working with Oakwood Specialist Cars on all aspects of its continuing development.

Michael Miller, owner of Oakwood Specialist Cars, says: "Buying the premises was the best decision the business has ever made, and it has enabled us to create a much more welcoming and higher quality environment in which to welcome customers.

"The car retail business is evolving rapidly, and it's essential to be able to offer customers a high quality environment where they're happy and comfortable spending their time planning and discussing their purchase.

"Having the new preparation centre right over

the road will make a big difference to the way in which cars are processed as they arrive, and will mean we'll be able to get them out on show and for sale even more quickly.

"We've got lots of other ideas for making further improvements across the dealership and will continue to add new features which will contribute to our continuing growth.

"The RMT team is always on hand with advice and guidance about our operations, and we really couldn't have done what we've done as well as we've done it without their support."

Anthony Andreasen, director at RMT Accountants and Business Advisors, adds: "Michael has a very clear idea for how he sees the dealership developing and we're pleased to be part of helping to see these plans realised."



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PENSION FUNDING YOUR BUSINESS

Are you looking for an alternative route to financing? Traditional bank loans are falling out of favour with an increasing number of business owners, but don't worry, our newest member of the Wellway team, Tony Barras can guide you towards the right finance solution for your business needs.

Whilst many alternative finance options were once overlooked in favour of high street banks, today's business owners have soon come to realise that, if you want more control over the way you finance your business, you may need to look elsewhere. Tony Barras, our specialist in business financing and loans, has just joined the Wellway team from his previous position as a Commercial Manager at HSBC and is here to make sure you make the right decision when it comes to financing your business.

With a vast array of financing options available to today's business owners, it is extremely important to carry out a comparative study of the costs of each possibility and consider any tax implications before making a final decision about who to approach, this is where Tony's experience, networks and expertise come in. At Wellway we can help you choose a finance source, secure the finance, and prepare a business plan, to ensure you have the greatest prospects of funding.

One overlooked, but increasingly popular method of finance is pension funding. Rather than relying



Tony Barras

on a traditional lender to buy into your business, using your pension, lets you take control. This can usually be done using a self-invested personal pension or a small self-administered scheme. The flexibility of these pensions means they can be used to provide funding either as a commercial loan, or buying intellectual or commercial property. If you're a business owner with a significant

amount of savings in your pension pot, this could be the profitable option you need.

However, any sort of personal funding doesn't come without risk. You need to be absolutely certain that your business is in a strong enough position to be able to replace the funds that have been taken from your pension so that your retirement income isn't put at risk.

Call us today for expert advice on business funding and finance, on 01670 514 433 or email us at enquiries@wellway.uk.com

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

We're brimming with pride here at the KP Simpson offices thanks to our Managing Director, Andrew Potts, completing the Great North Run in September following his brain tumour surgery, raising a whopping £2680 for The Brain Tumour Charity.

Not only has Andrew stunned us all with his fundraising, our Managing Director managed to come 878th out of 43,000 participants, running the 13.1 mile run in just 1:34:07.

Whilst coming within the first 1000 runners was a great achievement, Andrew's most important achievement was raising awareness of the Brain Tumour Charity. Their aim is to fight brain tumours on all fronts through research, awareness, support, to save lives and improve the quality of life of those whose lives have been affected by a brain tumour.

Since being diagnosed with a brain tumour in May 2017 and undergoing surgery the following month, Andrew Potts has been an inspiration to us all. Following his surgery in June 2017, Andrew began training for the Great North Run just three months later – Now how's that for motivation. Being unable to drive following surgery, Andrew trained by running from his KP Simpson offices in Jarrow to his home in Cleaton, and thankfully, all that hard work paid off.

From all of us here at the KP Simpson Accounting offices, we'd like to say congratulations to Andrew on his amazing achievement. We can't wait to see what's next... stay tuned.



Andrew Potts

If you'd like to know more about the Brain Tumour Charity head to www.thebraintumourcharity.org, or if you're in need of a hard-working and supportive accountancy firm, call KP Simpson on 0191 420 0550.

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

PETER CROMARTY

Director, Corporate and Commercial
Business Solutions Group

What inspired you to form the business?

After a career in corporate and commercial banking and asset based lending I spotted a gap in the market to help SME'S who needed assistance and advice, initially in relation to funding options. After the banking crisis, the funding landscape had changed, and this is where I knew I had the experience to help and make a difference. It is not always easy to find the right funding solution for your own particular set of circumstances and so my aim was to add value to management teams so that they get what they need rather than what is given to them

What services do you provide?

Initially we were a commercial finance brokerage, but we have also developed a consultancy arm to give additional support to SME businesses, specifically around effective cash management, receivables management and outsourced credit control.

What do you most enjoy about your role?

I have been extremely fortunate to work with some fantastic clients and some incredibly supportive intermediaries and I will always appreciate the assistance that was given to help me get the business up and running. Having the freedom to work with business owners to achieve their aspirations is great and we deliver the solution and see the value added, it is very satisfying

What effect has Brexit had on you?

The uncertainty that Brexit brings means that businesses need assistance more than ever and we have seen an increase in enquiries over recent months, both on the funding and advisory side

On Brexit itself, I think we stand on a precipice at this particular moment and the next few days and weeks will be critical. I am really tired of it as it has gone on forever, but I do hold the view that as a country we will make the best out of whatever hand we are dealt due to our innate resilience, especially in the business community.

What is the biggest challenge you have faced?

In the early years lack of resource was a limiting factor (24 hours in a day and 7 days in a week and all that...) Starting a business from scratch was very exciting and I have learned a lot from the experience from all angles whether it being CRM systems,



Peter Cromarty

accounting packages to website design and hosting. With a lot of these challenges addressed I'm looking forward to moving the business on rapidly in the next phase of development

Tell us about your team?

In 2017 I realised that clients were asking for assistance in cash collections and credit control. I had worked with Andrea Cummings previously and we formed CC Recovery Solutions to offer commercial debt recovery (specifically to insolvency practitioners) and outsourced credit control.

Matt Lister (whom I had worked with 2 times before) joined in June of this year to grow the commercial funding arm of the business. The summer has been particularly busy and so having Matt on board has been essential to allow us to look for new opportunities whilst completing existing ones. We are now able to implement some of the changes we need in the business regarding marketing and infrastructure which will stand us in good stead for 2019 and beyond

What are your goals for the next 12 months?

More of the same I hope. We will see what Brexit delivers but the uncertainty will mean companies will need funding and other business solutions we offer, and so I don't see that slowing up. I want us

to continue down the route of providing targeted quality services to our clients and intermediary network, and not get sucked into the mass volume low quality service model. I would like to think we could add another 1 or 2 heads to the team over the next 12 months, but this will only be with the right person who will fit in seamlessly to what we do

Where do you see the business in 5 years' time?

I tripped over a significant age milestone in late 2017, but the hunger, drive and determination is still there. I want the business to develop and maybe outside of the region also. In 5 years I want to be able to look back and be proud of the business we have built and be comfortable in the knowledge we have provided an excellent service to our clients. If that is true, then both our clients and the business will be in good shape

How do you like to unwind?

As a family we love spending time on the Northumberland coast around Bamburgh, Beadnell and Newton by the Sea. As the kids get a little bit older their tastes change but its lovely for Helen and I to spend time with them and our friends. Watching sport and playing golf whenever and wherever I get the opportunity is also a good way to relax

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Yorkshire Chambers, 112-118 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6SQ

WHAT MAKES LUMO DIFFERENT TO OTHER R&D PROVIDERS?



Joe Routledge, Business Development Manager

There is a lot of choice out there for R&D providers at the moment as every man and their dog seems to be offering this as part of their services.

So, you have to be careful when making the choice of who to use. Lumo are one of the options you have, but why would you choose them? Here is our guide to what makes Lumo different to other R&D providers.

Firstly, you want to work with someone who knows the game. Many R&D providers such as accountants offer to help you with your R&D tax credit claim as an addition to their other services. This means that it isn't their bread and butter. The results can differ massively if you don't choose an expert. Lumo do R&D. That's it. Just R&D. It means that their team of professional advisers know Research and Development tax credits inside out. They maximise a claim for a client because they know where to look. Experience really breeds confidence when it comes to R&D tax claims.

PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST

Submitting a successful R&D tax claim is all about having great communication. Whether getting information from the client or dealing with the tax man, you want an R&D provider that talks your language. Lumo talk tech as well as they talk tax, food as well as finance, software as well as science and money as well as manufacturing, leaving you completely in the picture when it

comes to your claim. And all of this starts with the initial conversation. Lumo take a little time to get to know you and your business so they can advise correctly.

It only takes half an hour of your time for the initial, no-obligation chat and from there you can find out how they work, whether you have a valid R&D tax claim and what it could mean to your business. Then Lumo do all the legwork with HMRC so you can get on with making sure your customers are delighted with your service.

BEING A PARTNER

And that's not all. Lumo become a long-term adviser to a business, so they can lean on the expertise of this R&D provider for years to come. It is when you start planning R&D as part of your business strategy that it becomes interesting. Lumo will help a business to see the potential claims from R&D tax credits as part of the planning process. Knowing the money that is likely to come back from the tax man means budgeting becomes easier and your business can look to the future with more confidence.

That's the Lumo way. We are always at the end of the phone and you get through to your adviser straight away rather than dealing with someone

at a call centre. Being able to discuss your ideas with someone who knows your business and understands R&D tax credits is refreshing to say the least!

SECTOR KNOWLEDGE

Although R&D tax credits can be applied for by companies in any industry, there are some specific sectors that come up time and time again. These include –

- Life sciences
- Food and Drink
- Science and Technology
- Manufacturing

And Lumo have assembled a team that have built up a knowledge base in these areas. This has allowed them to assist businesses in these sectors to make claims in the hundreds of thousands of pounds. Knowing that you are with an R&D provider that will understand your business inside out means you get your claim processed more quickly. Lumo see their claims come through in a matter of 4 to 6 weeks because they are sent right first time. Can you afford to use another R&D provider?

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DELOITTE BACKED TEAM TYNE INNOVATION INSPIRES SIXTH FORMERS



Sixth form students at Cardinal Hume Catholic School in Gateshead have been given an exclusive insight into a North East amateur rowing team's preparations for a gruelling 3,000-mile race across the Atlantic.

The school is partnered with Deloitte, which is also supporting Team Tyne Innovation's participation in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, a 3,000-mile race known as the world's toughest row.

As part of Deloitte's partnership with the school, Team Tyne Innovation met sixth form students studying business, design and sports science.

The rowers spoke about the challenges facing them and also explained how innovation across the North East has helped prepare the boat and crew for the epic row, which will start in December from La Gomera in the Canary Islands and end in Antigua in the Caribbean.

A wide range of pioneering products and services that are supporting the team in the challenge have come from businesses, colleges and universities in the North East.

As well as hearing first-hand what the four rowers in Team Tyne Innovation will be facing, and to ask questions, the students also had the chance to get into the boat to get a real insight into what the team's life will be like during the Atlantic crossing.

The purpose of the visit was to get the students thinking innovatively about problem-solving and to raise their aspirations in terms of what is available to them when they finish school.

Deputy head teacher Martin Errington said:



"We are fully aware of the importance that partnerships with employers play in raising aspirations for our students' futures.

"Being able to work closely with Deloitte is a vital part of this. Through this partnership we were delighted that our students were given the opportunity to meet Team Tyne Innovation's captain, Phil Kite, and to find out more about the team.

"The information Phil shared about the challenge

of rowing across the Atlantic was not only inspiring and motivational for the students, it also helped raised some important issues and the need for local businesses to be innovative in responding to these issues. This is something that resonates strongly with young people today and will provide an excellent context for their learning in the coming months."

Phil Kite, captain of Team Tyne Innovation, said: "The whole project is about innovation and engineering, and I think that is a great career option for young people. The world needs things to constantly change and improve through innovation.

"In terms of this boat and this challenge, plastics in the sea has been a major focus for us. We need to innovate and reduce the need for plastics and work out how to clean up the seas. That is just one example of a project that people can take forward throughout their lives."

As well as highlighting innovation in the North East, Team Tyne Innovation is also supporting three great local charities – Daft as a Brush, The Stroke Association and St Oswald's Hospice.

The team is still 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.

EFFECTIVE INHERITANCE TAX PLANNING

In last month's article we looked at Business Relief (BR) and life assurance whereby this combination could achieve IHT free investment immediately.

This month we shall consider how BR investments can be used to enhance client outcomes even further and look at an example considering Residential Nil Rate Band (RNRB) planning too.

Mr & Mrs Jones have an estate of £2.7m which is £700,000 above the RNRB £2m taper threshold. For every £2 the estate exceeds this figure, £1 of the RNRB is lost. The RNRB is to be £350,000 from 2021 so the £700,000 excess completely eliminates the RNRB.

A solution would be to invest £700,000 in qualifying BR schemes/assets.

Once two years has elapsed, and provided at least one of them is still alive, the BR assets are settled into a Discretionary Trust. This would normally be a Chargeable Lifetime Transfer for IHT and taxed at 20%. However, because the BR assets have been owned for two plus years, their IHT value is nil and 20% of nil is still nil! Good. No tax.

As the Discretionary Trust is not part of the Jones' estate, on death their estate is valued at £2m and therefore the RNRB taper does not apply.

Before this planning the IHT liability stood at £820,000 but with planning the IHT liability was less than half at £400,000.



Clearly, more may be done to mitigate the IHT liability even further, dependent upon circumstances. At least a good start has been made and allowances have been maximised.

Those that know about Discretionary Trusts will appreciate that there are entry charges, exit charges and periodic charges. However, they are based upon the IHT value of the trust which, as described earlier, is nil if the BR investment is maintained. Once the trust assets have been distributed, then the beneficiaries are free to take advice and decide how best to invest for themselves and their own objectives.

The attraction of BR schemes is the speed in which they are effective. However, care must be taken in choosing the most appropriate scheme as investment risks and liquidity are important.

Tax treatment can also change over time. BR was introduced in 1976 but was set at 30% of the asset value. It was in 1992 the relief became 100% and in 1996 it was extended to cover minority shareholders in qualifying companies.

If you or would like more information, or would like to discuss this, then please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my colleagues, David Hughes and Paul McAtominey.

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

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EXPORT EXPERTS ENCOURAGE NORTH EAST BUSINESSES TO 'THINK GLOBAL, ACT GLOBAL'

With Brexit on the horizon, UK export experts were joined by North East manufacturing and business leaders at Hardwick Hall Hotel, to discuss export, now and post Brexit and how to put their business in the best position possible.

The event, which was organised by accountancy firm Tait Walker, is the second event from the firm's 2018 Export Campaign, which will run until the end of November. It revealed the importance for North East businesses to consider export options beyond the EU and aimed to address the burning questions and obstacles that the region's businesses are facing.

Hosted by Tait Walker's managing partner Andrew Moorby, a five-strong panel including Simon Crosby for the Department for International Trade, Will McGarrigle for CBI, Patrick Kendell for UK Export Finance, Beverly Perry for Intellectual Property Office and Jacqui Tulip for North East England Chamber of Commerce encouraged attendees to assess their export activity and develop new strategy now, ahead of 29 March 2019.

Simon Crosby, senior international trade adviser at the Department for International Trade, explained that we have some great North East businesses who are exporting in the region already, but there is more to be done.

"At the Department for International Trade, we are aiming to get more companies exporting for the very first time and to get those already exporting into new markets.

"The North East is a region of SMEs and some can face some real challenges when it comes to exporting which we can help them overcome. We



are the only region with a consistently positive balance of trade, but we need more businesses to start to consider trading outside of the UK."

The UK is already very successful at exporting and there is a very high demand for British goods across the world. However, if Brexit results in a no-deal, exports to the EU could be more expensive, increasing costs for UK businesses. As a region, the North East should start to look at worldwide trade and the larger market opportunities that can extend product life-cycle and enhance business growth.

As well as the overlying message to increase exporting, advice was also given on the importance of protecting your IP and how this can differ across markets, how to secure financial support through UK Export Finance, looking at specific issues around

customs and ensuring you have the right team in place. Attendees were also given the opportunity to share any preparation concerns that they have and some great questions around practical steps to understand cultural issues, language barriers, new markets and pricing structures were answered by the panel.

Jacqui Tulip of North East England Chamber of Commerce said: "North East businesses have a huge support network and some great online tools to help them to understand new markets and opportunity to expand globally. We need to encourage local businesses to think more globally and share their success stories"

Andrew Moorby, managing partner at Tait Walker, said: "Our export campaign aims to support businesses across the North of England on how to explore export opportunities, understand support networks and how we can work better together as a unified region.

"We still don't know what the outcome of Brexit will be and there is a lot of uncertainty, but it's important that we start to look at the other markets that are available to us. The more we can export as a nation, the better our economy will be and there are ways that we can prepare for a no deal, with recognised customs standards and cash flow planning."

Tait Walker's export campaign provides a valuable space for businesses to come together and learn how best to approach Brexit. To find out more about Tait Walker visit www.taitwalker.co.uk or call 0191 2850321.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOLATILITY AND RISK

By James Cartmell, Divisional Director,
Brewin Dolphin.

One of the most common mistakes that investors make is to confuse volatility with risk.

At best, it leads to unnecessary stress and worry, and at worst it can lead to heavy financial losses. It is therefore vital that investors understand the difference between the two.

At its simplest, volatility a way of describing the degree by which share values fluctuate. In volatile periods, shares prices swing sharply up and down while in less volatile periods their performance is more smooth and predictable.

Risk, on the other hand, is the chance of selling your investments at a loss, and the main factor that differentiates the two is your time horizon.

Interpreting volatility as "risk" is a misjudgement often caused by watching your stock portfolio too closely. In one sense, this is perfectly understandable; the stock market is a risky place to be in the short term, and watching the value of your life savings jump around from day to day can be gut-churning.

But investing in the stock market requires a long-term perspective; history shows that over periods of 10 years or more - it is a very profitable place to be. Crucially, it almost always outperforms alternative investments such as cash. For example, Brewin Dolphin's analysis of a balanced portfolio benchmark over the past 20 years shows that the best time to invest was in 1998, just two years before the tech bubble burst in March 2000, and shares plunged in value. Even those that invested in 2000, literally just before the crash, would have seen their money more than double in the years since, although it would have been an extremely volatile ride along the way.

Remember, in that time we have endured the recession from 2001, the market bottoming out in 2003 and the financial crisis of 2008/9, when

markets were swinging up and down by four or five per cent a day. Investors that took a short-term view may well have made a loss, but those that kept calm and stood firm have reaped the rewards. The key is to remember that, over the long-term, with remarkable consistency, share values have always bounced back - sometimes in big, rapid leaps.

This demonstrates an equally important point: volatility can be a powerful force for good because these wild swings work both ways. For example, being out of the market for only the five best days during the past 20 years would have led to a 23% lower return. Missing the best 10 days would have reduced returns by a staggering 40%. So, while volatility may be stressful, experience shows it is better to stay invested in bumpy times. Timing the market with such precision is impossible.

Rest assured our experienced analysts are constantly monitoring the market and economic data, looking to make some judgement calls to move money from one asset to another to capitalise on market sentiment. This tactic has served us well and we have outperformed our benchmark index in 11 out of the last 13 years, through judicious use of our award-winning research and asset allocation strategies. But by far the most consistent message is that having a long enough time horizon and not reacting emotionally to market movements is key to success as an investor.



**BREWIN
DOLPHIN**

If you have any questions get in touch with James Cartmell, Divisional Director, james.cartmell@brewin.co.uk, 0191 279 7461.



James Cartmell,

MAVEN COMPLETES £2.15 MILLION INVESTMENT IN BOILER PLAN



(L – R): Michael Hunt – Head of Sales & Operations, Zoe Stewart – Finance Director, Ian Henderson – Managing Director & Founder, and Allison Cairns – Head of Digital & Marketing, all of Boiler Plan.

Disruptive 'digital first' service for sale and installation of boilers secures investment to accelerate growth and create circa 30 new jobs over the next 12 months

Maven Capital Partners has completed a £2.15 million investment in Boiler Plan, a market disruptive platform that sells, installs and services boilers.

The funding includes a £1.65m investment from the Maven VCTs and a £500,000 investment from the North East Development Capital Fund, managed by Maven and supported by the European Regional Development Fund. The funding will help accelerate Boiler Plan's growth, allowing the business to increase its geographic coverage and invest in its sales, marketing and digital functions.

Boiler Plan provides an innovative online platform (boilerplanuk.com) for the purchase of a new boiler. Its 'digital first' solution offers consumers a quick and convenient way to complete the quote process online, with the installation able to take place within 48 hours. The platform supports the entire boiler sales process, handling everything from the choice of appliance, the initial home survey, finance payment options, installation by a qualified engineer, and the ongoing maintenance

and aftercare service.

The UK domestic heating market is worth £3 billion annually and is growing at 2% per annum. Boiler Plan brings a market disruptive and customer focused service to a mature sector, which until recently had seen little advancements in technology and service. It is one of the first providers to offer a full end-to-end digital solution and the Boiler Plan platform currently services circa 45% of the UK market geographically. The business will use the funding to roll out its operations into new territories, including the South West, Wales, London, the South East, and Scotland. By 2020, Boiler Plan will cover 90% of the UK, with over 27 million households able to access its services.

Alex Marsh, Investment Manager at Maven, said: "Boiler Plan has evidenced strong commercial traction in a short space of time and was one of the first of a small number of new entrants to disrupt this market with a digital solution. Most sectors have been disrupted to some extent now by digital and online solutions, and Boiler Plan's innovative

and customer focused platform has brought this choice to the heating market. The impressive growth the business has achieved since launching two years ago demonstrates there is a clear demand from consumers for this type of platform. Boiler Plan fits the mould of the dynamic and entrepreneurial businesses Maven seeks to support and we look forward to helping Ian and the senior management team add scale to the company."

Ian Henderson, Managing Director and Founder of Boiler Plan, said, "Myself and my management team at Boiler Plan are delighted to have gained this investment from one of the most progressive fund managers in the UK. I would like to thank Alex Marsh and the rest of the team at Maven for their hard work and first class advice during this process.

"The realisation of this capital will allow us to continue on our growth path and further invest in our digital platforms and operational capability to offer our customers an unrivalled service when choosing a supplier for their new boiler."

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

NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL FUND



The £27 million North East Development Capital Fund, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, backs high growth and established businesses via debt finance, mezzanine loans or equity investments from £400,000 up to £2 million.

If your business is in need of funding to help unlock its growth potential, please contact Maven's local investment team on:

E: enquiries-northeast@mavencp.com | **T:** 0191 731 8590

Earl Grey House, 75/85 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6EF | Salvus House, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5TS



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Peter Neal & Peter Wilson

AZURE PLANNING TO EXPAND ITS SERVICE OFFERING AFTER CEO APPOINTMENT

Azure Charitable Enterprises, with the help of chartered accountancy and business advisory firm UNW, has appointed Peter Wilson as its new CEO as part of plans to expand its service offering and implement a new long-term strategy.

The Northumberland-based organisation, which works with disabled and disadvantaged people to maximise their quality of life and personal development, appointed Peter at the beginning of the Summer with the aim of developing the charity's capability and capacity to respond to the needs of the care sector community.

As well as providing supported housing, supported employment, education and training, community integration and counselling services, Azure also runs several charitable businesses throughout the region, including a garden centre in Cramlington, managed work-space in Newburn and further landscaping, design and print businesses.

Peter, who has a long history acting as a Trustee on the Boards at not-for-profit organisations including The High Tide Foundation on Teesside, joined Azure from Middlesbrough College, where he spent 6 years as Managing Director being responsible for business development and employer engagement.

UNW's Strategic Talent team, a niche service that recruits board-level and senior finance

professionals for various organisations to support and drive business growth, supported Azure throughout the hiring process.

Peter Wilson, CEO at Azure, said: "The ever-increasing challenge to provide 'more for less' is currently one of the biggest demands placed upon those in the charity sector. Arriving as CEO, I'm very clear that I am not only responsible for developing but, more importantly, delivering a strategy with the Board to ensure we can continue to maximise our resources long-term. To this end, we will find ourselves working in new ways with commissioning and partner organisations to deliver services and create more opportunities to improve the quality of life of the people we serve."

"Since joining Azure, I've been struck by the enthusiasm, imagination and determination of the staff here to make a real difference and I am extremely proud to continue to provide a platform to transform the lives of the people we serve."

Peter was introduced to the Azure board by UNW's Head of Strategic Talent Peter Neal and emphasises the importance of UNW's dedication

to ensure the potential working relationship would be a fruitful one.

Peter Wilson continued; "UNW's Strategic Talent team were extremely supportive and diligent, keeping me fully informed throughout the process. From the first meeting with UNW, I knew instinctively that Azure was where I wanted to be, and Peter Neal was instrumental in facilitating honest open discussions between the Board and myself regarding our mutual aspirations and vision going forward."

Peter Neal, Head of Strategic Talent at UNW, said; "Our expansive networks, in addition to easy access to business and accountancy specialists at UNW, means we understand the needs of the client to find them the best fit for their culture."

"From the initial conversations, I felt that Peter and Azure were the right fit for their mutual aspirations and I was delighted when he was appointed by the Board. We wish them every success in their future endeavours as Azure continues its vital work in the local community."

UNW is a leading independent firm of chartered accountants and business advisors delivery a wide range of services to its clients. To find out more about our strategic talent service, you can visit www.unw.co.uk/service/strategic-talent or contact Peter Neal at peterneal@unw.co.uk.

NORTHUMBERLAND FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMPANY SIGNALS GROWTH WITH NEW APPOINTMENT

Cramlington-based Explore Wealth Management, is going from strength to strength with the exciting news of a new appointment to its expanding team of consultants.

Family-run Explore Wealth Management specialises in retirement planning, pensions advice and investment management. Paul Moat joins the company with a wealth of experience from the banking and independent financial sector. He holds qualifications in Regulated Financial Advice and Long-Term Care, both from the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII).

Paul is originally from Chapel Park in Newcastle. He currently lives in Washington, Tyne & Wear with his partner Sarahjane, who works as a community nurse.

At 18 years old, Paul joined a global bank on a management training programme, which is where he cut his teeth and gained a great deal of experience about the financial markets. He later worked for two other national banks before entering the independent financial advice sector over six years ago.

"I was really attracted to working for Explore Wealth by their caring approach to looking after the best needs of the client and ensuring everything is done to the best of their ability to achieve the clients' expectations," said Paul.



Paul Moat of Explore Wealth Management.

"I intend to hit the ground running and look forward in particular to meeting with existing clients and forging new working relationships with retirees and business owners, who are thinking about the retirement journey and who want the best available financial advice for their money, pension and investments."

Stephen Sumner, Director of Explore Wealth Management Ltd, said: "The appointment of Paul shows a strong level of intent by Explore Wealth

to maintain our reputation as one of the region's leading financial advice firms. We feel strongly that increasing the amount of experience and expertise within the team will also serve to speed up our already rapid rate of growth.

"The appointment of Paul can only bode well for our new and existing clients as we aim to continue to offer the best advice possible to help people plan their financial future with a strong sense of trust and positivity."

For further information about Explore Wealth Management, visit www.explorewealth.co.uk or call 0191 285 1555.

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Chartered Financial Planner
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SELF-EMPLOYED? ARRANGING A MORTGAGE SHOULD NOT BE A FULL TIME JOB

According to the Office of National Statistics, the self-employed market has increased from 3.3 million people (12.0% of the labour force) in 2001 to 4.8 million (15.1% of the labour force) in 2017.

For many it is the conclusion of a dream, but applying for mortgage finance does bring with it barriers that they will not have been exposed to when in an employed position.

Many lenders, for some reason, view the self-employed with caution, something I find mystifying given that fate is in our own hands to a greater extent than most PAYE employees.

Whether you are a fixed contract worker, sole trading barrister, partner in a dental or GP practice, member of an LLP or a limited company shareholder, your income will be scrutinised closely and the level of mortgage borrowing available varies wildly between differing banks.

I am often approached by clients who think they are unable to get a mortgage or have been told that their dream home is out of reach but in many cases a solution can be found by taking a few simple steps.

For example, lenders approach the self-employed in several different ways:-

- **Number of years trading** – most lenders look at the last 2 – 3 years accounts, but some lenders will consider an application with just a single year of accounts.

- **Income of Limited Company Shareholders** – whilst most lenders underwrite by assessing salary plus dividends, a few will consider



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

salary plus share of net profit. This can make a huge difference to the borrowing level available as not all self-employed people draw the full level of income that they could do in order to manage their tax liabilities.

- **Most recent years accounts** – for a growing business, a lender which bases its mortgage decision on the most recent years income rather than an average of the past two or three years can be a significant advantage.

- **Contractors** – a growing number of people now work on a contracted basis rather than being a permanent employee. Specialist lenders, often not available on the High Street, have huge experience in this sector.

- **Pension contributions** – some lenders will take these into account for affordability purposes as the payments are considered voluntary.

As can be seen above, due the differing ways in which lenders assess self-employed income, how much can be borrowed varies according to how the lender considers income and one approach will be better for some, whilst a different approach will be more effective for others.

As a consequence, tailored mortgage advice for this portion of the mortgage market is perhaps more important than any other sector. Local, face-to-face, independent mortgage advice can smooth the process so my final message is do not despair if your first port of call says no....we are ready to take your call and offer assistance!

Paul Hardingham is Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans paul@innovatempl.co.uk www.innovatempl.co.uk 0191 2233514.

Your home is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loan secured on it.



NEWCASTLE ARCHITECT CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY WITH RESTRUCTURE

Leading North East architectural practice Pod Newcastle has restructured its management team as it prepares for growth following recent 10th anniversary celebrations.

The firm, owned by equity directors Craig and Ruth Van Bedaf, has made three senior promotions to its 12-strong team, based in the Toffee Factory, Newcastle.

Jens Rahmann, Adam Lee and Martin Clay have all been promoted from senior architect to director.

Craig said: "The promotion of these key staff members represents recognition of the vital contribution each individual has made over a sustained period with the practice. This provides Pod with a diverse senior skill base and the ability

to deliver a range of projects of various scale."

New director Jens, who has been with Pod for 10 years, has developed a strong reputation primarily for the delivery of residential master planning projects across the north of England.

Adam has been instrumental in the development and delivery of highly technical projects from inception to site completion. His promotion will allow the technical expertise in the office to be developed.

Meanwhile, Martin has been promoted for his varied skill base, from his expertise in strategic master planning through to his delivery of bespoke private homes.



FROM NEW ORLEANS TO NORTHUMBERLAND

Local developer Jonathon Daniels moved back home to the North East in 2012 after 12 years in the United States developing and renovating property in New Orleans.

Jonathon describes a colourful world of architecturally rich properties with exotic names such as Double Shotgun, Creole Cottage, and Greek Revival, all with influences from primarily French & Spanish architecture. After completing a Master's degree in Architecture and dozens of renovations in Louisiana, Jonathon returned home but wanted to stay true to his passion for the restoration of historic buildings.

Upon returning to the North East, Jonathon has restored a series of buildings before starting his latest project, the conversion of a Grade II listed former warehouse in Alnwick.

Jonathon explained: "Of course the two towns have many differences, but they are both historically and culturally rich with an abundance of architectural interest. The goal for me has remained the same in both markets, to successfully adapt old buildings to the demands of modern living in a way that incorporates the character of the original structure."

Jonathon has delivered the refurbishment of Wagonway House. The former warehouse, which accommodated offices in more recent years, has now been converted into an exclusive series of five luxury apartments.

VICTORIA COURT DEVELOPMENT SETS A HIGH BAR FOR JESMOND APARTMENT LIVING



A development of eight new apartments on one of the smartest streets in Jesmond is rapidly taking shape. Victoria Court is being delivered by North East developer and landlord Karbon Homes, with a £700,000 refurbishment of the building being led by main contractor Burrige Construction.

The building on Gowan Terrace is being reconfigured to boast six 2 bed apartments and two 1 bed apartments to suit the local rental market. Each one will benefit from its own secure car parking space at the rear of the block.

The building will be marketed at rents which will be competitive in the buoyant rental market in Jesmond. Letting agent Pat Robson has been appointed to market the building locally, with young professional tenants being the key market.

Jayne Hore, Assistant Director of Sales and Marketing at Karbon, said: "We are excited by the quality of homes we are bringing forward at Victoria Court. This is a fantastic location, right in the heart of Jesmond, within easy walking distance of the shops and cafes around Acorn Road and just a few minutes from beautiful Jesmond Dene."



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PROPERTY PEOPLE...



SUE SHAW-TOOMEY

Owner, Toomey Legal

Did you always envisage a career in the law?

No I only did law as a challenge ! As a working class girl from Leeds with no contacts getting to Durham to read Law was the challenge but once there I discovered I loved it!

Tell us about your current role?

I formed Toomey Legal Limited almost four years ago to provide a real alternative to customers who need specialist property law advice. Unlike many firms we only allow qualified lawyers to work on files so that we spot any problems at the start and not 3 days before exchange, which is what happens when a lawyer only reviews the file just before exchange ! We also work to agreed fixed fees so everyone knows how much it will cost and how long it will take. In addition we email everyone when key milestones are reached so that everyone knows what is happening so

they know when to book the removal van!

What is the most exciting thing you are working on?

It is not exciting in the sense of a sexy deal but I am passionate about enfranchisement. This is the process of extending a lease or buying the freehold for a house. It is so wrong that people were sold leasehold houses in the 1970's and 80's instead of freeholds. They thought it was just a £20 a year ground rent but the restrictions are very onerous requiring the owners to pay hundreds of pounds for the freeholders consent everytime they make any alterations. Most people do not know they have a problem until they try and sell their house and find out that any buyers can't get a mortgage because the lease now has too short a term left. They think they have to accept the valuation from the freeholder and pay thousands more than they need to buy the freehold which they should have

got in the first place. We save them thousands of pounds by using a statutory valuation scheme.

What are your remaining career aspirations?

Toomey Legal is continuing to grow and I want to be the go to firm for honest, fast, property legal advice that is delivered in the way the customer wants. I think solicitors could make a lot of improvements and I want Toomey Legal to be the firm driving that.

What are your favourite places to live in the North East?

Anywhere near one of the amazing beaches where I could walk my dog Oreo on the edge of the sea.

How do you like to relax?

Playing golf with friends, beach walks with Oreo or just chilling with my teenage daughters.

For further information visit the website www.toomeylegal.co.uk

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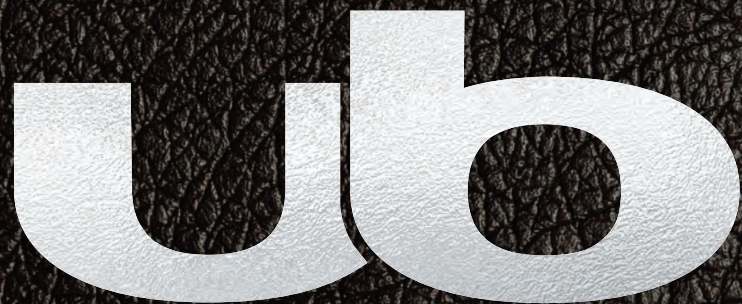
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Jan Dale heads up the high-end estate agency of URBAN BASE offering expert advice from her many years of experience in a diverse property market. With a team of property professionals URBAN BASE remains at the forefront of the regions property market offering a full range of services to their dedicated clients gained from valued recommendations over fifteen years in business.

It's that time of year again for important decision making and questions to answer; whether to move or not to move, whether to sell or not to sell, whether to extend or even rent out – all can make for life changing decisions. At URBAN BASE we have a team of property professionals able to guide and support you as to how the market is performing in your area, and offer an informed decision as to the best way forward. Then there's the where to move to, where to invest in. At URBAN BASE we are renowned for selling exceptional homes of luxury, building plots land, and a range of well designed new-build homes. The more adventurous homeowners can be surprised at the value for money to build-it themselves, but clearly this comes with a lot of decision making and planning, and you also need a great architectural design team. We can assist with all of these with our partners in both structural and spatial design, not to mention the finance team who can assist in advice on how to fund the Dream and make it a Reality.

We believe we offer a private-client bespoke property service like no other agent. Showcasing our client's properties with unique marketing and exclusive Open Events, inviting appropriate clientele to attend our events and view properties they may not have otherwise considered, often resulting in secured offers and sales agreed.

There is often a degree of inside expert knowledge to ensure a successful property transaction, ensuring the experts are at hand to overcome what the market can throw at us throughout a sale process – we like to refer to it as the URBAN BASE Gold Dust – a very rare find indeed. Exceptional property service is borne from true integrity in everything we do. The team here are passionate about the business, and aim to offer a client journey usually only seen in private banking or the delivery of a super yacht. **Now there's a thought... have you considered living on a yacht in the Tyne – we may have just the base.**



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Luxury Living Refined

TOWN PLANNING...THE BASICS

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House



There's a lot of advice out there regarding Town Planning, thousands of pages dedicated to what can be perceived as red tape but with a lot of jargon and confusing details in general they don't tend to cover what you need to know in simple basic terms.

Planning House strive to provide valuable information in order for people to be better informed about the planning process without being bogged down by unnecessary waffle.

Town Planning is not rocket science, to help you know the basics of town planning, Planning House have prepared 8 eBooklets covering just that, the basics. If you want to look further into a particular topic more information can be found online very easily. These resources have been prepared as an easy read starting point, free of charge, no email collection before you can download and no sign up to a newsletter – no strings attached! All you need to do is go to the Planning House website, click the eBooklet and read it, the current series is:

1. WHAT IS TOWN PLANNING?

Covering the need for town planning, the system, what town planners do and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), this eBooklet is a very light touch overview of planning.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

Designed to give you the basics of pre-application engagement, planning fees, types of application, how to apply for planning permission, who makes the decision, the process, validation requirements, and material planning considerations. This eBooklet provides you with enough knowledge to assist you through the planning process if your proposal is not complex.

3. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT & USE CLASS

If you're looking to extend or improve your home or change the use of a building it pays to understand the scope of permitted development rights. Covering potential permitted development rights you may have, including those for converting buildings i.e. barns into homes without the need for planning permission. However, as with all things about town planning it can be a complex topic, these rights can be removed, or there may be another process (prior approval) which you may need to go through in order to benefit from these rights.

4. SELF BUILDERS

This eBooklet is aimed at those who are proposing to embark on a self-build journey, covering the application process but also planning myths, the hidden costs of planning and steps to choosing a town planner, it's a useful starting point.

5. APPEALS

There's a right of appeal not just against the refusal of a planning application but also against non-determination of an application or against conditions attached to an approval. Covering who makes the decision, what to submit, appeal types and process, award of costs and disagreement with a decision this eBooklet helps you be more aware of the time and resources needed for an appeal.

6. ENFORCEMENT

Covering what is a breach of planning control, enforcement time limits, non-compliance, the range of methods used to tackle a breach and types of enforcement notice this eBooklet stresses the importance of early intervention.

7. CIL & s106

There are some hidden costs of planning which you may not be aware of, if you're liable to pay CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) or propose a development which may trigger the need for additional works or financial contribution (via s106 Agreement) it's better to be informed about what the implications of both are.

8. DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, knowing what plans are in place and how they are developed will assist in progressing any planning proposal.

More topics are proposed to be added to the series in order to assist you in any potential development project, however if you need support or advice Planning House are here to help.



The Granary Runnymede Road, Darras Hall, Ponteland

5 5 5 C

A stunning luxury mansion with outstanding accommodation of circa 7000 sq ft, in private grounds of approx 0.75 acres. This very impressive home, extensively remodelled to an exceptional standard, lends itself to multi-generational living due to the self contained annex which has been created.



Price Guide: Offers over £1.85 Million

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The Shooting Box Shooting Box Lane, Edmundbyers

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WILLOUGHBY HOUSE, WALLED GARDEN, MATFEN



PRICE GUIDE: £1.75 MILLION

Willoughby House provides an outstanding stone built, detached house, one of four properties originally constructed within Walled Garden in 1996 by local builder, David Meakin. Extended at a later stage, this magnificent five bedroomed home has extensive accommodation and stands on a mature, immaculately presented garden plot of approximately 1 acre with magnificent open aspect views over the ha-ha to the south and overlooking the adjacent golf course at Matfen Hall. The gardens have been professionally landscaped with paths and terraces, lovely walkways, neatly manicured lawns, a double pond with bridge, as well as beautiful rockery beds with flowers and shrubs giving tremendous colour in season. The property also benefits from a triple garage with independent one bedroom accommodation above it. Willoughby House is a very special property in such a lovely location.



Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 2233500 ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk www.sandersonyoung.co.uk



Jayne Hore from Karbon Homes (right) is joined by Tim Nixon from Pat Robson & Co and Stephen McCoy from BurrIDGE Construction to check the plans for Victoria Court in Jesmond.

VICTORIA COURT SETS A HIGH BAR FOR JESMOND APARTMENT LIVING

This development of eight new apartments on one of the smartest streets in Jesmond, Newcastle is rapidly taking shape.

Victoria Court is a project being delivered by North East developer and landlord Karbon Homes, with a high specification £700,000 refurbishment of the building being led by main contractor BurrIDGE Construction.

The building on Gowan Terrace is being reconfigured to boast six 2 bedroom apartments and two 1 bed apartments to suit the local rental market, and each one will benefit from its own secure car parking space at the rear of the block.

The building will be marketed at rents which will be competitive in the buoyant rental market in Jesmond.

Letting agent Pat Robson has been appointed to market the building locally, with young professional tenants being the key market.

Jayne Hore, assistant director of sales and marketing at Karbon, said: "We are excited by the quality of home we are bringing forward at Victoria Court.

"This is a fantastic location, right in the heart of Jesmond, within easy walking distance of the shops and cafes around Acorn Road, and just a few minutes from beautiful Jesmond Dene.

"There are not many homes of this type, in this area, with a reserved off road parking space for every apartment."



Stephen McCoy, Commercial Director for BurrIDGE Construction, added: "We are delighted to have this opportunity to build on our excellent working relationship with Karbon Homes, on a project which not only demonstrates our strength in high quality refurbishment but also adds to our growing portfolio of residential work."

Tim Nixon, director at Pat Robson and Company, said "We're pleased to have been appointed as letting agent for Victoria Court. Rental demand in central Jesmond from professional and corporate tenants remains strong, and we are confident that the design, specification and location of Victoria Court will ensure a good market reaction."

Karbon Homes is a major landlord in the North East, with almost 30,000 homes of different types across the region.

The company offers rented homes, Shared Ownership, Rent to Buy and homes for sale, with all profits re-invested to build and maintain more properties for the communities it serves.



If you'd like to register your interest in Victoria Court, please contact Pat Robson & Co in Jesmond on 0191 20 90 100 or email: jesmond@patrobson.com

SPECIALIST NEW HOMES TEAM STRENGTHENED AS REGIONAL DEMAND CONTINUES



L-R Nicola Osborne, Lewis Chambers, Jonathan Rudge, Matt Hoy and Kathryn Kent

One of the North East's leading property firms will expand its specialist new homes department after welcoming over £90m of new build properties to market this year.

Nicola Osborne joins Bradley Hall as corporate client director following building a successful career at Sanderson Young, Knight Frank, and Grainger PLC. She will also be joined by Kathryn Kent, who has been promoted from her role as branch manager to new homes manager.

Nicola said: "I am delighted to be joining the Bradley Hall team at an exciting time for the firm. The ambitious growth strategy implemented by Neil and fellow directors has ensured that the company has become one of the leading full-service agencies in the region.

"I am proud to introduce my longstanding clients and business contacts to the firm and its expert team. The Bradley Hall service is outstanding, and I look forward to supporting head of land and development, Jonathan Rudge, and director of estate agency, Matt Hoy, in their 'field to finish' approach for developer clients of all sizes.

"It is an exciting time to be part of the region's new build property development market as we welcome further projects funded by investments from both inside and outside of the region. This activity supports demand for properties further emphasised by the governments long-term target of delivering 300,000 new homes across the UK."

To meet demand for housing, the number of new homes built in the North East almost doubled between 2010 and 2017. A recent report published by The NHBC Foundation revealed that the Office for National Statistics estimated that £38.4 billion was invested nationally in creating new homes in 2017.

The report also outlined that, according to research for the Home Builders Federation, England and Wales should increase the annual supply of homes by 81,600. This would mean £411 million more net capital expenditure, a

£14.2 billion rise in economic output, 260,800 more jobs, £1.1 billion more paid in tax, £384 million more investment in local infrastructure and £2.7 billion household spending on goods and services.

Group managing director Neil Hart said; "Nicola is an excellent addition to the Bradley Hall team. Her professional experience will further bolster the growth of our dedicated new homes division as we move closer to becoming the market leader in our field.

"Kathryn has been an integral member of the Bradley Hall team and has proven to be a great branch manager who has provided an outstanding service to our clients. She will now apply her regional knowledge and experience to a new role within the specialist new homes team."

For information on its services please visit the Bradley Hall website www.bradleyhall.co.uk



WILLOUGHBY PARK

ALNWICK

OIEO £395,000

EPC Rating - B83



This family home is arranged over three storeys and provides spacious accommodation which is immaculately presented throughout.

Externally to the front the property benefits from a private driveway with space to park two cars and a detached single garage with parking. To the rear is an ample sized terraced garden mainly laid

to lawn with Indian sand stone patio area and mature shrubs and flower beds to the peripheries.

The house is prominently located within walking distance of Alnwick town centre. Alnwick has been famously dubbed by Country Life magazine as 'the best place to live and visit in Britain', Alnwick is a bustling market town steeped in

character and history, stunning countryside walks and mile upon mile of pristine dune-backed beaches to explore.

Alnwick
 01665 605 605

www.bradleyhall.co.uk





SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MORTGAGE EXPERTS

Director of mortgages and finance for Bradley Hall, Lewis Chambers, covers why it's important for experienced brokers to develop the skills of the next generation of mortgage advisors.

In the current market there are an excessive number of lenders, an abundance of mortgage deals and ultimately what seems like an endless number of hoops for applicants to jump through to get the best deal for them – in all honesty, the market is a minefield.

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.

It's not surprising that many buyers, whether they be purchasing their first home or moving, rely on mortgage advisors to handle the process – ultimately saving them both time and money.

The overall aim to meet current demand for housing, as outlined by the Government in official documents, is to build dozens of thousands of new homes every year; which means that the vast majority of these new homeowners will require mortgages.

As a mortgage is the biggest financial commitment you will likely ever make, it is imperative to ensure that you are getting the mortgage advice, which is exactly right for your personal circumstances, from an expert.

In line with demand for mortgages growing, so is the need for trusted and committed new mortgage brokers. We have certainly experienced this requirement and have developed our commitment to supporting the next generation of mortgage experts.

Since the launch of our specialist mortgage team

in 2016 the team grown significantly, and we have been able to supply hundreds of people with mortgages on a national scale. We are dedicated to training the next generation of mortgage experts in order to continue providing an unrivalled service to more and more clients across the North East and further afield.

We understand the importance of investing our time and in training for the team. This not only provides personal and professional development for the individual, but also helps us to provide the best in class.

Most recently, we welcomed young mortgage and property consultant Carney Frater, who is recently received her level four CeMap which makes her a fully qualified advisor. We are also investing in constant development and training for our advisors and case handlers to ensure our entire team is educated to the highest standard.

For more information please call the Bradley Hall Mortgage team on 0191 260 2000.

HOUSING DESIGN – THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



The Good... Alnwick



The Good... Coble Quay, Amble



The Bad & The Ugly... Northumberland

In his latest exclusive article with Northern Insight, Jon Tweddell, director of JT Planning provocatively asks whether we're achieving well-designed residential spaces?

Achieving high quality design in housing and other development has been high up the planning agenda for some years now. But is this really manifesting itself on the ground? In short, my answer to the above question is definitely no!

Part 12 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in July 2018, re-emphasises the importance of 'achieving well-designed places'. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states:

'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'

The above quote represents government policy. It's crystal clear that high quality design is fundamental and a crucial aspect of sustainable development, so why do we not always achieve this and why are local authorities granting permission for developments that do not meet this simple test?

As ever, nothing in planning is simple and straightforward. Design is subjective; one person's interpretation of good design can be different to another.

There are several people involved with the design process - the key players being clients/developers,

architects and local authorities. Architects design buildings but the initial brief will always come from their client.

Ultimately, it is local authorities who grant planning permission for new housing developments and they must make a judgement as to whether the design is of high quality.

There are several factors that heavily influence design such as site characteristics, client requirements, planning policy and highways requirements.

All too often I do find that that prescriptive highways requirements have a huge impact on the overall design – specified road/footpath widths, visibility splays, parking/turning requirements etc.

While I fully appreciate that these standards are there to make for safe environments, many housing developments are designed around the car rather than around people. This results in large areas of tarmac for roads and parking which is unsightly.

The image above is of a modern housing development under construction in Northumberland. Unless you know this specific development, it could be anywhere in the country. It is designed around the car; adopts unimaginative house types; and uses cheap materials.

The final product is not high quality. I appreciate that house prices are still elevated beyond the

reach of many, therefore house builders who build cheap can also sell cheap, and that provides more affordable housing.

But I do think there can be some simple changes that improve the appearance of new housing such as better quality materials; more careful thought of spaces; more soft landscaping; and more detailing on the houses themselves.

Modern housing and living environments do not need to be unimaginative and boring. Good housing design does exist and is happening around the North East; there's just not enough of it.

I can show two examples of what I think is good housing design. The first is a traditional scheme for housing in Alnwick, the second a contemporary group of buildings on the quayside in Amble. Completely different designs, but both high quality. They are high quality because there is an attention to detail in respect of elevation treatment; use of high quality materials; good spacing and generous room sizes; and incorporation of interesting landscaping.

Overall, I feel that we rarely achieve high quality housing developments. This seems absolute bonkers given that this is a fundamental requirement of current government policy on design. However, I do feel there can be a positive way forward if key players adopt a more flexible approach.

For more details visit www.jontweddell.co.uk



Beth Fletcher

SERVICE CHARGES JUST GOT TEETH – HOW WILL THE NEW RULES AFFECT YOU?

Beth Fletcher, Property Management Surveyor at Knight Frank Newcastle, shares her expertise on commercial property service charges.

If you are a tenant or a landlord of a commercial property, you've no doubt spent too much of your ir retrievable, precious time mulling-over service charges.

As a tenant you want to make sure the charges you're paying are fair and reasonable. As a landlord, you want to ensure the costs of running your building are covered and are paid on time.

Service charges are the cement that holds the tenant-landlord relationship together. And, unfortunately, that adhesive can too often become a sticky issue. One of the main reasons for this is a lack of clarity for both parties around what can be charged for – and how much can be charged.

Industry guidance on service charges was first published in 1996 by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and has become known as the 'Service Charge Code'. Until now, this has only been guidance. But, that is about to change.

'Service charges in commercial property – a Professional Statement' has just been published by RICS and it now has teeth. It sets out some mandatory requirements for landlords and property managers and if they don't comply with them, they may face legal and disciplinary action. The new rules will be effective from 1 April 2019.

It's hoped the Statement will improve standards, fairness and transparency in the management of services charges and reduce the causes of disputes.

What has become mandatory?

1. All expenditure that the landlord wants to charge for must be in accordance with the terms of the lease.
2. Landlords must recover no more than 100% of the costs of the provision of the services.
3. Annually, landlords must give tenants service

charge budgets, including appropriate explanatory commentary.

4. Annually, landlords must give tenants an approved set of service charge accounts showing a true and accurate record of actual expenditure.
5. Landlords must give tenants a service charge apportionment matrix for their property each year.
6. Service charge monies must be held in one or more discrete (or virtual) bank accounts.
7. Interest earned on service charge accounts must be paid into the service charge account.
8. Practitioners must tell tenants that, if a dispute exists, any service charge payment withheld by them should only be the actual sum in dispute.
9. Practitioners must tell landlords that, following the resolution of a dispute, any incorrect service charge should be adjusted straight away.

What are the advantages for tenants?

Making the guidance mandatory is in everyone's interest. It will make service charges clear and transparent for all tenants – rather than just to those whose landlords followed the guidance as best practice.

For example, in the past, it wasn't set in stone who should be responsible for paying for things like marketing events held in an office building or a shopping centre. Now there's clear guidance that says the landlord should contribute 50% towards the cost of such events.

Another example is, where a landlord has agreed a capped or fixed service charge as an incentive to secure a new tenant, the landlord must pay for any shortfall, and not simply try to hide this and recover the shortfall from the other occupiers. The service charge matrix showing the basis for recovery of costs must be completely transparent and disclosed.

Service charges on different commercial buildings will now also be easier to compare. So, if you're looking for a property to lease or buy, this will help you make the right decision on which premises to choose, in relation to service charges.

What will be the biggest change for landlords?

The change that will have the biggest impact for landlords will be the new mandatory – much tighter – timescales for budgeting and settling service charge accounts. They now have to be reconciled annually.

Until now, unless the lease states otherwise, there was nothing stopping a landlord going back several years to recover costs owed. This can have a significant negative impact on a tenant's cash flow. Similarly, if too much time elapses, a landlord risks losing their chance to recover money owed because a former occupier may have since become insolvent.

If you are a landlord and are up-to-date with your service charge accounting, this won't be an issue but, if you have a backlog already, you really need to get up to speed now.

How can I find out more about the changes?

You can read and download 'Service charges in commercial property, 1st edition' on the RICS website www.rics.org

Beth Fletcher works in the Property Management team at Knight Frank in Newcastle.

Beth and her team manage properties from small multi-let offices, to entire business parks, to shopping centres. They take the hassle and administration of owning a commercial property away from landlords. They also provide Service Charge Consultancy.

Contact Beth at elizabeth.fletcher@knightfrank.com 0191 594 5007.



Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

GENERATION RENT. A POSITIVE MEME?

This month's column allows me to use my current favourite word, 'meme'. I am not allowed to use this word at home as my wife says she is sick of it. Apparently, there is no meme evident in our children's lunch. They just happen to like cheese and tomato sandwiches.

There is a common meme in discussion of 'generation rent' which is picked up by mainstream media. This usually features a glum singleton or couple staying at Hotel Mum 'n Dad in order to save money for the deposit on a home of their own. But this meme only tells one side of the story, ignoring as it does the tens of thousands of young professionals who are perfectly happy to rent.

There are a number of reasons for this under reported trend among young professionals. Not least is the fact that their disposable income can be spent as they see fit rather than being squirreled away for a mortgage deposit. Another advantage is the ease with which they can move around the country if work or other factors dictate.

We were recently approached by a young couple who were planning to start a family and needed a larger property. Within two weeks they had found

the ideal apartment, the paperwork was concluded in an afternoon and they moved into their newly refurbished home. No mortgage headache, conveyancing, stamp duty or the dreaded chain.

This is all very well for our happy renters but let us not overlook the needs of young professionals desperate to get onto the property ladder. Amid the welter of property legislation introduced this year there is a proposal that would solve two major problems at once.

Conservative think tank Onward has proposed that landlords would not pay capital gains tax of around 28% if they sell to a tenant who has been in residence over three years. Further, it is proposed that the estimated saving of £15,000 should be split between landlord and tenant.

This gives an easy out for landlords struggling with ever more burdensome legislation and

refurbishment costs while providing tenants with an attractive fillip to their home deposit savings. The Sunday Times recently reported that the scheme could be included in the Chancellors autumn budget statement.

If adopted the plan would serve the Government well by ticking boxes on their wish list. More young people would be able to access their first mortgage, more properties would pass into private ownership from the rental sector and landlords would be encouraged to offer longer tenancies. Let us hope this entirely sensible plan becomes a meme.

Having got that out of my system I look forward to writing next month's column where I shall feature my current second favourite word 'trope'. I now have thirty days to find out what it means. If that proves impossible I shall follow the advice of J.R.R Tolkien who said "Children make up imaginary languages. I have been at it since I could write".

TIS THE SEASON FOR DESIGN



George Elliott

November is here and the festivities have begun. Flyers, cards and advertisements are everywhere we look, drawing us in (excuse the pun) to the festive activities and products in the city.

It is said that whilst good customer service keeps the custom coming back, design is the driving force that makes a brand memorable and we couldn't agree more. When you think of a company, what do you picture? More often than not, their logo and their colour scheme. Now think of your business... does this have the same effect?

Having spent 17 years in the print and design industry George Elliott, Managing Director of Elliott Print, knows just how to market your business through his personal creativity. Elliott Print is well accustomed to working for a diverse range of companies from local tradesmen to national nightclub group Novus Leisure, not to mention the brains behind Tiger Tiger. Alongside the above, George also works with a number of charities including MS Research & Relief and The Nicole & Jessica Rich Foundation. Did you see the impressive invitations for the launch of STACK Newcastle? Yes, that too was Elliott Print.

If you're in need of anything print and design, and would like a creative company that does what it says on the tin, then email George at Elliott Print on info@elliottprint.co.uk or follow the Facebook page: Elliott Print and Design Ltd for regular updates and offers.



This year marks 20 years since Newcastle based letting agency Wright Residential was founded in 1998. Based on Heaton's famous Chillingham Road, the ARLA certified agency has managed to build relationships with landlords across the region and has helped thousands of tenants find their dream home in the North East.

If you are a prospective landlord in need of some advice, there's no better team to help you than Wright Residential.





KAROL MARKETING GRABS SLICE OF THE ACTION WITH NEW CLIENT WIN

North East-based communications experts, Karol Marketing, grabbed a slice of the action with their appointment to deliver public relations, social media and influencer engagement for a revolutionary new pizza restaurant and bar opening in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Pizza Punks, the self-proclaimed artisan wood-fired pizza concept that flies in the face of traditional pizza restaurants, opened the doors to its first English outlet in September, bringing its own unique style to Newcastle's booming food and dining scene. Renowned for its vast array of unusual toppings, Pizza Punks first two restaurants in Glasgow and Belfast have taken the cities by storm, largely thanks to its unusual proposition and an increasing desire from customers to be able to customise dishes.

Karol scooped the PR brief for the new restaurant, located on the city's prestigious Grey Street, after a competitive pitch process.

TWO YEARS IN A ROW FOR PRO-AD AT THE INSTITUTE OF PROMOTIONAL MARKETING COGS AWARDS

Morpeth company Pro-Ad has won a silver award for promotional merchandise campaign of the year at the prestigious 2018 Institute of Promotional Marketing (IPM) 'COGS' Awards.

The award follows on from Pro-Ad's success in the 2017 awards, in which the promotional merchandising solutions provider took home both gold and silver accolades.

COGS awards highlight the significant impact and business contributions made by companies like Pro-Ad, which specialises in providing merchandise and marketing support for all types of promotional campaigns.

Pro-Ad scooped its latest prize for its work to design and produce a promotional pack to support energy provider SSE's health and wellbeing campaign. The pack included a branded gym bag, runner's recovery pack and a bespoke notebook which encouraged users to record their daily step count, water intake, amount of sleep and promoted SSE's mental health awareness message by encouraging people to talk.

NORTH EAST MARKETING AWARDS CELEBRATE REGION'S TALENT

The North East Marketing Awards celebrated the very best of the region's marketing sector at a glittering awards ceremony held at the Biscuit Factory, Newcastle. Sponsored by Nigel Wright Recruitment, the event attracted around 300 marketing professionals from agencies and in-house teams across the North East.

Organised by Echo Events & Association Management, the evening celebrated a range of talented teams and individuals, with awards for Rising Star of the Year through to Marketing Director of the Year illustrating excellence at both ends of the career spectrum. The awards shone a spotlight on not only the people but also the campaigns, brands and products they have created and promoted over the past year.

Over 100 nominations were received and the shortlisted finalists met with a carefully selected judging panel for face to face interviews before a winner was selected.



NORTH EAST MARKETING EXPERT SIGNS DEAL ON USA OFFICE



LIFE sciences and pharmaceutical marketing agency ramarketing is gearing up to launch its first US office, with the signing of a lease on offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the addition of three new US clients to its overseas portfolio.

The move puts ramarketing at the epicentre of the world's drug development industry, with its new office sited in the world-famous Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) in Kendall Square, where the agency's neighbours include the British Embassy.

In 2018, the agency has landed branding, content and PR projects with three multi-billion-dollar US-based clients all situated in and around Boston. Over 50 percent of its business now lies in exports, and the recent winning of eight new European customers creates a client list which spans 12 countries and three continents.

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ASK SILVER BULLET...



John Dias

“HOW CAN I MARKET MY BUSINESS ON PINTEREST?”

With Social Media being incorporated in to most marketing strategies recently, adapting the correct ones are crucial. Pinterest seems to be one of the most misunderstood platforms, where many companies fear to tread. This could be for a number of reasons, such as companies lacking visual content, irrelevant target audience or even complicated user interface. Whatever the reason, the platform should not be disregarded and should be considered as a useful marketing tool.

Pinterest marketing is popular. However, when looking at platform statistics in comparison with alternative channels, monthly users are the lowest across Social Media. Pinterest is generally the least popular channel with around 200 million actively monthly users, as opposed to Facebook with 2.23 billion, Twitter with 328 million and Instagram with 800 million. For this reason many companies don't even consider creating an account, and for some businesses in the service sector this could be considered the correct choice. Yet, Pinterest is a Social Media with one of the biggest conversion rates for directing traffic on to a website and even generating sales.

Safe to say, Pinterest is not to be ignored in the

business world, especially if you are a product-based business. In fact, using Pinterest for marketing could be one of the wisest strategic moves you make.

Users of the platform are predominantly female, dominating at around 80% of the demographic, and generally around 25-45 years old. The most popular categories being searched for are travel, food, home and beauty, so if this sounds like your ideal target audience then Pinterest is the place for you. As a visual platform, it is great to showcase exactly what you are selling with some information and a link to your website.

Each piece of content shared on Pinterest can be described and posted into relevant categories. This allows users to easily find what they are looking for and create 'Boards' which are personalised to them.

One of the great things about Pinterest is that you can learn how to use it and unlike most other channels it won't change rapidly. Thinking of Facebook and Twitter, the platforms are always trying to evolve by altering algorithms and functions. These updates are not always necessarily a good thing. Pinterest knows where it wants to be

positioned in the market and therefore is dedicated to staying true to its offer.

Pinterest advertising is a great option for companies selling products, due to its high conversion rate. Users can create a business Pinterest account and schedule adverts in order to target the correct audience. An ecommerce website would benefit from setting up a Pinterest business account as one of their main Internet marketing strategies. Companies primarily selling products have the opportunity to present their items to a large audience who are interested. Limited edition offers, sales and discounts can all be shared, ultimately driving customers to visit the website and hopefully leading to a transaction. This could essentially be the most cost-effective platform for advertising with the highest ROI.

Pinterest mirrors the advantages of Social Media as a user friendly, interactive and visual platform that integrates the most popular things affiliated with Social Media marketing. Spending around 15 minutes on the platform per day is enough to keep you active, so when you next re-evaluate your Social Media strategy don't forget to consider the benefits Pinterest could have on your company.

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.

JUST WHAT SOME OF OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US...

“

Mike and Northern Insight are great advocates for the North East regional business and leisure sectors.

Wayne Halton, Director, MHW PR

The magazine really is a staple read for any aspiring businessman/woman wishing to keep their fingers on the pulse in such an ever changing region.

George Galloway, Commercial Director, ITPS

Mike does all he can to offer value for money and is the consummate professional turning out quality publications every month.

Antonia Brindle, Managing Director, Get Brindled

Northern Insight has taken the local magazine market by storm with the quality of production, depth of content with a local bias and expert business opinion surpassing all past, current and other media alternatives.

Rodger Brasington, Chief Executive, Prosper

”

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For advertising and editorial enquiries contact Michael Grahamslaw, Managing Director, Northern Insight on mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com or visit the website www.northern-insight.co.uk





WTF ARE BRANDS DOING WHEN TRYING TO HIT ELUSIVE MILLENNIALS?

The holy grail of marketing, PR and advertising (still) seems to be the (always) elusive millennial generation – those born between 1980 and 2000 and with little else in common than their birthdays. This last fact has not stopped brands from trying to define them and reach them en bloc. And HOW they have tried. And failed.

A common failure stems from attempting to reach millennials in their “own language”. For example, Microsoft recently sent exclusive party invitations to new interns with the opening line “hey bae” and the call to action “hell yes to getting lit” with “hella noms” and “lots of dranks”. Binary may be universal but millennials are certainly not, meaning this fumbling faux-pas went right over their heads.

And what about Procter & Gamble attempting to patent “WTF”, “LOL” and “NBD” for their upcoming soap and air freshener products in a wistful bid to catch the eye of their colloquial counter parts – I mean, WTF?

Also named Generation Y, millennials have actually been classified as the most vaguely defined group which is exactly why it is so difficult for brands to make focused and insightful claims that inform meaningful two-way conversations.

However, according to The Economist, there are three general rules companies can loosely apply in order to get their foot through the millennial door; (1) Transparency, (2) Experiences over things and (3) Flexibility.

Transparency: Patagonia, the outdoor sports brand, introduced the “Footprint Chronicles” to better communicate their sustainability efforts to customers. They created videos and interviews of their supply chain so that customers could ascertain the real origins of garments as well as gauge what is good and bad about a particular product – in other words, total transparency. As a



recent Fast Company study revealed that 90% of Millennials would purchase a brand’s products if they are strongly aligned to a “social purpose”, it is therefore not surprising that Patagonia is one of the most loved brands for Gen Y.

Experience over things: It’s no secret (in marketing at least) that younger generations are dispensing with ‘things’ over ‘experiences’. So for brands to get in the minds of millennials, they need to integrate themselves seamlessly into their environment. American Insurance group State Farm provided Bonnaroo Music Festival Goers with festival essentials such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and

shampoo which millennials then shared online with the hashtag #HereToHelp. The campaign subsequently went viral and an otherwise non-millennial brand was successfully planted on their radar. A simple value-add that led to a generational perception shift.

Flexibility: And why do millennials crave experiences like festivals over material goods? Because they are the generation with the most debt, least assets and lowest job security, making them as commitment-phobic as Casanova. Consequently, brands that offer millennials flexibility in the form of temporary access as opposed to the permanent ownership of “things”, are gaining traction.

Borrow My Doggy, an online pet-sharing platform, enables animal-lovers to get their doggy fix by borrowing Rover, Rex or Rolo for any amount of time. Renting pets for as little as one hour gives millennials the desired access without the cumbersome disadvantages that come with outright ownership such as expensive vet appointments, purchasing pet food, finding kennels when going on holiday and dreaded early morning walks. Maybe a dog can just be for Christmas...

For a generation that prides itself on diversity and deliberately not fitting the mould, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all solution is not only misdirected, but impossible. However, by implementing these three tenets, brands may actually find that they have the inspiration to go beyond the cookie cutter and communicate with millennials successfully and for the long-term.

Gabie Speed is a millennial at W Communications. www.wnorth.co.uk. Find us on twitter @wcommnorth

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METROMAIL SEMINARS

As part of MetroMail's 30th anniversary celebrations they hosted an industry event for their customers, prospects and suppliers. They had seminars from key note speakers including: Royal Mail MarketReach, Engelmann and Buckham, Canon and The Software Bureau. The seminars featured new research yet to be officially released by Royal Mail, focusing on consumers' subconscious reactions to brand messaging. Other seminar topics included: the environmental impact of single use plastic, the power of data and how to enhance its effectiveness as well as the value of personalised print and mail.

Attendees enjoyed a deluxe three course meal with waiter service, there were opportunities to network and finally participate in a factory tour.

The day was a great success and MetroMail hope to host similar events in the future.





USING LINKEDIN TO BUILD BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

By Sarah Hall, managing director of Sarah Hall Consulting Limited

There's a growing recognition of the opportunity to use the social web as a means of engaging directly with customers, employees, prospects and suppliers.

LinkedIn is a good starting point. It's a professional social media network of more than 500 million people each showcasing their experience and skills, and sharing content and information related to their professions' expertise.

A LinkedIn profile is a great basis for new professional relationships. People can seek out your expertise via the platform's search functions or newsfeed. You can also use these functions to find other people.

It's important that you complete your profile to maximise the opportunity for search and discovery. Rich profiles are visually engaging and enable prospects to seek you out. They are also optimised for search.

Here's how to get started.

1. OPTIMISE YOUR PROFILE FOR DISCOVERY

There are some basics that you need to get in place to make your profile discoverable. The first job is to make sure that your account isn't set to anonymous. Log into your account and head to the settings and privacy section. Select Edit your public profile and ensure that the visibility is set to public.

2. PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

According to LinkedIn a professional photo will make visitors seven times more likely to visit your profile than a profile without an image. Use a close cropped photo of your face. LinkedIn recommends a high resolution image with a neutral background cropped to 400 by 400 pixels.

3. BACKGROUND IMAGE

Aside from your profile photo, your background photo is the thing that people notice first on your profile. A carefully chosen image relating to your professional experience will inform prospects who you are and what you do.

4. HEADLINE

Write your profile headline to appeal to your target audience. Consider including what you do and who you do it for and what differentiates you from other people on LinkedIn.

5. PERSONAL SUMMARY

Use this space to differentiate yourself from other individuals and organisations in your sphere and showcase the skills that appeal to your target audience. Include examples of the organisations that you've worked for and the outcomes that you have delivered.

6. CAREER EXPERIENCE

Use this area to record your previous roles and achievements. Focus on the organisations that you have helped and the outcomes that you have delivered. Focus on what you've done and what you've achieved that relates to stakeholders for your current role. Ditch experience that doesn't fit with your career narrative.

7. STATUS UPDATES

There are two ways of sharing content with your network on LinkedIn - either by posting an update or an article. Content is shared with your network and the newsfeed. It's a way of building a community and sharing content that will help build your personal reputation. Updates are short posts that enable you to share a link, photo or video in the same way that you would on Facebook or Twitter. They're a good way to start a conversation about what you're reading, ask for ideas and to share industry news.

8. ARTICLES

Use articles to share your insights, perspectives and expertise. The best way to drive conversation and attention is to write on industry trends or share commentary about the day's news. Aim for 500 to 1,000 words. Like status updates this content is pushed into the newsfeed of individuals in your network.



Sarah Hall

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IN CONVERSATION WITH...



KEITH NEWMAN

Owner, Highlights PR

What were your career ambitions growing up?

As a teenager, I was set on a career as a navigating officer in the Merchant Navy but sadly, a slight colour-blindness deficiency put paid to that idea. I was devastated but it taught me that there are always alternatives. I then had an exceptionally good career within the gas industry leading ultimately to the formation of Highlights PR.

Tell us about Highlights PR and the services you offer?

I write stories that help my clients get more business. In a nutshell, I find story angles that others often don't see at first. Having the ability to find the right story helps me to promote a business, charity, individual or organisation to the media. Couple this with excellent professional photography and good working relationships with the media and I tend to get a high success rate. I don't just do press releases and campaigns though. I also run very successful radio media training courses and I specialise in PR crisis management too for when things go wrong.

What's your proudest business achievement?

Going back to my aspirations with the Merchant Navy and my subsequent career within the gas industry, I'm proud to say that I've been able to work on PR stories with a number of nautical clients including the Royal Naval Reserves and the Maritime Volunteer Service and I still provide a service to Northern Gas Networks some 12 years after I left the company. I'm also pleased with the diversity of my work and how I've helped others achieve success in their businesses. From promoting an up and coming comedian to coordinating all media activity for massive events such as Northumberland Live or Sunday for Sammy or producing and issuing press releases for a new start up business or a multinational organisation, I'm

proud of the way I understand the issues and needs of my clients and then get them a high level of media coverage.

What is the biggest challenge you have encountered?

My challenge is living up to my own self set high standards and targets. If I don't think there is a news worthy story I won't write it. This helps to maintain my high success rate and saves my client's budget too. Sometimes convincing a client that a story isn't newsworthy is a real challenge but it's always done with good humour.

How has the industry changed?

When I started in PR everything was done via the Royal Mail, we posted physical photographs and press releases to our contacts. I hated writing out the envelopes. Change is good however and now it's not just print media, radio and TV that I target. More and more I'm finding that the internet is the place to highlight my clients on e-news sites and blogging platforms too.

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

In business I find that a lot of my clients become good friends too. The good thing about my job is that I see lots of different businesses and go behind the scenes in the most bizarre and interesting places. Getting to know my clients is very important and I learn a lot from many of them. In that respect they are all my heroes.

Out of business, my biggest hero has to be my wife Lesley for putting up with my long hours and constant phone calls. I've had the honour of working with two of my comedy heroes over the years too in the form of comedy writers Ian La Frenais and Dick Clement through my work with Sunday for Sammy,

Tyneldols and the Auf Wiedersehen Pet 30-year celebrations.

Is there a mantra you aspire to do business by?

That's simple – Do what I say I will do and then I do more.

What is your funniest business moment?

I have a lot of fun at work and sadly some of the things that happen aren't printable to protect the guilty! However, I do like to have a bit of fun with some of my headlines. For example, I did a story for my client- the award-winning Harbour View Fish and Chip Restaurant in Seaton Sluice about a young couple who took a takeaway supper to their parents in Corfu. The headline – "Cooked in Batter – Served in Greece."

How do you like to unwind?

I don't think I ever unwind properly and perhaps I should relax more. My hobbies are punk music and boats and I'm lucky that I have my own show, New Wave with Newman on Radio Northumberland and that my office is a boat on the Tyne.

Favourite book/CD/film?

I love music of all kinds but mainly punk and new wave, My top band of all time are The Ramones and I must say that any of their albums would hit my top ten. My favourite film is Pulp Fiction, I love the way you can watch it from any part of the movie and it still makes sense as it's written on a loop. My favourite book is Stephen Kings 112763 which is a time travelling adventure about the assassination of JFK. I love the idea of time travel and recently I've helped a local author Richard Abbott-Brailey promote his book "Azarias Tor" which is set in the North East and will hopefully soon be attracting Hollywood interest.

YOU'VE "HIGHLIGHTED" OUR BUSINESS – EXECUTIVE COMPASS

Highlights PR is a successful PR agency run by Keith Newman. Uniquely, their office is a boat based on the River Tyne. Here we look at how Highlights PR have helped one of their clients.

Executive Compass are bid and tender specialists who in the last 12 months have helped companies and organisations secure more than £3.5 billion worth of public and private sector contracts.

Based in Newcastle with offices in London and Glasgow, Executive Compass provides bid management and bid writing services for companies across the UK, Europe, the United States and Asia.

Next year, the firm will celebrate their tenth anniversary in business and to promote their success and also that of their clients, they have once again engaged Highlights PR to help them gain maximum media exposure.

Marketing Director Amy Forshaw said: "Our team of expert bid writers has handled more than 4000 submissions in our nine-year history and achieved a very high success rate. We've asked Highlights PR to share some of these successes so that we can help others win small, local contracts to large UK-wide projects."

Highlights PR has previously featured Executive Compass on BBC radio, regional newspapers, trade and business magazines and on social media.

To find out more about Executive Compass call 0191 338 6975 or email info@executivecompass.co.uk

www.executivecompass.co.uk



To see how we can help you, let's have a no obligation chat about your PR and a coffee on-board Highlights – the floating office, call Keith on 07814 397951 or email Keith@highlightspr.co.uk



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new customer (lol)



Gill Burgess

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...

GILL BURGESS

Managing Director, r//evolution marketing

Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

I planned to work in marketing but of course it was very different when I started – no social media and few digital platforms in general. I worked in-house initially and was tempted to agency side by a contact who'd set up a break-away agency from Manchester and needed someone to look after the client portfolio. I loved it from the minute I started and learned so much from my time there.

What is your favourite aspect of the job?

Without a doubt it's being able to get to know such a variety of people and business sectors. I like that I get to develop relationships with people over time, some of our clients I've known for many years and to have that kind of depth and history is special.

As a growing group it's always a thrill to be able to welcome new people to our team too and get to know them, understand their background and see them move up and succeed in the business.

What has been your career defining moment?

Choosing to relocate back to the North East to be nearer to family and set up an agency has definitely defined my career. I'd always known I wanted to run my own business but hadn't known what form that would take. Having helped grow the agency in the North West, I had a blueprint for what I wanted to achieve, but of course r//evolution has taken its own course.

How do you measure success?

For me success is when we exceed client expectations. At the outset, we agree project goals, and we monitor activity closely, so we can demonstrate the all-important ROI. It's when we see the actual business benefit for our clients that it becomes very real, and that's success.

It's also about building r//evolution for the long-term, creating exciting and rewarding work opportunities for talented young people. As mum to two university students, I'm very aware of the challenges they face when they start out in their chosen careers and having positive work experiences to build on.

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

Change has been constant of course, but recently the focus on content and inbound marketing is a significant shift from the traditional interruption-based model. This, of course, presents challenges – and opportunities – with the constant need to generate and disseminate quality content to gain a significant share of voice.

How has your skillset developed as a result?

On a personal level I still set aside time for CPD and feel it should be a requirement in every profession, as it is currently with professional services. I joined the Entrepreneur's Forum Scale Up Academy last year, which was excellent, and I've done some leadership training too. At a business level we have invested a lot of time and training to be recognised as a HubSpot Gold Partner, the first in the North East, which brings with it a deep understanding of inbound best practice.

Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

I'm definitely not a risk-taker.

Although leaving my job and relocating with my young family, to set up r//evolution was a big risk, at the time it didn't feel like it – I became very focused on making it work, rather than wondering what would happen if it didn't.

With such a close-knit team now working alongside me any risks I take are also risks for

each one of my staff and that's something that always factors in when I'm looking at the next opportunity, we all have a stake in it.

To what would you attribute your success?

I've always been a hard worker and I'd say I have grit rather than brilliance. I've learned a lot from people I've worked with and do try to make every day count.

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

In the past I think I've been guilty of pursuing opportunities that may not have been the best fit for the business. Now we have a much more robust structure in place and identifying the good-fit opportunities is a much smoother process.

How do you remain motivated?

I set myself goals – in business and in life. It's important for me to have something specific to work towards and measure myself against.

Over the past year I've taken up yoga, which I absolutely love, and I find the combination of physical challenge and mental control really good for me – it's both energising and relaxing.

Would you prefer to be liked or respected?

I think the two don't have to be mutually exclusive. The people I respect most in business, and in life, are those who have achieved success but without having to lose themselves to do it. I think there's a bit of a cliché about tough MDs having to succeed at all costs but generally I have found that being open and honest, and driven by the right motivation, generally reaps a positive outcome.

I'll retire when...

I'm no longer adding value to r//evolution.



MEDIAWORKS ON THE MOVE TO ACCOMMODATE EXPANSION

One of the largest digital marketing agencies in the North East is moving offices to accommodate its recent increase in numbers.

Mediaworks, which has operated in Team Valley since it was founded in 2007, will relocate its team of over 100 colleagues to Honeycomb at The Watermark in Gateshead as it continues to expand. The move offers Mediaworks the capacity to expand into office space of up to 20,000sq ft and the agency has signed a 10-year lease as it continues to go from strength to strength.

In 2018, Mediaworks has welcomed over 30 new faces to its ranks as it continues to grow, supporting an ever-increasing number of clients to enhance their digital visibility via channels including Paid Search (PPC), Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Online Reputation Management (ORM), Web Development and Content Marketing.

Mediaworks' managing director, Brett Jacobson, acknowledges that the move is necessary if the business is to continue its rapid growth. "Having greatly increased our head count in the last 12 months, we really needed a move to facilitate our ongoing expansion. As we continue our growth and keep looking for new business to help us reach our existing targets, it's important to have



a space that accommodates this and enable us to continue our development. The move to Honeycomb at The Watermark gives us that and it's certainly exciting times ahead for everyone involved with Mediaworks."

The building, which was acquired by the Jersey-based Palladium Group in 2017, is also home to ITV Tyne Tees and has recently undergone an impressive refurbishment.

The Group's chairman, Spencer Bourne, added: "We are delighted to have Mediaworks as our new tenant at Honeycomb Gateshead. The building will provide them with a fantastic platform to

attract and retain talented people and will allow them to build on their success to date."

Jessica Ross, associate director at Naylor's, the property agency based in Newcastle who secured the letting on behalf of Palladium, added: "Over the last 12 months, we have seen a significant transformation take place at Honeycomb and this work has culminated in the letting to Mediaworks.

"Naylor's has been heavily involved in the project, acting as managing agent, building consultant and joint letting agent, so we are very pleased to welcome an established regional business such as Mediaworks."

Mediaworks new offices have been designed by Design North and construction is being undertaken by APTUS. Contract administration support on the project is being delivered by Mables Hall.

In recent months, Mediaworks has acquired more big-name clients, including Lookers Group and River Island, as well as developing interactive apps for Wild in Art, including Manchester's Bee in the City.

To see how Mediaworks can help your business, email info@mediaworks.co.uk or call +44 (0) 0191 404 0100.

NEW CIM COURSES LAUNCHING IN THE NORTH EAST IN NOVEMBER



Veronica Swindale

This month I'm delighted to announce a new strategic partnership we have with the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) to bring nine new training courses to our Newcastle Study Centre.

This means that from November individuals, teams and organisations in the North East and beyond will be able to access the CIM's open courses without having to travel too far. Breaking down some of the traditional barriers to learning by saving time and expense.

As many of you will know nesma has successfully been running CIM qualifications from Level 3 to 7 (A Level to master's degree) for many years. It's exciting to extend our relationship to enable us to make these short courses more accessible to more people. CIM is the largest and most successful professional marketing institution in the world, and its courses and Professional CIM qualifications are accepted and respected worldwide.

The training is offered at three levels of expertise and includes everything from Managing Digital Marketing, Introduction to Customer Experience and Brand Masterclass. All of which can be delivered in-house if required to meet specific development needs. And obviously, if there is demand for any other courses, we can look at bringing them up to the North East too.

As you can imagine there has been a lot of behind the scenes work to get this in place. However, I'm confident the new training offer will equip learners with the skills to meet the increasing demands of contemporary challenges at every stage in their career.

In the advert below you'll find an overview of all the courses coming up, but if you need any help deciding which direction is best for you or your team, please contact me.

Veronica Swindale, Director, Chartered Marketer, FCIM, CIM Ambassador of the North. Whether it's working on your current skill set or exploring a new area of expertise nesma has all your marketing and communication know-how covered.

www.nesma.co.uk hello@nesma.co.uk

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Managing Digital Marketing 28/11/2018 to 28/11/2018 1 day 27/03/2019 to 27/03/2019 1 day	Introduction to Customer Experience 29/11/2018 to 29/11/2018 1 day 21/03/2019 to 21/03/2019 1 day	Customer Experience Management 08/01/2019 to 09/01/2019 2 days 28/03/2019 to 29/03/2019 2 days
Advanced Content Strategy 15/01/2019 to 16/01/2019 2 days 11/06/2019 to 12/06/2019 2 days	Effective Marketing Through Events 16/01/2019 to 17/01/2019 2 days 29/04/2019 to 30/04/2019 2 days	Writing Successful Newsletters & Press Releases 17/01/2019 to 17/01/2019 1 day 16/05/2019 to 16/05/2019 1 day
Brand Masterclass 11/02/2019 to 12/02/2019 2 days 29/05/2019 to 30/05/2019 2 days	Copywriting Masterclass 05/03/2019 to 06/03/2019 2 days 04/06/2019 to 05/06/2019 2 days	Digital Marketing Masterclass 12/03/2019 to 13/03/2019 2 days 07/05/2019 to 08/05/2019 2 days

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Accredited Study Centre



TYNESIDE TECH FIRM IN ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION WIN

Newcastle based tech firm ION has announced completion of the first phase of a financial and business transformation contract to help the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) rebuild its suite of business management tools, using Sage Financials and Salesforce.

The Elton John AIDS Foundation was set up 25 years ago and since then has raised more than £290m to raise awareness, support programs and policies, and provide services for people with or at risk of HIV. It is one of the 20 largest private philanthropic HIV/AIDS grant-makers in the world.

Launched in 2016, ION specialises in Salesforce, the world's number one customer relationship management system (CRM), as well as Sage Financials, a fully integrated cloud accounting solution.

ION's 16-strong team have implemented a customised version of the CRM, specifically tailored for non-profit organisations, to integrate Sage Financials giving the Elton John Aids Foundation real-time visibility and control of its financial operations, including donation and gift management.

The second stage of the project will involve implementing a sophisticated event management solution including ticket bookings, seat planning and auction management. This will provide deeper integration with the accounts solution as part of a bid to support the Foundation's plans.

NEW IDENTITEYE FOR TECH TRAILBLAZER MAKING SUNDERLAND HOME



A Tech trailblazer, who has overcome incredible adversity to achieve academic excellence, is now on the pathway to success, after launching a business out of Sunderland Software Centre.

Born and raised in Tamil Nadu, Dr Selvakumar Ramachandran - or Selva, as he is known - has moved his life from one that saw him crawling the streets of his home city to founding a Sunderland-based business, Kerckhoffs Ltd, that has produced a product - Identiteye - that will keep some of society's most vulnerable safe.

Owed to a disability caused by contracting Polio as an infant, and with no wheelchairs in India to help him move freely, the 38-year-old, pushed himself to achieve a Masters degree in Software Engineering from Blekinge Tekniska Hogskola in Sweden and a PhD in Information Science from the University of Rome Tor Vergata. He has now developed Identiteye, which aims to use a specially fabricated, discreet 'chip', installed on the doorstep of vulnerable people, to 'screen' people at their door to ensure they are 'official' and they are who they say they are.

PARTNERSHIP CONNECTING CONSTRUCTORS WITH CUSTOMERS

Online experts have been recruited to take the drama out of managing the aftercare process of dream homes in County Durham.

Chapter Homes called in customer care software specialists, Clixifix, to enhance homebuying customer experience at its new development at Eden Field in Newton Aycliffe.

Clixifix, based in Durham, has developed a pioneering platform that manages client feedback and repairs for the construction sector. The software is designed to help developers administer customer care tasks and deal with any snagging issues.

Chapter Homes managing director, Richard Roddam, is focused on ensuring the firm's first major development delivers a high level of customer satisfaction and sees Clixifix as the perfect partner to ensure any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively.

He said: "The customer must be at the heart of everything we do, and Chapter Homes wants the homebuyer to feel as positive and excited entering their new house as they did when they first stepped into our show home.

"Snagging is perceived as the house gone wrong and can negatively impact the purchasing experience, but in reality, it's an unfortunate, but necessary part of the process. By using Clixifix to deal with it, it becomes a key plank of customer care and brand reputation."




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Think IT security is for the IT team to worry about? Think again.

Cyber security is a strategic risk issue facing every organisation.

The National Cyber Security Centre has published new guidance to help business leaders understand cyber threats, so they can better direct their organisation's response to them.



68%

of boards have received **no training** in dealing with a **cyber attack**



10%

of businesses operate **without** a **cyber incident response plan**



50%

of **all UK firms** were hit by a **cyber attack** in the last year

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CYBER-SECURITY IS EVERYONE'S ISSUE

If you think IT security is solely the responsibility of your IT team, think again.

Cyber security is everyone's responsibility, from the boardroom downwards. That's the view from the National Cyber Security Centre, which has published new guidance to help business leaders understand cyber threats, so they can better direct their organisation's response to them.

Despite the ever-increasing threat from cyber criminals, a 2017 survey of the UK's biggest companies revealed that 68 percent of boards had received no training in dealing with a cyber attack, and that 10 percent of FTSE 350 companies operated without a cyber incident response plan.

Those are worrying statistics, and NCSC's board toolkit takes the shape of five questions designed as part of its plan to reshape the way that senior management regards cyber security, and bring the issue to the boardroom table.

Q1: How do we defend our organisation against phishing attacks?

Phishing is usually done via email, and involves sending persuasive, realistic looking messages that encourage users to click on a rogue link. The best place to start tackling phishing is at its source, by monitoring incoming emails and filtering out any obvious phishing attempts. Attackers can make emails look as if they came from a reputable source. Educating staff and giving them a channel to report suspicious messages is key. If something looks not quite right, it should be flagged up immediately.

Q2. How does our organisation control the use of privileged IT accounts?

Staff should be given just enough privileges and rights to do their job properly, without having access to data or systems they do not need to see. The accounts of administrators and those with more extensive rights should be tightly controlled, particularly when people leave the organisation, and it is useful to involve your HR team in creating, modifying and deleting accounts. With access to your security settings and sensitive data a hacker can do far more damage through an administrator account than a standard user account.

Q3. How do we ensure that our software and devices are up to date?

Suppliers and vendors issue regular patches to fix any bugs and vulnerabilities. It's easy to overlook patch management but exploitation of bugs and vulnerability is the biggest risk after phishing and we see too many organisations breached by a 'known' bug that could have been easily patched. Replace devices or software approaching end of life, before they become unsupported or obsolete. Your network should be designed so that the impact of any hardware or software being compromised is contained. Consider the use of cloud or managed services, so that a third party takes the strain of hosting and maintaining an increasingly complex technology infrastructure, while your IT team focus on critical 'business as usual' tasks.

Q4. How do we make sure our partners and suppliers protect the information we share with them?

Sharing information with third parties opens your systems up to risk. You need confidence in their cyber security as well as your own, particularly if you allow direct network connectivity. Work on the principle that at some point your partners or suppliers will be compromised, and make sure you have the right technical controls in place when that happens.

Q5. What authentication methods are used to control access to systems and data?

Weak passwords are an easy way for hackers to break into your systems. Your password policy should be robust, with a requirement for passwords to be regularly changed, and be supported by other controls such as a restricted number of login attempts. Two-factor authentication provides extra protection, and means even if a cyber criminal knows a password, they will be unable to access the account.

These questions are designed to spark discussions between the board and the IT team. Only when senior management fully understand the issues, will attitudes to cyber security change at boardroom level.

Cyber crime is constantly evolving and the best way to protect your business is to work with an expert IT security partner. Come along to one of our regular security events and hear from security professionals and ethical hackers about the topical issues, and how to avoid being the next victim.

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TECH DRINKS

Mincoffs Solicitors were thrilled to host yet another successful 'Tech Drinks' evening bringing together the region's growing technology community for drinks and informal networking. The bi-annual event was this time held at The Alchemist, Newcastle, and saw attendees raise £100 for the recently opened North East Futures UTC.

Keep up to date with Mincoffs' busy calendar of events on their website and social media.

@mincoffs #TechDrinks
www.mincoffs.co.uk







RISE IN BOARDING AT DURHAM SCHOOL

Durham School, a leading independent, co-educational day and boarding school has seen a significant rise in pupils choosing to board.

Year on year for the term starting September 2018, the number of boy and girl boarders has increased by 13.5%.

Durham School educates 546 girls and boys from the age of three to 18 and offers boarding for pupils aged 11-18 from the UK and overseas.

With flexible options available, pupils can choose to board full time, weekly, or occasionally throughout the school term.

Durham's weekly-boarding package, which allows pupils to board up to six nights per week during term-time, has become a practical and enjoyable option for many Durham School families.

Pupils living on site during the week makes participating in early-morning training sessions, evening rehearsals and Saturday fixtures much more straightforward, and cuts the weekday travel time.



GO NORTH EAST TRANSPORTS NORHAM HIGH SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS ON 'JOURNEY THROUGH TYNE'

Youngsters from Norham High School in North Shields will embark on a journey of discovery with Go North East this Autumn, delving into the history of transport in Tyne and Wear and learning from those who experienced the changes first-hand.

Aiming to provide students with meaningful experiences to best prepare them for life after school and the world of work, teachers at the school are bringing the curriculum to life through employer engagement – starting with an intergenerational project for their Year 7 students.

Entitled 'Journey Through Tyne', the project will concentrate on changes in transport systems and the local community over the past 50 years. Working with local charity Age UK North Tyneside, students will engage with older residents in the area, who will be invited to share their memories and personal experiences of how public transport has transformed since their youth.

COMMUNITY COMPANY PROVES TO BE MEDIA SAVVY



A community interest company, which helps train hard-to-reach and vulnerable people across the North East, is scaling up its operations after moving to a new head office in Sunderland.

Media Savvy, which was founded by Dan Makaveli and Mark McKenna back in 2010, has recently moved to a new office in the city centre after receiving support from Sunderland City Council.

The pair founded the company eight years ago after working collaboratively on a project to help school children in County Durham produce a video promoting cultural awareness and cohesion.

Inspired by how enthralled the children, teachers and wider community were by the project, they decided to take the brave step of launching their own organisation providing similar support to people across the region.

Founded in 2010, the company started as a non-profit organisation with Dan and Mark working full time hours to launch and develop the social enterprise without drawing a regular salary for the first two-years.

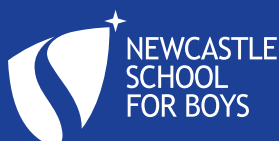
SCHOOLS URGED TO TAKE A SLICE OF THE PIE



A North-East charity that connects education with the world of business is urging Primary schools in the region to follow the enterprising example of a school in Darlington to win the chance of a £5000 prize.

Newcastle based charity, Primary Inspiration Through Enterprise (PIE) recently named Reid Street Primary School in Darlington as the North-East's most enterprising school after they won the final challenge in a unique project.

The challenge helped young people to develop the knowledge and attitudes they need to succeed in both the education system and the world of work. Students worked in partnership with local businesses including IT Systems, Bannatynes and ITEC North East. The competition involved a number of team building and task oriented activities and a full day of enterprise where the students designed, made and sold items for profit.



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FROM THE HEADTEACHER'S STUDY...

MRS SIMONE NIBLOCK

Durham High School for Girls



Did you always envisage a career in Education?

I suppose it had often been at the back of my mind but as I loved books when I was younger I had dreams of being a librarian. Mind you, I would never have been quiet enough! Whilst at Oxford and teaching English as a Foreign Language in Bratislava, I had an epiphany and realised that teaching was my natural choice of career. Everything then fell into place: I took a PGCE at Cambridge and the rest, as they say, is history.

Describe your career path so far?

I began my career teaching English and acting as a Boarding Mistress at a co-educational boarding school, which was very challenging but a great experience. I then got a job at Stockport Grammar School which, for someone from Bury, Lancashire, was very convenient as it was close to home. Two years later, I moved to The Perse School for Girls in Cambridge. Here, I realised that teaching girls in a single-sex environment was definitely what I wanted to concentrate on for the rest of my teaching career. I then had sixteen wonderful years at Shrewsbury High School, Shropshire, first as Head of English and then as Director of Studies and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. However, at the age of 45, I realised that I wanted to progress even further in my career, so, in 2015, I took up the role of Deputy Head at Queen Margaret's York. Here, I honed my leadership skills still further and decided that I would apply for Headships. In December 2017, I was extremely fortunate to be offered the position of Headmistress at Durham High School for Girls, so here I am, settling into a wonderful school in one of the most beautiful cities in the UK.

Describe a typical day?

I am generally at my desk by 7.30 and my days are always varied and stimulating. There are whole school assemblies on Mondays and Thursdays, and then, at the moment, as a new Head, I have been having meetings throughout the day with Heads of Departments, individual members of staff and many parents and visitors. It would be fair to say there is currently rarely a dull moment.



What do you most enjoy about your role?

I am very appreciative of the fact that my school is an all-through school, so there are many different ages of girls around the site all the time. It is such a joyous atmosphere to be around them, and I particularly love seeing the infants skipping around school!

What have been your biggest challenges?

As an educator who has been in the teaching profession for 26 years, one of the biggest challenges has been to be fully briefed at all times about the vicissitudes of the ever-changing educational landscape. Moreover, in an increasingly target-driven system of the 21st century, all teachers face the challenge of trying to ensure that the educative process is considered to be as important as the results.

What are your goals for your first year at Durham High School for Girls?

Amongst many other targets that all new Heads coming into their new schools have to attain, my main goal is to enhance our existing mental health provision, in order to help the girls attain a happy work/life balance.

How do you see the education sector evolving in the next 5-10 years?

I envisage that degree apprenticeships will become more prevalent as they will allow students to get a trade and a degree without incurring the current level of debt that the vast majority of undergraduates now accrue during their years of study.

I hope to witness a period of stability in education, whereby there are no more fundamental changes to GCSE and A Level, so that teachers can have the time to become expert in their delivery of the specifications, which have changed significantly for a number of subjects.

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

Be more confident and less critical of yourself: you are fine as you are!

Who are your heroes in and out of business?

In education, my heroes are two female mentors who have helped me become the educator that I am today: the wonderfully gifted former Head of English at the Perse School for Girls, Judith Findlay; and the inspirational former Head of Shrewsbury High School, Marilyn Cass.

Outside the world of education, I am a massive admirer of the late, great, Victoria Wood; the gloriously talented Emma Thompson; and the iconic Katherine Hepburn. Finally, from the world of fiction, Jo March in *Little Women* remains my favourite heroine, despite the fact I have read thousands of books since reading about the trials and tribulations of the March family when I was seven years old.

How do you like to unwind?

Cinema, theatre, box sets on Netflix and binge reading. My husband and I also have an apartment in Spain, where we go to relax and enjoy the Spanish climate.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNANCE

By David Tickner, Headmaster at Newcastle School for Boys.

In my prize day speech a few years ago, I suggested, irreverently, that governors were like bidets. They added a touch of class but nobody really knew what they were for. My tongue was firmly in my cheek and I quickly followed up expressing my genuine appreciation of the valuable work undertaken by those on the governing body of Newcastle School for Boys.

It is an exciting time in the School's history. We are a young and ambitious independent school now firmly established in the local educational landscape. We are working with great energy to realise the next stages of our ambitious vision for the School. Governors are valuable members of our school community and have an important and rewarding role to play in all of this.

The role of a school governor can be misunderstood. However, the importance of good governors and their contributions shouldn't be underestimated. The role is sometimes confused with that of a member of a parents' association. Parents' associations also have a valuable role to play in supporting schools but it is a different one to governors.

School governors have a legal corporate duty to determine the overall direction and development of a school. Governance structures can vary. Like many independent schools, Newcastle School for Boys is



David Tickner

an incorporated company and charity and as such our governors serve as its directors and trustees.

The time commitment for governors can be as little as preparing for and attending around three meetings a year. In practice, many governors give more as their other responsibilities allow.

Governors undertake valuable and rewarding work. Much of it can go unseen and some of it is challenging. They give strategic direction to the school. They monitor school performance and suggest ways in which it can be improved. They listen to pupils and staff and see examples of lessons and pupils' learning.

Governors support the process of school inspection.

They support and challenge the Head. They oversee management of the school's finances. They support and attend school functions, such as prize day, concerts, etc. They review school policies. They have particular responsibilities in monitoring health and safety, safeguarding and the procedures involved in appointing staff and much more besides.

I am fortunate at Newcastle School for Boys that our governors also provide expert advice from their own professional backgrounds.

The relationship between the Head and the Chair of governors is a crucial one and, again, I am lucky that I have a strong relationship with our Chair of governors, Tim Care, who is a lawyer by profession.

Sometimes governors are parents at the School. We have had a number over the years. This is good for the School in the sense that they have a vested interest. It is also important that governors understand that the role of an effective governor is different to that of an interested parent.

We are always on the lookout for new governors who have particular specialisms and backgrounds to complement the existing team and support our school's development. If you have an interest and/or a background that you think could be helpful to the School, please do not hesitate to contact me via headmaster@newcastleschool.co.uk

Newcastle School for Boys are currently taking applications for September 2019 entry and beyond. For more information and to apply for a place at the school, please visit www.newcastleschool.co.uk

ARE YOU A PERFECTIONIST?

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster at Durham School.

This seems something of a loaded question; to answer no could be perceived as an admission that you can settle for second best, or that somehow high standards don't matter to you. In some quarters, such as high performance sport or design, perfectionism is seen as a desirable quality associated with an ambition to be ever better at your chosen discipline.

In reality, perfectionism is a much more pernicious and troubling quality to have. Rather than reflecting a desire for high standards, perfectionism manifests itself in feelings that nothing is ever good enough and a sense of inferiority or self-loathing. There has been a good deal of research on the phenomenon lately, particularly at York St John University, and the insights thrown up are revealing.

Broadly speaking, perfectionism can manifest itself in individuals in one of three ways: self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism. The first kind, self-oriented, is the most familiar and perhaps most benign form. These perfectionists set themselves high standards and work hard to achieve them; provided they can keep their tendencies in check, this can lead to high performance in their work.

Other-oriented perfectionists are a different matter. These apply excessive high standards to others and can be harsh in their criticism when they feel others aren't meeting them. Unsurprisingly, researchers find that these individuals struggle to form good



Kieran McLaughlin

working relationships with their colleagues and their perfectionistic traits are counter-productive to the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

Most worrying however, though, are socially prescribed perfectionists. These individuals perceive the world as one which holds them to standards which they can only ever fail to meet. No matter how well they are actually doing in their lives, whether it be their work environment or their domestic relationships, the individual feels constantly that they are letting others down and disappointing colleagues and friends. This leads to low levels of life satisfaction and issues of self-esteem.

What's worrying is that the research shows that levels of perfectionism in individuals are in the rise, particularly in the socially prescribed case. More and more people are feeling a pressure from society to be better in ways that they can simply never be. The effect is increasing levels of unhappiness and reporting of mental health issues.

What's fuelling the rise in this perfectionism? Social scientists are inevitably rather circumspect in their judgments, but the rise of social media in the last few years seems to me to be more than a coincidence. Many aspects of social media use are little more than case studies of socially prescribed perfectionism. The constant demonstration of "living your best life", the rejection of tens if not hundreds of selfies until the most perfect one is found, the borderline boasting that routinely occurs on the likes of Facebook; small wonder that the social media devotee feels a mix of envy and inadequacy when bombarded with carefully managed social media profiles of others. And the irony is that, in some cases, the person with the most exciting and wonderful life is no doubt feeling the same feelings when they look at others' profiles too.

This is particularly worrying in the case of children who often lack the maturity to see past the surface image. Stories of highly able and successful youngsters who collapse when their perfect row of 9s at GCSE suffer the blemish of one grade 8 are not apocryphal. How can we help? Whilst it's easier said than done, we need to help youngsters understand that their best is good enough. Celebrate their successes and encourage them to focus on the positives rather than catastrophising their setbacks. It's a tough battle to fight and youngsters can be resistant to the message, but for their good it's essential we keep pushing it. The phrase "nobody's perfect" was never more important.

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



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Alan Bailes, General Commercial Manager at Jennings Ford Transit Centre Middlesbrough, pictured with the New Transit Courier.

UPGRADED TRANSIT COURIER AND CONNECT ARRIVE AT JENNINGS FORD TRANSIT CENTRE

Jennings Ford Transit Centre, now part of the Lookers family, has unveiled the facelifted versions of Ford's popular small vans – the Transit Courier and Connect.

Both small Transits – on display and available to test drive at the Groups Middlesbrough and Gateshead dealerships - have been given revised looks and significant engineering upgrades, including a new 1.5-litre EcoBlue diesel engine for the Connect, which has been designed to improve fuel economy and reduce running costs.

Alan Bailes, general commercial manager at Jennings Ford Transit Centre in Middlesbrough, said; "We're delighted to be able to offer the upgraded Ford Transit Connect and Courier models, which both offer a new look and a significant number of upgrades, which we're confident will appeal to both existing and prospective customers."

The upgraded Ford Transit Connect, which has a new front end design, adopts the distinctive three-bar Transit grill, includes a modified headlight design, and offers a range of technical

and interior changes compared to its predecessor.

Customers can also choose from Ford's new 1.5-litre EcoBlue diesel engine, or the latest version of the manufacturer's widely-used and popular 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine.

The EcoBlue diesel is available with a new eight-speed automatic transmission, which is a rarity in vans. The petrol engine includes features such as cylinder deactivation to run on two cylinders at low loads.

All engines have a six-speed manual transmission as standard.

The interior is highly functional, as well as offering comfort with an attractive new cabin.

Meanwhile, changes to the Transit Courier - Ford's smallest van - are very similar to the Connect, with an updated front-end design combined with a new cabin to provide a fresh and improved feel for the popular small van.

The engine line-up is similar to the Transit Connect, with an older generation 1.5-litre TDCi diesel, in addition to Ford's 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol. All engines get a six-speed manual in place of the outgoing five-speed manual.

A new fuel efficiency package is offered as standard on diesel models, including Ford's Active Grille Shutter.

The upgraded Transit Courier is available in a choice of van and kombi styles, with payload capacity from 500-590kg. Customers in search of a little extra can choose between the range-topping Sport model, and a more luxury-oriented Limited variant.

Customers who purchase a vehicle from Jennings Transit Centres, can also take advantage of a range of aftersales facilities, including service, MOT, accident repair, and genuine parts and accessories.

For more information about the range of products and services available at Jennings Ford Transit Centres, call into the Cargo Fleet Lane dealership, contact 01642 209100, Eslington Park dealership, contact 0191 4607464, or visit www.jenningsmotorgroup.co.uk

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THEATRE ROYAL GIVES WARMEST WELCOME IN THE NORTH EAST

(L-R) Newcastle Theatre Royal's Susie Wardley, Paula Mitchell and CEO Philip Bernays



Newcastle Theatre Royal has been voted the North East's 'Most Welcoming Theatre' for the fourth year in succession at the prestigious UK Theatre Awards.

The UK Theatre Awards are the only nationwide awards to honour achievement in regional theatre throughout the UK. Over 170 theatres of all sizes from across the country competed to be named the UK's Most Welcoming Theatre 2018. Newcastle Theatre Royal beat off stiff competition to scoop

the North East title.

Philip Bernays, Newcastle Theatre Royal Chief Executive, said: "To be the North East regional winner is just fantastic. We have an extremely hardworking team here who always go that extra mile to make customers feel welcome and ensure they have a great experience at the theatre, and it's wonderful to be recognised for this. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has taken the time to vote for us, from our loyal and generous

audiences to touring companies, sponsors, partners and participants."

Julian Bird, Chief Executive at UK Theatre, added: "Theatres play a vital role in communities across the UK, so it has been wonderful to see so many votes cast. This campaign brought together audiences, theatres, performers and producers and gave everyone the opportunity to celebrate their local venue."

Alex Clark



BUSINESS IS ROSY FOR ARTIST ALEX

A lifelong love of animals and wildlife has been the inspiration for a multimillion-pound business success that is sending greetings across the world from Derwentside.

Brought up near Shotley Bridge on the picturesque Northumberland/County Durham border, artist Alex Clark has loved the countryside and animals all of her life.

Alex's artwork is now a worldwide phenomenon with her stylised, quirky interpretation of farm animals, birds, cats, dogs and other wildlife instantly recognisable in gift shops and major outlets by characteristic rosy cheeks and beaming smiles on the animal's faces.

From selling her art in craft fairs in Durham and Northumberland, Alex's company is now a global business which sells in Canada, Australia and New

Zealand. The firm operates from a 15,000-sq. ft. warehouse in Consett and is a testament to Alex's talent as an artist and designer and the business acumen of her long-term partner and co-director Erik Nielsen.

Erik's sales pedigree was first established when he ran a reproduction art print and card distribution business in Scotland and Northern Ireland. His knowledge of the business has helped to propel millions of units of Alex's work into homes all across the world.

The Alex Clark brand is steadily expanding with some 3000 designs across all product ranges. The business is currently turning over around £2.5m per annum, a remarkable achievement especially as the growth of the whole business has been self-funded by the couple themselves.

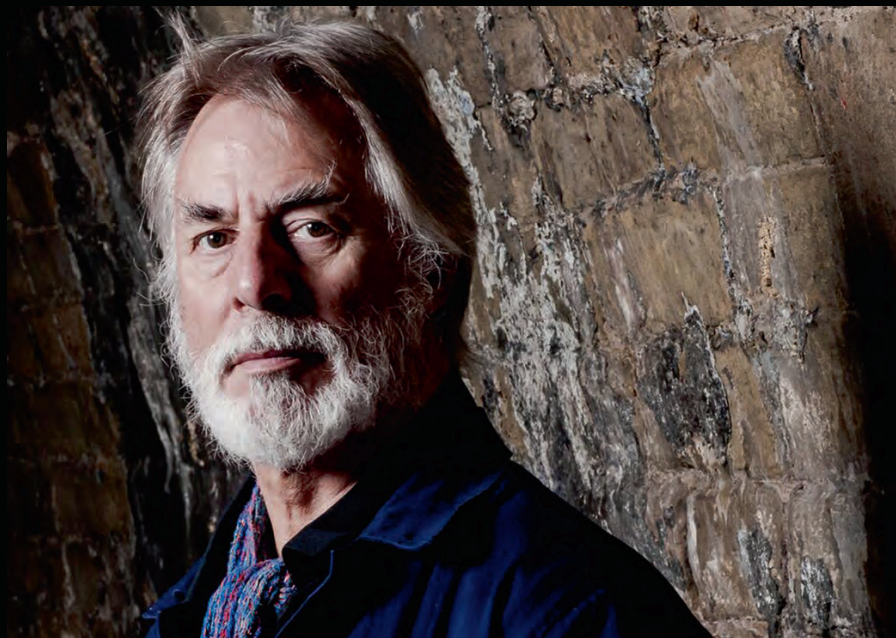
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SPRING 2019 AT NORTHERN STAGE

Spring 2019 at Northern Stage features ambitious new productions made in Newcastle, alongside new shows from some of the UK's most exciting and innovative theatre companies and work made by and for children and young people.

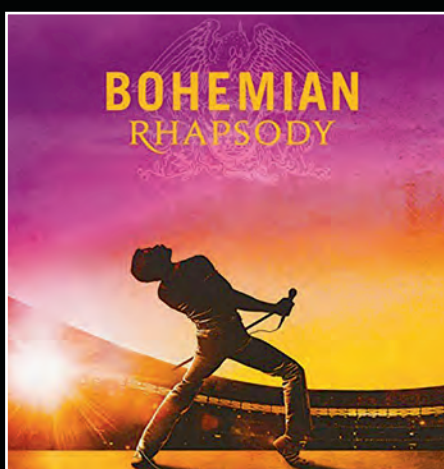
Highlights include the UK stage premiere of Khaled Hosseini's international best-selling novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* which will arrive from 30 May - 15 June. Adapted for the stage by Irish/Indian Scriptwriter Ursula Rani Sarma, the show explores the powerful story of three generations of women discovering strength in unity and finding hope in the unlikely of places.

Wonderland, a spirited and uplifting drama written by a miner's daughter, will also arrive 27 Feb - 9 March. Audiences should expect dark humour and tension in this 360° look at the events leading up to and during the miners' strike. A co-production between Northern Stage and Nottingham Playhouse, the show is directed by Nottingham Playhouse Artistic Director Adam Penford.

Following on from *Richard III* and fresh from directing *Two Noble Kinsmen* at Shakespeare's Globe, Barrie Rutter OBE will both direct and play the title role in *Jack Lear* from 12 - 16 Feb. The production will include live music by award-winning English Folk Musician Eliza Carthy MBE.

RECORD OF THE MONTH – QUEEN 'BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY' (ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK)

The recent release of long-awaited Freddie Mercury biopic, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, has also brought with a soundtrack album laden with hidden gems. Of course the album is bejewelled with a number of the band's greatest hits from *Somebody to Love* to *Bohemian Rhapsody* to *Another One Bites The Dust* yet also includes previously rare live recordings such as *Keep Yourself Alive* "Live at the Rainbow" and *Now I'm Here* "Live at the Hammersmith Odeon". The standout though is a touching rendition of *Love of My Life* from the band's 1985 performance at the Rock in Rio festival. The album also features the band's triumphant set at *Live Aid* from the same year. Another highlight is the reworking of *Doing All Right* - a late 60s pre-Mercury hit for the band Smile (Brian May & Roger Taylor) with original vocalist Tim Staffell. All in all, much interest for casual fans and Queen aficionados.



WHAT'S ON THIS NOVEMBER?

Kinky Boots

November 1 - 10

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Miss Saigon

November 1 - 17

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022
www.atgtickets.com

Queen Extravaganza

November 3

City Hall Newcastle T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

National Theatre Macbeth

November 13 - 17

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Billy Ocean

November 16

City Hall Newcastle T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Culture Club

November 17

Metroradio Arena T: (0844) 493 6666
www.metroradioarena.co.uk

Brendan Cole

November 20

Sunderland Empire (0844) 871 3022
www.atgtickets.com

Ross Noble

November 21 - 24

Newcastle Theatre Royal T: (0844) 8112 121
www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Focus

November 22

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661
www.sagegateshead.com

Jess Glynne

November 24

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...MEET THE ARTIST...



Peter "Deetz" Davidson

NORTHERN INSIGHT MEET THE RENOWNED OIL PAINTER, PETER "DEETZ" DAVIDSON

Did you always want to pursue a career in art?

When I was at school I showed a lot of promise in art class and it was expected that I would follow an artistic path. I really wanted to be a cartoonist for a newspaper or design LP covers for bands. As the time to leave school approached I seemed to lose my love for artwork and my interest in following an artistic path eroded away with it.

Career path...

I trained as a paint sprayer with Benfield Motors after school and spend 10yrs there before moving into heavy industry at the Alcan Aluminium Smelter. I spent 14yrs there and during that time I started sketching again, just to see if I could still do it really. I had instant success in selling my pencil drawings and the bug bit me again. When Alcan closed down I found myself unemployed for the first time in my life. I took several jobs during the next few years as I continued to explore my artwork. I was by now in many galleries and had moved into acrylic paintings then onto oil paintings. Finally the time came to make the jump to a full time artist as my other work was "getting in the way" of my art. Through the help of several local galleries, especially Northeastartcollective and Blagdon Gallery, and my publisher, I now sell my work all over the country.

What should people expect at your exhibitions?

To smile! My artwork is heavily based on nostalgia and of times no longer with us which some will argue were better times. I try to tell stories with my paintings and always look to get some humour in there also. For me art should not only be beautiful but also fun.

What do I enjoy most about my job?

Bringing joy and happiness to people as it doesn't get any better than that. If my artwork can put a smile on someone's face

then it's all been worth it. Simple as that really.

What is the most challenging aspect of your work?

The most challenging aspect of my job is a self imposed one really. The motto I use is that the next painting always has to be better than the last one. The constant striving to improve technically and composition wise is a demand I place on myself. As I am a self taught artist with no formal training at all it's sometimes frustrating when I know a certain look I want but I have to practice on how to achieve it as I go. Having said that it can also be great fun and very rewarding. I may not always achieve my motto but it's not through lack of trying.

Who are your Heroes?

I don't really have any heroes. I admire many people. In the art world I really like Bob Barker, Craig Everett and Tracy Savage and the artwork of American comic book artist and author/film producer Frank Miller. I also think Tarantino is a genius of his time. Outside of the art world I admire anyone who has made a difference in a positive way and left their mark in life.

What are your forthcoming plans?

To paint the perfect picture! I'm very motivated and determined to take my artwork as far as I possibly can and explore new avenues and ventures. I'm very very lucky to do something I love for a living and it would be wrong of me to just settle for what I've already achieved.

How do you like to unwind?

I like to socialise as much as I can and I'm also am a bit of a sports nut. I really love Motogp and the NFL. I used to be football mad but the way the game has gone is not to my liking. I also like to go and watch live music but as I don't have a particularly mainstream music taste I don't get to see as many concerts as I'd like.



Peter is exhibiting at the popular Blagdon Gallery from Sunday 4th November to Monday 31st December showcasing a range of new work inspired by hardworking characters from powerful childhood memories. For more information visit the website www.blagdongallery.co.uk



JESMOND DENE HOUSE

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TASTE THE FOODIE REVOLUTION

It is the beginning of a new chapter for the food at Jesmond Dene House: as Masterchef: The Professionals and Great British Menu contestant, Danny Parker, has taken the reigns as Head Chef. Furthermore, Danny has recruited Cal Byerley – formerly of Michelin Starred, The Forest Side – to Head up the Pastry Section.

Between them, the two plan to further develop the food offering; with the aim of raising the Hotel's profile as a foodie destination in the North. Already, their influence can be seen across all menus: from A la Carte evening dining; to Afternoon Teas; and to an entirely new Lunch menu, coming later in October.

For more information,
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OUT & ABOUT - STIRLING



Photographs by Melissa Middelmiss, Slimming World Consultant

I was preparing this article on a train to Edinburgh for a meeting, and had in my mind's eye a walk over Old Stirling Bridge, up towards the Wallace Monument, back through Cambuskenneth to the abbey ruins and over the footbridge to Stirling city.

Amazingly, when I spoke to the man sitting next to me in the meeting, it transpired that he lived on Stirling Riverside and did this very same walk (minus the climb to the Wallace Monument) with his dog regularly.

The east coast main line operator LNER offers one train a day to Stirling, the Highland Chieftain service to Inverness which is a diesel hauled IC125 locomotive, soon to be replaced by the new Azuma trains. It leaves Darlington Monday to Friday at 1423 (Newcastle 1454) arriving Stirling 1719, and the return journey is at 1032 from Stirling, arriving 1253 at Newcastle and 1324 at Darlington. To make the most of your day or days in Stirling you can use an earlier train north changing to Scotrail at Edinburgh, and return home later, and there are plenty of cheap seats on this route. Different timings apply on Saturdays and Sundays for the Highland Chieftain.

Stirling was created a royal burgh by King David I of Scotland in 1130, and our present Queen gave it city status at her Golden Jubilee in 2002. Stirling, "like a huge brooch clasps the Highlands and Lowlands together", and it is often quoted that "he who holds Stirling, holds Scotland, as a result of its key position as the traditional lowest bridging point of the River Forth. I often visited the city as part of a single day tour for my railway station apprentices covering Edinburgh and Glasgow too, but a full day can be enjoyed in Stirling alone, visiting the Castle high on a rock, the jail (closed for the winter) and the Wallace monument just north of the town, easily walkable or use a local bus. The oldest known citizen of the Stirling area is Torbrex Tam (Torbrex is a suburban area of Stirling), whose bones were dated between 2152 and 2021 BC. The most significant battles in the area, both of which were lost by the English, were in 1297 at Stirling Bridge and 1314 at Bannockburn involving "Braveheart" William Wallace and Robert the Bruce respectively.

The Church of the Holy Rude is one of the town's most important buildings, founded in 1129, and reputed to be the only surviving church in the UK excepting Westminster Abbey to have held a coronation. On 29 July 1567, the infant son of Mary, Queen of Scots, was anointed James VI of Scotland in the church, later to be King James I of England from the union of crowns in 1603 to his death in 1625.

The city has a population of nearly 50,000, and it is an important regional centre with about half of Scotland's population living within an hour's travel time. The Castle is open through the winter, administered by Historic Scotland, and the tall Wallace Monument too. The Museum and Art Gallery is free to enter, and also open during the winter. Cambuskenneth Abbey, a village across

the River Forth accessed by footbridge, is where William Wallace's remains were buried, but not until after he had been taken to London's Smithfield in chains, hung, drawn and quartered and his head, dipped in tar, was exhibited on London Bridge. The giant monument, erected in 1869, which can be climbed by visitors, is a more fitting memorial to one of Scotland's most famous sons.

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SEEING DOUBLE

Michael Grahamslaw enjoys a 'flying visit' to Hilton DoubleTree, Newcastle Airport.



Catching the red eye to London the following morning, I decided to hole up for the evening at the Hilton DoubleTree – just a few hundred yards away from Newcastle Airport.

This classy venue offers far more than your typical "airport hotel" effortlessly spanning both business and leisure markets with trademark Hilton style and panache.

The hotel is perfect for a pre / post flight stay and with easy transport links to the A1, Newcastle City Centre is well within reach. It's also well positioned to explore the Metro Centre, Northumberland and Hadrian's Wall.

DoubleTree offer a number "Sleep, Park & Fly" packages to help prevent early morning starts, traffic jams or last minute delays. With this in mind, I bombed up the A1 and booked in for all the Hilton DoubleTree has to offer.

Angled windows and sharp contours combine to create a very imposing façade. Inside, the hotel boasts 179 upscale guest rooms, a wood-panelled bar area showing live sport, a chic Italian eatery (more on which later) and a bespoke fitness suite. Meanwhile, business facilities include contemporary meeting spaces alongside use of printers, photocopiers, telephones, audio/visual equipment hire and complimentary WiFi.

Another thing guaranteed is the warmest of welcomes when checking in. Guests can expect a signature DoubleTree chocolate chip cookie (they're seriously good) along with a helping hand

with any extra luggage.

Rooms are the perfect place to unwind before/after a gruelling flight, complete with all the amenities present to make you feel right at home. 37" LCD TV's, air conditioning, writing desks, tea and coffee making facilities all come as standard, whilst a deluxe upgrade offers more space, better views and a cosy bathrobe and slippers.

Nicely settled in, I kicked back on the double bed for a snooze before a blast in the shower and a change for dinner.

Dining is an important part of the DoubleTree experience, especially with a lack of viable alternatives within walking distance. Fortunately, the hotel offers a nourishing room service menu – not to mention its own in-house restaurant – Fratello's – which is a hit with residents and non-residents alike. Fratello's is one point on a North East culinary triangle serving authentic Italian specialities against a bright, modern backdrop.

Included in my dinner, bed & breakfast bundle I could sample either the neat three-course Table D'hôte menu or could use my £25 "allowance" elsewhere on the à la carte menu. I chose the latter option opting for the beef shin & short rib ragu before following up with a fiery tandoori chicken pizza with roasted peppers and chilli. I even had

some change leftover for a very large glass of Chianti which aided somewhat in sending me over to sleep.

A good night's sleep however was always assured thanks to the patented "Sweet Dreams by DoubleTree" bed – I can personally vouch for its irresistible clutches.

The following morning was surprisingly swift and hassle-free. DoubleTree serve a cooked breakfast from 06.00am whilst a continental buffet runs from 04.30am with the option to order hot items from the kitchen prior to 06.00am. This provides a bit of ballast for the journeying ahead and I felt (almost) fresh as I headed out into the early morning air.

What also struck me is that this could be a great venue for a Christmas party or event. The hotel offers a large function suite with a built-in bar area whilst the sleek Columbus bar is also available for hire. The hotel's strong transport links also make it easily reachable from a number of places. Food for thought? I think so!

So whether you're looking for somewhere to stage your next bash, holidaymakers looking to kick off your trip with real aplomb or a travelling business executive seeking comfort and luxury, the Hilton DoubleTree has much to offer.

www.doubletree3.hilton.com

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LUXURY BEAMISH HOTEL INVESTS A FURTHER £450K IN TWO GUEST HOUSES AND A VINTAGE STORE

Owners of luxury independent hotel, South Causey Inn near Beamish, have invested a further £450k to create two, two-storey hot tub houses and an onsite antique and vintage store.

The hotel have recruited 10 new members of staff, taking the staff total to over 110.

The family-run hotel, which turns over around £3.5m annually, was taken over by Philip and Susan Moiser in 2007, in which time they have invested significantly in the business, taking bedroom numbers from 16 to 38, while introducing a wedding venue, conferencing facilities, weekly market and a mini farm. From 2016 to date, £2.25m has been invested in the hotel and venue.

Chester le Street construction company Radford Construction Services worked with the Inn to complete all refurbishment and building work.

The store opens at 9.30am on Saturday 22nd September.



MICHELLE'S HEALTH TREATMENT IS WORTH ITS SALT

For anyone who has ever been to the coast and noticed the therapeutic effects of the sea air on their health and wellbeing, a new treatment centre in Newcastle may be the answer to a wealth of health problems.

One of only a handful of salt cave therapy rooms in the UK, Sereniti Salt Retreat in Friars Street within Newcastle's China Town near Blackfriars Restaurant is leading the way in the region's treatment of skin and respiratory conditions by the use of salt in a medically controlled atmosphere.

Salt therapy, or to give it its Greek name Halotherapy works by the client breathing normally in a salt air environment during a 45-minute treatment session. The sessions are carried out in a specially constructed 'salt cave' with rich sea salt adorning the floor and the walls. Soothing music, ambient lighting and reclining chairs ensure a relaxing, enjoyable experience while the treatment itself helps with a variety of conditions.



OYSTER FESTIVAL RAISES £36.6K

Guests at one of the largest - and most glittering - events on the North East's social calendar dug deep to raise a record amount for charity.

The 15th annual North East Oyster Festival was held at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield, County Durham in September.

And organisers, Ramside Estates, which owns Hardwick Hall, have revealed the event raised a staggering £36,600 for Butterwick Hospice Care.

Headlining this year's Festival was singing sensation Gabrielle, the voice behind 1990s classics such as Dreams, Give me a Little More Time, Walk on By and Rise.

North East band Mr Wilson's Second Liners, Irish musicians Emerald Thieves and the JJ Galway Band also took to the stage at the event which was compered by comedian, Steve Walls.

The event, sponsored by Great Annual Savings Group along with many other local and national businesses, included a Champagne reception, three-course fruits de mer menu, oyster stalls and complimentary lager, beer and wine.

STYLE DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER PACKS HIS SALON SCISSORS FOR SYRIA



Newcastle style director Christopher Davies is packing his salon scissors along with other equipment in readiness for a month-long stay in Syria, delivering humanitarian aid as part of a volunteer team working with French charity SOS Christians of the Orient.

The charity's mission is to deliver practical help and moral support to Christians in areas of conflict, and its teams work in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

Christopher will be helping to deliver medical, education, food and hygiene aid to the Syrian population coping with the after-effects of the civil war.

A style director at Green Ginger Hairdressing in Newcastle, Christopher has been studying Arabic for the last two years at North East Arabic Language Academy in Newcastle in readiness for the trip. His employers have supported him by holding fund-raising events at the salon and signing off his month-long absence through a mix of holiday and unpaid leave.



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DAVIDSONS JEWELLERY MILESTONE IS A GEM

When a business has been in existence for over a hundred years, you know that it is hugely successful. It has stood the test of time; it has continued to flourish and has moved seamlessly from the 19th to the 21st Century.

That is the case with Davidsons the Jewellers. They've been based in Newcastle for 120 years.

Actually, they've been based on Grey Street in Newcastle for all of those years.

The company was set-up by Robert Davidson in 1898 and is still very much a family affair with Tony and Helen Davidson moving the company forward over the past twenty years.

"We are proud to be an independent, family jewellers; still creating hand crafted jewellery using traditional methods whilst sourcing unique creations from all over the world," said Tony. "Even though we have become a mainstay of life on Grey Street in Newcastle, we are still an independent jewellers. We pride ourselves on being bespoke and offering a truly personal service. We have customers who have been shopping here longer than Helen and I have been in charge because they appreciate quality craftsmanship and frequently want something different."

In 1939, Robert Davidson, who founded the company in a small workshop at 66 Grey Street, handed over the reins to his nephew Stanley. The business was mainly repairing jewellery and silverware for customers across the North East as well as undertaking work for other local jewellers. The company continued to blossom so Stanley, who by now was



joined by his son Allan Davidson, moved the workshop to a larger premises at 94 Grey Street in 1947.

The reputation of Davidsons was spreading. Allan made the decision to expand the business from being a jewellery workshop to also be a jewellery retailer. He expanded into the shop next door and created Davidsons as you see it today.

Although the retail arm of the business is the most obvious example of what Davidsons the Jewellers now does, sourcing and selling the finest diamond and gemstone jewellery...much of which is unique to Davidsons...there is still a very active in-house workshop upstairs. Fronting the workshop is John Douglas who began his working career as an apprentice for Tony and Helen's grandfather in 1967. His creations are iconic and made using techniques that have been refined since his first day. "I

still get enormous pleasure from making jewellery," said John. "I enjoy it now as much as I did 51 years ago." Davidsons has clients from Australia and Canada who will only buy one of John's creations.

Tony and Helen took over the business in the late 90s. They have remained loyal to the timeless jewellery Davidsons have built their name on, whilst ensuring they stay current with the latest trends. A carefully curated blend of contemporary and sculptural pieces from design houses such as Lapponia in Helsinki and Baccarat in Paris, makes Davidsons stand out on the high street; offering the North East something different.

"Davidsons offer the North East the opportunity to see and buy beautiful and unusual jewellery," said Helen Davidson. "We insist on stocking high quality products. Our team endeavour to give the best service possible so clients can choose jewellery they can enjoy for many years to come."

Davidsons the Jewellers has the sort of reputation that other firms can only dream about. With 120 years of family experience behind them, Tony, Helen and their team continue to lead the company forward. If you are looking for contemporary creations or a truly bespoke item manufactured to the highest standards, call in and you'll find out what personal service and attention to detail is all about.



Tony and Helen Davidson

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- Apartment group
- Ramside event catering
- Angel of Corbridge
- Longhorns ...to name a few!



Les Reay (Owner, Catering Units) hands over their bespoke vehicle to Zak of Tango Durham, which has recently opened.



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*Subject to availability



TINY LIVES MAD HATTER CHARITY BALL

Over 200 guests headed down the rabbit hole on Saturday 20th October, at the Tiny Lives Mad Hatter Charity Ball at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead.

The night was expertly hosted by Pete Graves of Sky Sports and attendees enjoyed a drinks reception, live dance performance from Tyne Theatre Stage School, 3-course-meal, raffle and auction, before live band Funk Conspiracy entertained everyone, all whilst raising vital funds for this wonderful local charity, which supports the Neonatal Unit at the RVI, Newcastle.

It was a night to remember, with quirky touches including thrones and unique custom-made Mad Hatter hats as eye-catching centrepieces – later modelled by guests as they danced the night away!







PREPARE FOR A MIRACLE ON GREY STREET

A Newcastle city centre hotel is using its Grey matter this winter to attract those who like to mix business with pleasure, as Emma Walker reports.

As autumn speeds up, bringing Christmas firmly into sight, time too speeds up.

One minute we're unpacking summer holiday suitcases and, the next, we're panic buying opaque tights and lip salve as dark nights roll in and the thermometer plummets.

But, like a fairy godmother waving her wand over a Halloween pumpkin, one city centre hotel is coming to the aid of those who just don't have enough hours in the day.

Those who have meetings to arrange, clients to entertain and the office Christmas party to organise...and who, somehow, if they are to maintain their morale, sanity and appearance, have to fit in a manicure and, (please, Santa!) a scented oil massage.

Thankfully, at Newcastle's Grey Street Hotel, help

is at hand. For not only can the hotel's conference suite host everything from private meetings to presentations and seminars – with a range of late availability deals to choose from – but guests can then switch seamlessly to social mode with drinks in the hotel's latest attraction.

From Thursday 15 November up until Christmas, the former Living Room site, on the corner of Grey Street and Mosley Street, will be transformed into a winter wonderland-themed drinking venue; Miracle on Grey Street.

A glittering grotto dressed with everything you would associate with winter, it is just the place in which to raise a glass to the spirit of Christmas.

And, along with a full range of wines, spirits, beers lagers and ciders, this rather gorgeous bar will be serving hot drinks, mulled wine and cider and a

range of themed cocktails for those who just can't decide if they have been naughty or nice.

The bar is also available for private hire for parties of up to 120 making it the perfect choice for an office party and, to help guests switch from work to 'wow', the hotel's All About You beauty suite offers a variety of treatments for those on the go.

"Quite simply we can offer everything you need for work or pleasure all under one roof," said Atul Malhotra, director of operations at Malhotra Group plc, which owns Grey Street Hotel.

"And at the end of the night you don't even have to go home – just head upstairs to bed."

Miracle on Grey Street will be open daily from 12 noon to midnight can be exclusively hired for parties of up to 120 people.

For more information visit www.malhotragroup.co.uk/miracleongreystreet and for Christmas Party booking enquiries email marketing@malhotragroup.co.uk



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ARE SOCIAL WORTHY RESTAURANTS THE KEY TO SUCCESS?

RDA give their views on the importance of restaurant design.

Increasingly, the stylish places that serve you food are being designed to cater to your social media feed.

It's not just about the food itself. How the little design touches of a restaurant or cafe gets on social media is no longer a passive consideration for proprietors or designers.

In particular the young professional demographic only want to go somewhere that's cool, trendy and "instagramable". As a result, restaurant owners are not only creating more stylish interiors to entice customers, they are also aiming to create interiors

that they hope will be shared on social media.

Restaurant owners now understand that if they play their cards right, their customers will not only pay for a meal but beam their plates and décor to hundreds or thousands of followers.

With over a decade of experience in restaurant design we know that the design of a restaurant can have a profound impact on your customers. Implementing a new and unique style of décor can help bring in more guests and boost your profits.

These are just some of our projects which have had "social grabbing" success.

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THE CITY JEWEL

By Michael Grahamslaw

The Vermont Hotel is enviably situated in the heart of Newcastle, combining neo-classical grandeur with contemporary features. Its striking 1930s façade is very impressive and sits between Castle Keep and the Tyne Bridge in the Newcastle skyline.

Inside, the hotel is deceptively large, set over numerous floors ranging from the swish late bar Livellos at street level up to the hotel's spectacular sky lounge – available only for private hire – which offers spectacular views across the city.

In between, the hotel boasts deluxe accommodation, offering guest rooms, suites and serviced apartments alongside an elegant restaurant, fitness suite and bar area. With this in mind, we booked in to experience all this iconic North East hotel has to offer.

Unfortunately, we'd chosen one of the wettest afternoons of the year to do so. The heavens were teeming and with the hotel's overflow car park full, we resigned ourselves to a soggy walk across the city. Luckily, the Vermont's super-amenable concierge service were on hand and offered to park the car in a nearby multi-storey and then collect it for us the following morning. This is what I call top customer service and it really created a strong first impression.

Following this, we were checked in cheerily before being shown to our double room. This was a sumptuous affair, resplendent in rich

shades of gold, walnut, brass and brown which ushered in feelings of warmth and sanctuary. Other features included leather wingback chairs, suede headboards and tartan carpet. The room also catered well for the modern leisure traveller or business exec with LCD TV, writing desk, telephone and tea & coffee making facilities as standard.

Premium rooms also afford some great views and a quick peek out the window revealed the Tyne Bridge standing triumphantly in our eyeline. "We've made it!" we joked whilst changing for dinner.

After a long working day, we thought it only proper that we'd first enjoy a quick loosener in the hotel's 'Redwood' bar. As the name might suggest, this is a cosy, convivial space complete with mood lighting, chesterfield sofas, fully-stocked bar (hurray) and assorted cocktail menu.

Thirsts quenched, we adjourned to "The Bridge" restaurant for our evening meal. Again showcasing some fantastic Quayside views, this is a destination eatery in its own right, offering a classic brasserie-style menu with many modern inflections.

My son Jack kicked off with the seared Orkney scallops – the perfect texture with a delicate herb crust – which was paired inventively with black pudding, cauliflower and smoky pancetta. I chose the potted smoked salmon, a fresh sprightly starter singing with fresh lemon and dill.

Following up, yours truly walloped the 10oz sirloin steak with thick cut chips (surprise) whilst Jack tucked into the Halibut & Chicken with saffron potatoes, fresh fennel and an exquisite vermouth butter sauce.

Naturally all of this was washed down by a glass of Malbec and Chardonnay respectively.

The following morning was thankfully a lot drier than the day before. I exchanged the extra "zzzzzzs" in favour of a brisk walk alongside the Quayside before reuniting with Jack over a freshly-cooked full English breakfast.

Our stay had been one to remember. Set in the heart of the city, adjacent to the castle itself, this is a hotel with an aura of its own and that real VIP feel. The venue is owned by The Gainford Group who, with a growing portfolio of leisure venues, have done much to develop the city. The Vermont Hotel is the jewel in its crown.

For more information, visit www.vermont-hotel.com

FANCY A FEAST FIT FOR A KING THIS DECEMBER?

Forgive us for talking about Christmas so soon, but it's only a month away and our Peace & Loaf team are already preparing themselves for the crazy period that'll soon be amongst us!

It's one of the most manic times of the year in the leisure industry and restaurants are no strangers to the long hours that are upon them, and with food and quality that we serve at Peace & Loaf, it's easy to see why we're already full for dates throughout December! Our most eagerly anticipated menu of the year has been a huge hit with our excited diners as much as 12 months' before it's being served, so we're now pleased to have put the final touches to it and present to our loyal diners.

In my opinion, mass catering is nearly always a let-down when it comes to Christmas. At Peace & Loaf, we offer something very different. Ham hock, split pea, beetroot and egg, and cured salmon, gin and tonic, not to mention the fermented cucumber and meadowsweet all making an appearance on this year's menu; a welcome change I'm sure you'll agree to the usual soup, turkey and all the trimmings and Christmas pudding that we're all too used to.

As well as a range of main courses including my very own twist on a traditional turkey dinner; Goose, Morteau sausage, stuffing and root vegetables, there's some 'surprises' in the menu, that we're pretty keen to keep under-wraps for



the time being. 'If you like Pina Colada', and Christmas spring roll with brandy ice cream and they sound equally as appealing to you at a very reasonable £25 for five courses at lunch time, then you'll see why our restaurant has received

accolades aplenty in its five-year existence.

We hope to see you celebrating your Christmas with our lovely Peace and Loaf team – Until next time - Dave.

To reserve your table now, visit our website www.peaceandloaf.co.uk. For tables of eight or more, call the restaurant directly on 0191 281 5222.



sachins

Festive journey of East meets West, from the Punjab North of India to the North East

To begin
Poppadoms and pickles.

Amuse-bouche
Festive mini onion pakora with brussels sprouts, served with a droplet of taramind sauce.

Starter
Hearty daal and spinach spicy soup with a sprinkle of coriander, served with a mini nan bread.

Chicken tikka over the coals.
Spiced minted lamb chops over the coals.

Tandoori spiced salmon.

* All served with a jewelled winter salad.

Dessert
Brandy fruit cake, served with ice cream or vanilla and star anise custard.
Gulab jaman, served with lightly spiced ice cream.
Tangerine kulfi, served with a sprinkle of roasted pistachio nuts, pomegranate and fresh mint leaf.

Main course
Sachins Christmas dinner
Turkey marinated with ground spices and masala gravy, served with delicately spiced regional root vegetables, infused garlic and chilli roasties, and saffron mash.
Accompanied with slow gin cranberry sauce.

Kashmiri champney over the coals
Lamb chops marinated in punjabi spices, served with festive spiced bubble and squeak.
Accompanied with lashings of mint jelly.

Boxing Day turkey tari wala
Turkey cooked in an authentic medium spiced family favourite punjabi sauce, served with rice and nan bread fresh out of the tandoor.

Mixed vegetable koftas
served with rice or nan.

Salmon Tikka
Marinated salmon over the coals, served with festive spiced bubble and squeak.

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Menu

Bywell smokehouse; smoked salmon & crayfish cocktail, Bloody Mary mayonnaise, brown bread straw

Northumbrian game terrine with damson chutney

White onion, celery & Blagdon blue cheese, puff pastry croutons (v)

Please choose a roast for you to carve at your table.

All roasts served with a selection of honey roast root vegetables & herb roasted potatoes

Roast crown of turkey, accompanied by sage & chestnut stuffing, pigs in blankets & roast gravy

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THE CHANGING FACE OF AUSTRALIA



One of the great success stories in the last 30 years in the wine industry has been Australia. Aussie wines burst on to the UK scene in the mid 1980's and took it by storm.

These were big, ripe and juicy wines full of flavour, very difficult to ignore and completely different to the rather dull and dusty wines that much of Europe was producing at the time.

In a wonderful act of serendipity, these big and full-on flavoured wines arrived in the UK just at the time that wine drinking started to gain popularity and they were exactly what the new generation of wine drinkers were looking for. Not only were these wines bursting with character they were also very reliable – you could always rely on an Aussie Chardonnay or Shiraz from one company or another to fit the bill. No longer did the individual producer or the year really matter, it was Australian and that said it all. Neither were Australian wine makers limited by the strict regulations their European counterparts had to work within, they were much freer to experiment.

The Australian wine industry also realised it was on to something big and with a combination of ultra reliable wines and aggressive promotions, Brand Australia gained a very strong position in the UK wine market. Wines were created to fit the market and blending from different regions to achieve that end was often the norm. The industry was very much focused on using grape varieties to build the wine's identity rather than a geographical identity as is the case in so many other growing countries.

However, wind the clock on 25 years and things have changed. Most of the big Australian producers have realised that their heavily promoted wines, whilst still popular, were not making them any profit, indeed many were losing a great deal and going out of business. Wine drinkers can be fickle and there is always another source of reliable wine to turn to and today the gloss has certainly come off Aussie wines in the UK.

Bad news for Australia? Yes and no.

The better producers in the country have moved away from the stylised wines of the past and are creating new wines based on regional identity rather than national homogeneity. Australia has a very varied and, in many cases, ancient geology providing some exceptional soils for the cultivation of the vine. It also has a long history of growing grapes – true, Australian wine as we think of it today is a relatively new phenomenon, but the wine industry has been around in Australia for well over 150 years – and Australia has many of the oldest vineyards anywhere in the world. It is these quality factors that are today driving the industry.

Recently we tasted a range of wonderful wines from Yalumba, a very fine Barossa Valley producer. Traditionally the Barossa was a source of big and powerful wines that used weight and power to impress. The current offerings from Yalumba however are different. There is no mistaking the character of these wines – many are made from vines well over 100 years old – but the wines are now tempered by an elegance and finesse that until recently was rarely seen in Australian wines.

The big Australian wine brands that remain are still important, and do a great job at getting consumers to start drinking wine, but more and more we are seeing smaller producers championing their individual regional qualities based on local climate, soil (terroir) and their winemaking skill. The future of Australian wine is no longer in the hands of the huge brands of the past, more it will be influenced by the skill of much smaller producers. It's time for Brand Australia to make way for the likes of the Yarra Valley, Clare Valley, McLaren Vale, Barossa, Coonawarra, Tasmania, and Margaret River; names, that in time, will be as synonymous with Australia as Chardonnay and Shiraz.



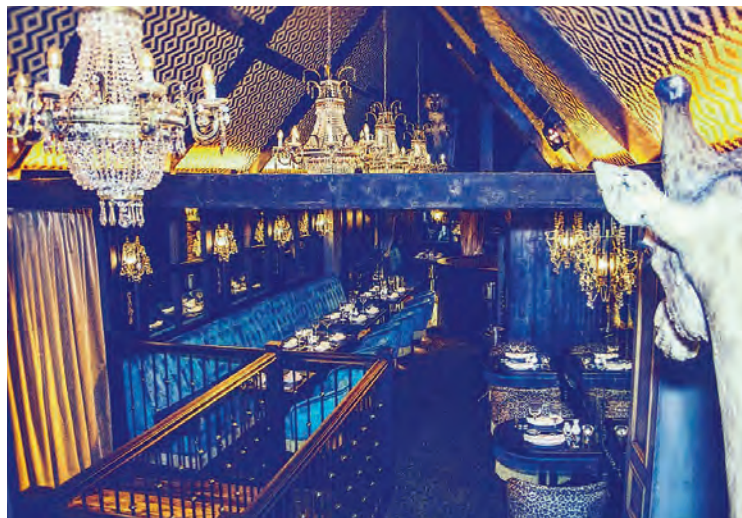
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LUXURY AND OPULENCE AT NEW DURHAM DINING VENUE

By Michael Grahamslaw

With my daughter Holly having recently returned to Durham University, I thought I would combine a nice catch-up with a night of fine-dining at The Rabbit Hole.

Located in Durham's city centre just off Hallgarth Street, the niche restaurant is set within an eighteenth-century quaint building. Independently owned by Nigel and Deborah Gadd, the venue underpins itself as a jazz supper club, with a lavish bar and a chic 50-seater dining room inspired by the iconic roaring 20s. Offering delicious Shanghai-inspired food, the venue also holds a stage for live music on Fridays and Saturdays. With this in mind, we were ecstatic about the night ahead, especially Holly who was thrilled at the prospect of departing from her staple university diet of ready meals for a night.

Upon arrival, we decided to sample the restaurant's drinks offering with a beverage in the cosy Drinking Den to begin. Spoilt for choice with an array of sumptuous boutique wines and spirits available, Holly decided to taste something off the 'Giggle Water', or cocktail, menu with a sweet and zingy cosmopolitan, whilst I stuck to my usual habits with a classic pint of tiger. We also immediately noted the attendance and hospitality of the staff, especially our waitress Bew, who greeted us with warmth and friendliness throughout.

We were then ushered to our table in the heart of the Supper Club itself. The location really did promote an ambience of comfort and luxury, with plush velvet interior, elegant mood lighting and opulent table settings. The sophistication is of course paralleled



in the restaurant's food offering. With a plethora of traditional Asian dishes available, the venue provides tasty oriental cuisine, as well as classic fayre from the grill, presenting a unique food cocktail ready to delight all palates and dietary requirements.

We both decided to try the oriental route first with Holly immediately devouring mouth-watering satay spiced chicken skewers, embellished with fragrant peanut sauce and pickled cucumber relish. As a seafood enthusiast, I tasted delicious king prawns coated in heavenly soy, spring onion and ginger dip,

which without a doubt had the taste buds tingling.

Also eager to sample the venue's 'Off the Live Fire' plates, our main courses were then served straight from the grill. Whilst Holly polished off Gai Yang chicken, a delectable whole chicken breast served with tangy sriracha sauce and rice, I savoured one of the venue's exquisite steaks. Presented with a locally-sourced 8oz fillet, the tender steak was accompanied by all the usual fixtures and fittings, with delicious chips and a rich black peppercorn sauce. Both courses proved extremely flavoursome and nutritious and were much to my delight presented in wholesome, hearty portions.

Feeling satisfied and replete, we unfortunately had to decline the attractive dessert selection in favour of tasty coffees and liqueurs. We then left The Rabbit Hole after a very pleasant evening and went on to enjoy a few drinks in some of the city's distinctive bars and pubs after our meal.

With accessibility to the restaurant only available through a side door which is hidden by the venue's antique shop seeming exterior, the phrase hidden gem really comes to mind when reflecting on our evening at The Rabbit Hole. Since guests are also asked to adhere to specific 'house rules', with requests to wear proper attire, there is simply nothing like this on the market in Durham. All in all, a unique hidey-hole that we can't wait to return to.

The Rabbit Hole can be found at 17 Hallgarth Street, Durham, DH1 3AT. For more information call 0191 386 5556 or visit their website www.therabbitholedurham.co.uk.



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BRINGING THE FIGHT TO THE NORTH EAST

How one food entrepreneur is Declaring War on the Mundane!

Northern Insight catches up with The Sweet Beet and Weirdly Relatable founder, Lizzy Hodcroft, to discuss how one food entrepreneur is changing the face of the food condiment industry and helping combat mental health issues in the workplace.

What does the Sweet Beet do?

The Sweet Beet creates and distributes authentic Americana condiments into the UK retail market.

Our mission is to harness the bold, tame the heat and declare war on the mundane by bringing customers authentic innovation in food condiments that deliver pure, no-nonsense flavour that can revitalise your meal from lifeless to enlightened. We want to create a world where confidence is created through discovery and we actively seek to provide empowerment, encouragement and daring for our customers.

Describe your achievements over the last 12 months.

Over the last 12 months, The Sweet Beet has gained listings in over 100 farm shop and deli stores across the UK as well as Ocado and Fenwick. We've created partnerships with two distributors and watched sales increase month on month. However, the best achievements by far are the numerous awards given to recognise me as an entrepreneur and our products for great taste, innovation and branding. The Sweet Beet has also seen us featured on BBC radio and pitching to the investors on Dragon's Den.

What can you tell me about Weirdly Relatable?

Weirdly Relatable was created as an outlet to address the stigma of mental health issues in entrepreneurship and business. I found it quite frustrating as I hit barriers that would silence my own path and progression to find purpose within my business as well as my everyday.

I address what can happen to our well-being in a startup and why resilience is key for any founder- food industry or not. More than anything else, I'm trying to be as honest as I can with others and hopefully illustrate a picture of how important it is to share our truth.

Give us a brief timeline of your career so far – where did you start, how did you move on?

Before The Sweet Beet, I was not in a good place. I was battling an eating disorder, depression,

drug addiction and a horrible self-image. Since the age of fourteen, I'd been in and out of the hospital for self-harm and suicide attempts. I'd also been an inpatient while I went through rehab at the age of 17 and I couldn't see a future for myself.

I created my business with only a short amount of time after my last recovery period. In a weird way, I've moulded my own lifeline, my savour and my reason to wake up each day.

I took the challenge with excitement and no forward planning, putting in all of my savings which amounted to about three grand and with absolutely no idea what I doing, apart from the vague idea of a street food business. I started my entrepreneurial journey – and without knowing it- a path of recovery, self-discovery and enlightenment.

What do you believe makes a great leader?

The ability to be humble and show vulnerability. The importance of creating strong connections with others and bring them in on your own journey can have an impact beyond the more traditional concept of leadership.

How do you alleviate the stress that comes with your job?

I try to be gentle with myself. I feel the anxiety and dread and patiently wait for it to pass. In

the meantime, I take more time for myself (without the extra weight of guilt for not working). I walk my dog with a friend in the park. I nap. I let myself get lost in the alternative world of a good book. I climb more, rewarded with having with entire bouldering wall to myself during the middle of the day. I go on adventures in the middle of the week, hiking mountains and biking through forests. I let myself live and slowly shed myself of the burden that comes with responsibility and expectations.

I also don't let myself become all consumed in these little cocoons of pleasure. The trick is allowing myself to enjoy other aspects of my life without completely ignoring the rest, otherwise, guilt would have swallowed me and the mounting workload would have left me completely blindsided and overwhelmed causing

the dominoes of a dangerous cycle to fall.

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

That's the thing, I don't think I ever did know what I wanted to be. I would fixate on passing ideas but never had a real burning passion behind those thoughts. It caused me a lot of stress and feelings of anxiety.

Any pet hates in the workplace? What do you do about them?

I work alone a lot of the time so I'm not able to really gripe about anything as it's all my own doing. I enjoy silence and the ability to get lost in my own thoughts. I do get very frustrated with emails though, especially ones that contain important content. I wish people would just pick up the phone!

Where do you see the company in five years' time?

We aim to lead the food industry into real change; re-engaging and re-invigorating consumers with personalised recipes, value for money and authentic innovation in flavour. I hope to still be very much involved in product development but would like to also explore other interests and passions.

What advice would you give to an aspiring business leader?

Celebrating the success we do achieve, reflecting on the failures in order to learn from them and having an intrinsic knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses is one of the most powerful tools you can access.

What do you wish someone had told you when you started out?

Don't mix business with family. Learn to accept the fact that all roads seem to lead to capitalism and corporations.

What happens next for The Sweet Beet?

I'm hoping in 2019, our new flavours will be launching. We've got mouthwatering plans to see more innovation in flavour and food, branching out of condiments and into seasonings!



For more information about The Sweet Beet visit thesweetbeet.co.uk

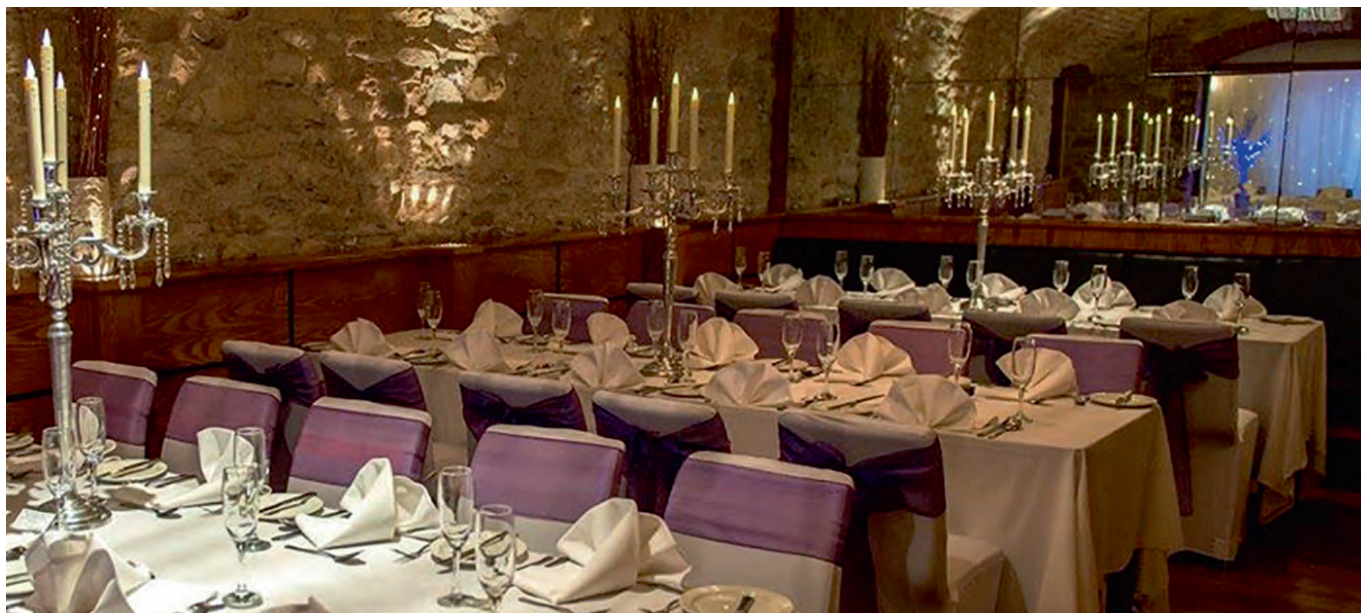
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Wendy Fail, pain free and enjoying life again (x-ray image is for illustrative purposes only).
Photo credit: Crest Photography.



HIP SURGERY SEES MORPETH SPORTS ENTHUSIAST PAIN FREE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS

Sports lover Wendy Fail, from Morpeth, is walking pain free for the first time in three years.

The 39 year-old Visitor & Education Centre Coordinator for Groundwork North East & Cumbria, says she's "looking forward to sailing and getting active again", after hip surgery at Nuffield Health in Newcastle finally brought an end to her constant pain.

Wendy hurt her right hip during a training session for the Great North Run three years ago. Originally dismissing it as a strain that would recover on its own, the pain gradually grew worse and forced her to give up running and her love of sailing.

"My quality of life really dipped," said Wendy, who sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 2012 and has successfully completed seven Great North Runs.

"I injured my hip whilst out running; that day my life changed. I have a very active job and I love sports. I went from being active to virtually sedentary overnight. The pain was often unbearable and I was unable to do any form of exercise, it impacted on my work and social life. I was miserable and in constant pain."

Wendy tried various treatments including cortisone injections which provided temporary relief before

the pain returned and left her seeking a definitive diagnosis.

"I'm a very outgoing person and was starting to feel really frustrated that I was missing out on life, I had to do something about it," adds Wendy.

She did her research and eventually sought advice from Nuffield Health Hospital in Newcastle where she was referred to experienced orthopaedic surgeon Paul Partington, who specialises in hip and knee joint replacement and revision.

An arthrogram scan showed a labral tear in the hip joint. Following a successful surgery to replace her full right hip, Wendy was put on an enhanced recovery programme. After one night in hospital and a thorough physio assessment, she was back on her feet, moving comfortably and allowed to go home.

Wendy says that since the procedure her hip pain has gone. "I'm still in the early stages of recovery and have a degree of stiffness, but things are steadily improving.

"I'm getting my life back, resuming normal activities and hope to be back at the gym and

sailing again soon. I do recognise that my running days are over, purely for the preservation of my new hip, but I can't wait to get back to normal and it feels wonderful to be pain free and enjoying life again.

"The care and support I've received throughout has been outstanding and it was great to be able to go home and start my recuperation almost immediately. I would recommend Mr Partington and the enhanced recovery programme at Nuffield Health Newcastle to anyone who is experiencing hip pain."

Nuffield Health offers diagnostic tests and operations with no waiting lists. The most recent report from the Care Quality Commission (England's independent regulator of health and social care services) saw 94% of Nuffield Health hospitals rated good or outstanding compared with an average of 70% for the independent healthcare sector.

Nuffield Health also offers Private GP services, Health Assessments and Recovery Plus – a service which brings together a spectrum of healthcare services across Nuffield Health's Hospitals and Fitness & Wellbeing Clubs.

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HUNGRY FOR CHANGE

Northern Insight's Steve Russell talks to former World Champion Kickboxer, Ross Gladwin about his mission to eradicate one of the most controversial aspects of the modern fight game.

In the fierce world of combat sports, the threat of serious injury is an ever-present danger. The morality of that fact will be forever debated, but the cold reality is that all fighters must accept the risks which come when your opponent's ultimate goal is to separate you from your senses. In spite of the dangers of fighting itself though, many believe that a more dangerous battle is being fought long before the first bell rings.

Weight-cutting is a long-established practice, whereby fighters will undergo extreme dieting before a fight to reduce their bodies to their lowest possible weight. The aim is to conquer the scales, then rapidly gain weight to potentially gain a size advantage over your opponent. However, critics argue that the extremities of this process are unnecessarily jeopardising the health of fighters - an argument seemingly borne out by facts. Numerous high-profile UFC bouts have been cancelled due to fighters being hospitalised during weight-cuts and Brazilian MMA fighter, Leandro Souza tragically died in 2013 having attempted to lose 33 pounds in one week.

One man all too aware of these issues, is retired Light Heavyweight World Kickboxing Champion Ross Gladwin. Ross, originally from Bedlington, caught the fighting bug early having joined his father's Karate school at just four years old. He eventually developed a passion for Kickboxing and at 17 was selected by England for the World Championships, but even at this young age he'd already fought his first battle with the scales: "I was 17 years old, boxing in a social club in Sunderland. Three hours before the bout, I stepped onto the scales. The limit was 79kg but as I looked down I saw 79.4kg. I was then given 30 minutes to make weight."

Having already endured a gruelling weight-cut, Ross spent the next thirty minutes sucking Werther's Originals to generate saliva and literally spat the remaining 400 grams from his body. Utterly depleted, he desperately tried to re-energise with a cocktail of Red Bull and ephedrine tablets (then legal). Miraculously, he won the fight but far from celebrating, he spent the rest of the evening vomiting. He recounts similarly gruesome weight-cuts and tellingly, these stories are laced with a degree of anguish completely absent from his descriptions of anything he suffered at the hands of his opponents.

Despite these punishing episodes, his career flourished, winning a remarkable 8 elite championships in a row between 2012 and 2014, defeating legends like Zoltan Dansco along the way. However, at the age of just 29 - whilst ranked



Ross Gladwin

number one in the world - Ross realised his time was limited: "I turned up at the 2014 Irish Open well above my fighting weight, leaving me with 4 days to lose 23 pounds."

His account of those four days sounds more like the regime of a sadistic prison than the preparation of an athlete, but it shockingly demonstrates what fighters must put themselves through. Following a programme of starvation, dehydration and the ingestion of laxatives and other supplements designed to aid fluid loss, he made the weight feeling like a "zombie". Losing in the first round to a lower ranked opponent, he left Ireland physically and emotionally exhausted.

Ross went on to compete a few more times and even ended his career with another World Championship title later that year, but the realisation that he could no longer put his body through such insanity had already set in.

For an athlete in his prime to be forced into retirement because he could no longer starve himself effectively is a sad indictment of modern combat sports. However, even more tragic are the long-term health problems Ross now endures:

"I was recently diagnosed with severe liver issues,

almost certainly caused by continual dramatic weight loss, which is currently managed through medication, but I may require surgery eventually."

Understandably, Ross is now a passionate advocate for change, but what does he see as the solution for what he describes as a taboo subject?

"Coaches and promoters are part of the problem as there is a lot of pressure put on fighters, but ultimately I think same day weigh-ins are the solution."

He acknowledges that affecting change will be difficult, especially as sports like Kickboxing, Boxing and MMA have such disparate organisational structures, but he remains hopeful that in the future, others won't have to suffer what he has.

As for his own future, he remains optimistic, despite his initial struggles to fill the void left by retirement. He currently operates Emulous Sports Kickboxing and Ross Gladwin Sports Injuries & Fitness, both based in North Shields, as well as being a part-time lecturer in Sports Injuries. However, in typically competitive fashion, he sees his future in elite sports, but he hasn't quite figured out what form that will take. Suffice to say though, you would literally be a fool to argue with him!

For more information visit www.rossgladwin.co.uk



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GIN AND WELLNESS

BY Claire Hawes, Osteopath, Co-director

The first workplace wellness offerings started in the industrial revolution when employers allowed 'gin carts' to circulate the factory floors helping relieve workers monotony in their repetitive jobs carried out in pretty dire conditions with poor hygiene, polluted air and long working hours. It is no wonder that life expectancy and morbidity was so low in years gone by. How times have changed...

There have been many improvements since these days with health and safety, a pay package that allows you a holiday or to buy the latest clothes or electronic devices, occupational health and workers rights have come on a long way. But that's where the differences end... how many contact centres or offices have you been in where there are rows of computers and telephones, circulating air conditioned air, long working hours, lack of sunshine or natural light. It is no wonder that wellness in the workplace is becoming such an important part of company's policy and that employees are expecting their bosses to take more notice.

The current trend in wellness is mindfulness on the back of increasing awareness about mental wellbeing in the workplace. The recognition of bosses that the conditions their staff are working in is sub-optimal for top productivity and a positive attitude from the workforce. We have moved through the phases from smoking cessation and diet clubs on the shop floor to the focus on mental health. And it's mazing how many people you talk to who feel liberated to be able to discuss suicidal thoughts or mental illness that they or someone

they know has experienced without the stigma which was attached. But we must remember that wellness is about balance. Balance in all aspects of our lives – body, mind and spirit and certainly work-life balance.

So when we see employers paying for their staff to have monthly wellness appointments whether that's a massage or reflexology, or company's paying for health insurance for their staff so that they can access osteopathy or psychotherapy we are giving them a 'high five' as they are taking steps which will have these effects on their business:

- Increase productivity through improved employee relations and creativity
- Reduced spending on sickness absence through cover and pay
- Meeting some of your corporate social responsibility initiatives by improving working practices using wellness strategies.
- Make your company more attractive to the best candidates by showing you have a 'caring' side to your business which encourages a well environment.

The benefits are not just for the shop floor employees, because when we have seen company directors and team leaders or managers come in for regular wellness appointments – we also hear that they are able to find focus and clarity to make difficult decisions or find strategies to move their business forward. They find that their health starts to improve meaning they are less distracted by worries such as back pain or stress. And remember that 2 of the top 3 sickness absence reasons are preventable through wellness initiatives – that's musculoskeletal pain/injury and stress. The third reason is minor infection such as cold, flu and sickness, which will have less impact if the workforce is healthier and not breathing recycled air all day! A quick exercise should quickly open your eyes to the financial benefits that wellness has on a company's bottom line.

So, gone are the days of the gin carts, and thankfully so too. But our working environment and conditions are still having a profound effect on our health and wellbeing so it is vitally important that employers embrace the wellness movement and keep their business moving with the times. Gin and tonic anyone?

Claire Hawes and Nicky Robertson run Back to Balance a wellness centre focussed on delivering high quality wellness initiatives either in-house or on-site. For more information on how we can help email contact@back-to-balance.co.uk

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EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOU - FACT!

It is a fact of life, exercising on a regular basis is a vital part of a healthy lifestyle and actually makes you happier.

Scientists have proved time and time again the importance of exercise in helping prevent serious illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and numerous cancers.

Of course the exercise does not have to be vigorous to have an impact, a regular walk, swim, cycle or workout DVD can help improve your physical and mental health.

Any and all types of exercise can benefit mental health, whether it be team sports, cycling, walking the dog, or even just doing the housework- it doesn't have to be limited to what can be done in the gym.

Researchers have found that those who benefit most in terms of mental health were those who exercised for 30-60 minutes between three to five times per week- these more regular levels of activity have been shown to help with treatment of even chronic depression.

Here are a few reasons why you should exercise to help your mental health and improve your mood:

De stress - Exercise will help you de stress and give you that euphoric feeling that makes you feel happy and re energised. This makes stress easier to manage and lead to a deeper sense of relaxation.

Lowens anxiety - Exercise decreases tension and worry by reducing muscle tension, lowering blood pressure and puts you in a more relaxed state of mind.

Lifts your mood - Exercise is a very powerful and effective treatment for improving your mood. It also helps you think more clearly and feel more energised throughout the rest of the day.



Huge benefits for depression - Exercise is one of the most successful treatments for depression. Research shows regular exercise is equivalent or better than certain anti depression drugs and has been shown to cut depression rates almost in half.

Helps the brain - Exercise increases oxygen flow to the brain decreasing brain cell loss. The Alzheimers Association says exercise improves focus, planning and thinking skills. Exercise is also correlated with higher IQ scores and mental gains in cognitive decline through middle age and beyond.

Helps with difficult emotions - As endorphins levels are increased you start to feel more positive

within yourself and your thought processes. This will help you deal much better with things like grief and fear - exercise helps channel these emotions elsewhere.

The benefits of exercising go way beyond simply losing some weight and looking better. The physical aspects we all know about, but exercise can have a hugely positive effect mentally and should not be underestimated.

Next time you feel low, need a boost and want to reignite your self confidence, rather than reach for tablets, start some regular exercise....the positive effects are often instant.

DAVID'S SUMMING UP

Exercising is not just about making you look better, the positive mental impact is huge and can immediately transform the way you feel.

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COMMENT WITH... Barry Speker

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“
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”

As Bob Geldorf joined the throng in Central London and was claiming that the ‘People’s Vote’ campaign was as uplifting as Live Aid, the risks of mob rule as against democratic process create confusion and alarm. The first EU referendum was in 1975 after the Heath government had decided in 1973 to join the Common Market. It took over 4 decades for there to be a second referendum on the issue last year.

Large numbers have demonstrated for this so-called People’s Vote, but that is what the 2017 referendum was. Do the campaigners suggest that the majority who voted were not the ‘people’ or just not their sort of people?

What are we to have? Best of three? And if it is still leave what would our negotiating position with the EU be then?

Some brighter news was the opening of the Invictus Games in Sydney by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. Prince Harry spoke of his pride at sharing with Australia the announcement of the ‘newest addition’ to his family.

His stirring speech to the 500 ex-service competitors due to take part in 13 sports in the Olympic Stadium was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm for the Royal Family. He praised the Invictus generation for their selfless service to their countries in complex and dangerous conflicts with a dedication which was often unrecognised.

The opportunity had been taken to lay a wreath at Sydney’s Anzac memorial as part of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

I hope he has also had time to work on a trade deal with Australia and New Zealand.

Talking of major sporting events and just before the forthcoming Race to Dubai there was the Robbie Howard ‘Race to North Berwick’. The usual miscellany of variously talented golfers graced the links of Gullane and Longniddry as well as supporting sales of the best Scottish (and Irish) whiskies. The usual high quality hospitality from Chris at The Open Arms. The joint winners Frank Matthewson and Ewan Duff- lawyers of course.

I was delighted to be at the North East Chinese Association Autumn Festival Banquet at the Hilton. This was also the opportunity for Sue Winfield, the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and

Wear to present to NECA the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. QAVS is a prestigious national award presented to selected groups each year.

My customary speech in best Cantonese may have been comprehensible to some. Well done Jimmy Tsang, your committee and volunteers.

As a Freeman of the City of London I had the privilege of guiding sheep over London Bridge at the annual Sheep Drive organised by the Worshipful Company of Woolmen. Leading the event this year was Alan Titchmarsh. He probably collected some fertile material for his back garden.

The Russian State Opera made their yearly visit to Newcastle appearing at the Tyne Theatre. Their production of Madam Butterfly was memorable although imagination was needed to make the casting and characterisation convincing. How ironic for Russian opera singers to be praising Captain Pinkerton of the US Navy sailing his fleet through the Far East. The music was brilliant.

The Russian State Ballet is coming to the Tyne Theatre on 15th November to perform The Nutcracker. It will be magnificent. Get your tickets now!

During a recent holiday in Israel and staying at the magnificent Carmel Spa in the hills above Haifa, there was some unusual after dinner entertainment. The talented group of musicians turned out to be a Beatles tribute band. A real pleasure to join in with ‘Can’t Buy Me Love’, ‘Eight Days a Week’, ‘Hey Jude’, ‘Twist and Shout’ and many more. And we still knew all the words.

And finally, and talking of biting the hand that feeds you, actress Keira Knightley has announced that she has banned her three-year old from watching certain Disney films - because they lack strong female characters. For example Cinderella puts up with her fate ‘waits around for a rich guy to rescue her’, while Snow White ‘cleans up after seven men, eats a poisoned apple without questioning and the arising from a coma falls for a total stranger who kisses her, without permission!’

Keira has cashed in with appearances in various Disney films including Prince of Thieves, four Pirates of the Caribbean films, and the soon to be released ‘The Nutcracker and the Four Realms’ full of maleficence, magic and mystery. Probably not suitable for three year olds even without worrying about the #MeToo agenda.





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A man with short brown hair, smiling, wearing a dark blue and brown checkered suit jacket over a white shirt and a brown tie. He is holding a Rubik's cube in his right hand. The background is a solid grey.

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