

NORTHERN

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# INSIGHT

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SEPTEMBER 2019



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

issue 51

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# Find your dream home in Newcastle with Taylor Wimpey



**Taylor Wimpey North East is encouraging house hunters to buy new as it has a range of large four-bedroom properties at its Brunton West development, in Newcastle Great Park.**

The homebuilder is also sweetening the deal for buyers looking for their dream home in the sought-after area with an exceptional Summer offer, which is only available until the end of September.

Taylor Wimpey North East is offering £10,000 buyers towards options, stamp duty or cash discount on selected new homes when using Part Exchange or Easymover.

For first-time buyers, renters and with those who have already sold their home, the homebuilder is offering five per cent deposit paid on selected homes.

Sarah Northcott, sales and marketing director for Taylor Wimpey North East, comments: "We understand that one of the deciding factors when buying a new home can be a stressful, time-consuming buying process.

"We hope these soon to be ready homes, coupled with our current offers, will help to alleviate some of the time and financial burdens and make the decision-making process that bit smoother."

Brunton West is the fourth phase of homes at Taylor Wimpey's Newcastle Great Park development and is proving just as popular as its predecessors.



These incentives are currently available on selected plots at Brunton West which boasts a stunning location, proximity to local amenities and great schools. There really is something for everyone.

"Situated just over five miles from the city centre, Newcastle Great Park is one of our most sought-after residential locations in the area. We've gone to great lengths to incorporate the magnificent mix of woodland, meadowland and wide-open spaces to create the ideal location for residents."

Homes at Brunton West are easier than ever to secure thanks to Taylor Wimpey's range of financial initiatives specifically designed for all types of home buyers.

The homebuilder is encouraging house hunters to take advantage of its Part Exchange and Easymover schemes to secure their perfect home.

Part Exchange sees Taylor Wimpey purchase a homeowner's existing property as a cash buyer, removing the hassle of selling on the open market and the worry associated with getting caught up in complicated chains.

Using Easymover, Taylor Wimpey manage the selling process, liaise with estate agents and even pay their fees to ensure a hassle-free move, meaning house hunters can reserve a new home and be ready to move in sooner than they might think.

Sarah comments: "We know that the process of selling a property can be stressful and expensive, which is why we offer the schemes to help speed up the process and alleviate some of the worry typically associated with moving.

"Buyers are able to get the keys to their new home easier than first anticipated, allowing them more time to settle in and start this new chapter of their lives.



"Anyone interested in the homes available at Brunton West can view the show homes to get a better idea of how stunning our homes really are.

"Our friendly sales team will also be on hand to offer their expert advice on the selection of financial schemes available."

As demand for the larger properties continues to be strong at the development, buyers should act fast if they are to secure their new home with the current incentives.

Besides quality and luxury aesthetics, house hunters can be assured in the build quality at the development, with the two-year Taylor Wimpey warranty, as well as a 10-year NHBC 'Buildmark' warranty and insurance policy.

Sarah concludes: "Located just five miles from Newcastle city centre, the development is perfect for those looking to spend less time traveling to work and more time with their friends and families."

To find out more about the Brunton West development and the homes available, please call 0191 300 7821 or visit [www.taylorwimpey.co.uk](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk).

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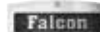
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## FOREWORD

### Welcome to the September edition of Northern Insight.

Following the great success of our souvenir 50th issue we are delighted to bring you another magazine bursting with features and content.

Our cover star is Newcastle Falcons' stalwart Will Welch who looks ahead to the challenge of a new season.

The return of our Big Interview feature sees us talk to Fokhrul Islam who looks at the journey ahead for Northern Gas and Power.

Social highlights include Regents Gate Homes launch of their Regents Plaza apartments development and the recent North East Accountancy Awards.

On our travels we enjoy overnight stays at the Maldron Hotel Newcastle and Jesmond Dene House as well as lunch at the City of Newcastle Golf Club.

All in all, another issue showcasing our wonderful North East region.

Thank you to all concerned for your fantastic support. Till next month.

*M.J. Grahamslaw*  
Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher  
mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com



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# CONCEPT MOVES CLOSER TO DIGITAL TALENT CLUSTER

Specialist North East recruitment consultancy Concept Personnel has relocated to be closer to the growing digital community on Tyneside.

Concept has moved from Newcastle city centre to larger offices in Baltimore House, in Gateshead's fast-emerging Baltic Quarter.

The building is already home to dozens of start-up and high-growth digital and tech companies, many of whom are existing Concept clients.

Nearby, there is also PROTO, a unique hi-tech research and design facility which opened its doors last year and is the first of its kind in Europe. Gateshead College, also based nearby, recently became the official education partner to PROTO.

Erin Kirtley, Regional Manager of Concept, said: "Relocation has been on our agenda for a while. It makes so much sense for us to be closer to a natural client base. The emerging Baltic Quarter has become such a dynamic area in the last year or so and it was just too tempting to ignore.

"It's a perfect location for us and anyone working in the digital, tech and creative industries. We have built our reputation supporting these sectors, so it makes so much sense to be closer to the action."

Concept has been in business for more than 17 years and that success is due to the long-standing relationships the consultancy has with clients, covering creative, digital and marketing companies across the North East, Scotland and more recently from a new office in Milton Keynes.



# SPORT NEWCASTLE LAUNCH £20,000 TOKYO & BEYOND APPEAL



Olympic triple jump champion and world record holder Jonathan Edwards CBE has backed popular North East Charity Sport Newcastle in their bid to raise £20,000 over the next 12 months to support the region's top young Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls in their quest to reach the forthcoming Olympic Games.

Sport Newcastle is a local charity that has been supporting young people in the North East for 52 years. In that time, they have given out grants totalling over £2million to hundreds of young people and dozens of clubs, covering every conceivable sport.

The launch of the appeal encouraging local businesses and members of the public to support the regions hopefuls comes exactly 12 months before the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games. A number of the region's future Olympic hopefuls attended the launch including two Sport Newcastle scholars.

Mike Booth, Sport Newcastle Vice Chair, said: "Sport Newcastle have a dream of making Newcastle a sporting capital that we can all be proud of. Our Tokyo & Beyond appeal aims to raise £20,000 in the next 12 months to support prospective Olympians and Paralympians in their dreams of reaching the Olympics in Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024 or even Los Angeles in 2028. To achieve this, we need the support of North East Businesses and the region as a whole."

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## 100-YEAR OLD LAW FIRM LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH NEW SENIOR HIRE

One of the North East's longest established law firms has strengthened its property specialism with its latest appointment.

Phil Dean has joined Newcastle-based Samuel Phillips Law as Head of Commercial Property, bringing with him more than 20 years of legal expertise in the commercial property sector.

Sharon Boyd, Chief Executive at Samuel Phillips Law, said: "Phil's experience, expertise and astute commercial sense will add an extra dimension to our legal services. Phil will drive the development of our services in commercial property law across all sectors. We're delighted to have recruited someone of his calibre."

Phil Dean first worked as a commercial property solicitor for Gordons in Yorkshire before moving to the North East and working with Ward Hadaway and Mincoff Jacksons. He then established PG Legal in 2011, which specialises in commercial property work.



## UNIQUE SKILLS FOR UNISUS NEW TEAM

North Tyneside Business Forum member, skills training provider and specialist carers Unisus have strengthened their management team by appointing two new directors.

The social enterprise empowers individuals to achieve their potential and helps people who have physical or mental health issues, particularly those with brain injury and neurological conditions.

MD Kelly Oliver Dougall has now appointed Ian Dougall and Ann Barkas as directors. Ian, the new Director of Innovation and Business Development, has a professional background in engineering and industrial sales prior to working in the voluntary and community sector. His main role in Unisus is to develop new initiatives, projects and partnerships.

Director of HR, Ann Barkas, has a wealth of experience in working with people both as a business consultant but also as the head of a networking company. She brings with her a whole network of business owners who will provide opportunities for Unisus' clients.



## BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR SPORTWORKS ON 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Although sport programmes provider Sportworks recently celebrated their 10th anniversary, it was business as usual with a Sport England funded Tackling Inactivity session for adults with complex physical and learning disabilities at the Meadow Well Connected Centre in North Shields.

Working in partnership with local charity Journey Enterprises, the weekly sessions are based around improving agility, balance, coordination, strength and endurance but delivered in an informal way which makes the exercises fun for all participants.

Formed in 2009 by Managing Director Neil Cameron, Sportworks design and deliver sport-based programmes to specific groups, matching their individual needs to funding opportunities.

Neil said: "We're proud of the partnerships we've created and, to mark our ten-year anniversary, we have developed an ambitious growth plan which will result in over 8,000 people accessing our programmes each year by 2022. To achieve this aim we are increasing the number of organisations we work with."

## NORTH EAST ENTREPRENEURS SHARE EXPERIENCE OF BUILDING BUSINESSES

North East entrepreneurs have spoken about the challenges of starting and growing successful businesses in the region as new data shows a rise in new companies.

Fresh data shows that 2018 was a strong year for entrepreneurialism in the North East as it brought a record in the number of new companies.

Nick Johnson, Managing Director of brand performance business Precept, is committed to nurturing this development of the region's entrepreneurs.

Nick and his team have brought together some of the region's key business leaders under the banner Entrepreneurship, providing advice to local entrepreneurs on how to survive in business.

Michael Farnsworth and William Johnson, the pair behind multi-million pound success story Torro Cases, Simon Bourne of men's style brand The Hand Dyed Shoe Co Limited, Robert Cooper, corporate financier at Newcastle head quartered UNW chartered accountants, and many more all opened up about their experiences.



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Will Welch



## FALCONS SET TO TAKE FLIGHT

Plotting a route back to the Premiership, Newcastle Falcons' stalwart Will Welch tells Northern Insight that a season in the Championship offers the opportunity to recalibrate and return stronger.

Starting the new season as big favourites to claim the Greene King IPA Championship title after dropping down from the top flight, one-club man Will Welch insists relegation is a mere bump in the road for the North East's only professional rugby team.

Backing up his words by signing a new four-year deal to remain with his hometown team, the energetic back-rower can speak from experience after captaining the club to the 2012-13 Championship title, a season which saw him becoming the Falcons' youngest ever skipper.

"Without dwelling too much on last year because that's been and gone now, this coming season is a chance for us to take stock and re-set a little bit, really thinking about what made us such a good team the year before," says the man who boasts 226 first team appearances to his name.

"We've done a lot of good work in the summer both from a strategy and a training perspective, and it will definitely make us better. We know there's a target on our head and we can't just slip into a comfort zone, because teams are good enough to punish us when you're not at the top of our game.

"The Championship a tough league, make no mistake about that, and we're the team that everyone wants to beat. The challenge for us is to be absolutely on our mettle every single week, even when we're going to be favourites to win in most cases. You don't get those victories without focusing on your performance level, and if we can manage to put together a run of positive results there's a natural good feeling which follows on from that."

Putting pen to paper on a new contract like many of his club-mates, Newcastle native Welch is in it for the long term.

"It's pretty simple from my perspective – I'm happy here and I didn't want to leave," says the former Royal Grammar School pupil.

"I came through the academy and I don't see any reason to want to go anywhere else, so I just want to stay and be part of the squad which gets us back up to where we belong. From there we have even greater ambitions, but the only focus at the moment is getting promoted this season.

"There's no reason why one season in the Championship is necessarily a bad thing for the club, as long as it really is only one season, because it's a chance for us to re-set and focus for the future."

The region's business community has been similarly supportive, sticking with the Falcons despite the blip of dropping down a division. This has certainly been reflected in Welch's case, with the forward saying: "I've had the same player sponsor all the way through from when I first started at the club more than a decade ago, and it's great for the boys to have that link with local businesses.

"I've actually gone in and done some work experience with Sintons Law along the way, which was useful, because you do have to have one eye on life after rugby. Other players will have similar stories of connecting with businesses through player sponsorship, and I think it's a good way for both parties to connect."

Relegation has certainly not hindered Newcastle Falcons' pulling power, with summer signings including Tonga wing Cooper Vuna, South African back-rower Philip van der Walt, USA lock Greg Peterson and Leicester Tigers centre Gareth Owen, as well as retaining the bulk of their core players.

"When you look at the quality and depth of our squad, although there are a few boys who've left I actually think we're in as good, if not an even better position in certain areas," says Welch.

"That's going to be important because this league takes its toll on your body, so having the ability to rotate your selection gives you a massive advantage."

Encouraged by what he has seen over the summer, he adds: "The boys came back from their holidays in good condition, and with it being a Rugby World Cup year we've had a longer pre-season to make sure everything is right by the time we play our first game away to Jersey on September 21.

"I'm one of those unusual people who actually quite enjoys pre-season, because it's a time when you can work on your game and your conditioning without the pressure of playing on a weekend. It's a time to make yourself physically better and become a better rugby player, which is ultimately what it's all about."



## REGENTS GATE HOMES LAUNCH GOSFORTH DEVELOPMENT

Friends, family, colleagues and business partners joined the team at Regents Gate Homes to celebrate the release of the Regents Plaza Apartments development for sale.

This iconic building will offer something special when complete in Spring next year, with 70 luxury apartments including six duplex penthouses. Gary Morton, Managing Director welcomed and thanked everyone for the work done so far and then asked his mum, June Morton, to do the honours and cut the ribbon to officially mark the show apartments and marketing suite open!

Jan Dale, Managing Director of property experts, Urban Base Land & New Homes, who are the sales agents for the development, said, "We are thrilled to be appointed to sell such a landmark project for Regents Gate Homes. Interest in the apartments has been high, which is no surprise. We are already taking reservations. It's going to be a busy summer!"

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Fokhrul Islam

## A FU-TURE VISION

"I'd rather talk about the future ..."

Fokhrul (or Fu) Islam is clearly focussed on the roadmap ahead, when we meet him at Northern Gas and Power's (NGP's) boardroom on Gateshead Quays.

It's not that he doesn't realise the significance of the past he has built - the job creation; international market expansions ... not to mention the multi-million pound growth. But as the energy market rapidly evolves, the challenges and opportunities the future presents are clearly where Fu has his sights set.

The global utilities sector is experiencing a profound technological evolution which will enable businesses to completely change how they choose, use and manage energy. And Fu sees technology and innovation as an enabler, rapidly driving this transformation forward.

The MD of NGP - part of Global Procurement Group (GPG) - explains: "Technology is constantly transforming our lives and for industries such as e-commerce, finance and gaming (to name a few) it's had a massive impact the last decade - vastly improving our quality of life.

"But in the energy sector we've seen limited innovation to date, with current energy Monitoring & Targeting systems relying on technologies that are out-dated.

"From talking to our customers, we understand there's a real demand for change. But our industry needs not only a change of attitude; it also needs a change of technology.

"There is the opportunity to totally transform how businesses use and manage energy, as we move towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy.

"People want change - businesses tell us they want to become more eco-friendly, but technology has limited their ability. We know there is a real demand for change in people's behaviours and we need to drive that through technology."

Speaking to Fu, there is a clear sense of his excitement about what the future holds. His continuous drive for improvement is key to the on-going success of the business, highlighted by the recent Lloyds' national finalist announcement for Scale Up Business of the Year. His entrepreneurial spirit hasn't gone unnoticed either. This year alone, Fu has been named a finalist in two major national entrepreneurial awards - Ernst and Young and NatWest. He doesn't dwell on accolades though.

His vision is what is driving the future of the business.

At the company's UK annual conference in the autumn, its people from across three continents (America, Europe and Asia) will meet to celebrate another successful year, but also focus on the journey ahead. This journey places GPG at the epicentre of the emerging new global utilities market. It is the past success that informs the future ambition - and a quick snap shot of the business' history demonstrates just why it has the pedigree to deliver this vision.

In 2012 in a bedroom in South Shields, Fu takes the first steps to creating an energy consultancy. The early years involved consolidation and a determined drive to develop partnerships. As a relative unknown in the market, Fu faced a challenge in building relationships with suppliers. Yet over time a major suppliers' network was built up consistently throughout the UK ... and then further afield.

What followed was unprecedented growth of customers, colleagues and the business, resulting in NGP becoming the UK's leading energy procurement specialist. In 2016/17 the business employed 75 people, growing to 228 the following year and now at over 500 globally. It is the fastest growing company in the north east of England. This year alone, over 150 sales consultants have joined the business at its grade A Gateshead HQ.

The rest ... as they say ... is history. A decade of success has helped stimulate job and wealth creation across the north-east region. But the future is the real goal now. And not just for the business, but for the hundreds of thousands of companies NGP supports every single day. And there is no better launch pad for this exciting, new future vision than the forthcoming annual conference.

Fu adds: "We can't wait to share this with our friends, colleagues and the wider industry. This year we have some significant announcements and we are looking at firmly putting our stamp on the sector globally... All is to be revealed soon."

The Big Interview...

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**Speaker - DAVID FAIRLAMB -**

David Fairlamb Fitness

**Venue** - Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle upon Tyne

**Date** - Monday 16th September, 12 noon

**Price** - £55pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee

**David is the owner and motivator behind David Fairlamb Fitness, he has spent over 20 years inspiring people to achieve their fitness goals.**

With a focus on wellness in the work place, David works with corporate clients to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the workforce.

**BOOKING NOW FOR  
MONDAY 7TH OCTOBER...**



**Speaker - GARY LUMBY MBE -**

Focus on Success Ltd

**Venue** - Wynyard Hall, Stockton-on-Tees

**Date** - Monday 7th October, 12 noon

**Price** - £55pp to include a two-course lunch and coffee

**Why and How To Build Yourself a  
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Gary will be tackling the subject of transitioning into a portfolio career and talking us through his own career journey. From his years early years with Yorkshire Bank to his role as a board level executive banker and what motivates him now.

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**Diary Dates:**

**Monday 21st October – Chris Milnes – BMC Recruitment Jesmond Dene House**

**Monday 4th November – Bill Scott OBE – Wilton Engineering – Wynyard Hall**



Samantha Legget and Andrew Silver

# STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

*“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”* Charles Darwin

In a world of constant change, disruption and re-invention, it's important to hold fast to a few proven marketing principles which are guaranteed to help your business, keep you focused and ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Here are five principles that will not only help you survive but also thrive in these changing times.

### 1. Build a brand with meaning

In a world where there is less incentive to be loyal, customers are firmly in control of their relationships with companies. They find it easier than ever to take their business elsewhere, switching from brand to brand if their expectations aren't being met.

It is important to engage your audience on the issues that they care about, have a strong sense of purpose that resonates with them and be authentic to gain their trust.

**“A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another.”**

*(Seth Godin)*

### 2. Dare to be different, dare to be you

Why should people buy from you over your competitors, what makes you unique, what makes you, you? It is important to have a strong sense of purpose and understand why you started your

business in the first place. Then make sure your team and your customers get it too. Remember that it is more important than ever to be authentic and to be you.

**“They laugh at me because I'm different, I laugh at them because they are all the same”** Anon.

### 3. Know your audience

Demographics is dead, it's all about mindsets and behaviours, so get to know your customers, what they are thinking and why. Go mass market or go niche but go after people who are showing intent for your product or service and are aligned with your brand values.

To be successful you need to know who you are speaking to; not only when they are ready to buy but in the consideration stages prior to purchase. Customer insights have never been easier to glean. Use the technology, the platforms and the plethora of channels to really get to know your customers.

People want to be treated like 'people' so think about how you can personalise your communications and appeal to them as individuals.

### 4. Adopt a Customer-first approach

Adopting a customer first approach is not just about attracting new customers, it is also about creating raving fans. First get to know your customers, and then when it comes to making the sale be sure to deliver a quality service and a great experience.

This way you will not only foster loyalty but also have the power to turn them into your strongest advocates.

When was the last time you checked your customer experience?

### 5. Measure, analyse and action improvements

Ensure you have clear goals in place and then make sure you measure and analyse them. Don't just have a set of KPI's that you put into a report every month and pass on to the rest of the team. Take a good look at what story the data is telling you.

Once you have a good idea of what is really happening, what is working and what is not, then you can start to consider how to make improvements. Get into the habit of small but regular tests and look for every opportunity to learn from a mistake and make it better, be agile in your approach.

So, how do you measure up against these five key principles? Being aware is the first step. Be bold and don't follow the crowd. Become famous for being you and if you need some support then get in touch.

*Samantha Legget is an associate of 360 Growth Partners who develops and implements customer-centric strategies for businesses to support their growth plans.*

For more information go to [www.360growthpartners.co.uk](http://www.360growthpartners.co.uk) or e-mail [start@360growthpartners.co.uk](mailto:start@360growthpartners.co.uk)

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We are often approached by distraught property buyers who have approached their bank or normal mortgage provider only to be told "sorry – you don't meet our lending requirements".

However, a full review of your circumstances and research across the entire market mortgage market can often provide a solution to rescue that dream move.

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

- 1. Monthly pension contributions can cause severe restrictions** - some lenders do not factor in these outgoings at all, others do include thus reducing borrowing levels.
- 2. Assessment of overtime**, commission and bonuses can give extreme variances.
- 3. Credit cards** - if you use these for day to day expenses, your mortgage availability can be restricted with some lenders even if you repay the card in full each month.
- 4. Self-employed income and contractors** - an old favourite of ours - different lenders have many varied ways of assessing income and its sustainability.
- 5. Credit file** - again a regular theme - a poor



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

score doesn't necessarily mean that you can't get a mortgage, whereas an excellent score doesn't guarantee that all lenders will help!

- 6. School fees** - seen by many as an optional payment, some lenders treat these as a fixed and permanent expense.

Lastly, the nature of the mortgage market is that the affordability calculators used by lenders can result in some large differences from lender to lender in how much they will lend to you. You may have approached your own bank or building

society and be quoted a certain figure, but it could be that there are lenders much more suited to your needs who will offer a larger borrowing figure. For some people this can be crucial in allowing them to buy the property that they aspire to.

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

**Paul Hardingham and Tony Ibson are Mortgage and Protection Advisers at Innovate Mortgages and Loans. Both have over 20 years of experience advising individuals and businesses across the North East of England. They can be contacted for bespoke advice at [paul@innovatempl.co.uk](mailto:paul@innovatempl.co.uk) or [tony@innovatempl.co.uk](mailto:tony@innovatempl.co.uk) or call 0191 2843723.**

*As a mortgage is secured against your home or property, it may be repossessed if you do not keep up the mortgage repayments.*



## SITE AND FIELD SERVICES GEARS UP FOR GROWTH FOLLOWING MBO

Northumberland-based engineering supplier, Site and Field Services (SAFS), has set its sights on contract growth following a management-buy-out (MBO).

The Ashington-headquartered firm, which supplies services and components to the oil and gas industry, was recently acquired in an MBO by John Thompson and Mark Berry, who bought the company from retiring director Peter Tighe.

Managing director at SAFS, John Thompson, has been with the company since October 2018, while Mark Berry has been working as a consultant to the business. John, who previously owned Moffat 2000, brings to SAFS his experience of the offshore construction sector.

John Thompson said: "I have worked with and admired Site and Field Services for many years due to its excellent track record as a North East welding fabrication and CNC machining company. When the opportunity to acquire the business presented itself, Mark and I jumped at the chance to buy the company.

We have a fantastic team of over 45 employees here with second to none capability and I am

excited about the possibilities to develop and grow the company at a time when North Sea oil and gas market is starting to see good levels of investment after many years of downturn.

My hopes are to grow the business by securing contracts with oil and gas majors and blue-chip offshore construction contractors as well as developing new and innovative products for the industry."

The MBO was supported by the MHA Tait Walker team throughout with forecasting, financial negotiations and project management. HSBC UK also supported John and Mark by providing the funding required to take ownership of Site and Field Services – and legal advice throughout was provided by Square One Law.

Steve Plaskitt, partner at MHA Tait Walker, said: "We were delighted to have acted for John and Mark as part of this important deal. Having worked with them both through a number of projects, including the sale of Moffat, it's great

to see them now as owners of Site and Field. We would like to wish the team all the best for the future as they move forward with their new business."

John Hammill, corporate partner at North East commercial law firm Square One Law, said: "John and Mark have a wealth of experience in the engineering industry and their leadership will no doubt drive the expansion of Site and Field Services whilst enhancing the company's current reputation for providing high-quality products in a timely manner."

Martin Glaholm, business banking relationship manager at HSBC UK said: "We were thrilled to support John and Mark with the growth of their long-standing business. This deal further enhances the company's visibility and position in the North East and we look forward to seeing the business flourish in the engineering market over the coming months."



## PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE OPENS IN TEESSIDE

Dr Best and Dr Pilkington are pleased to have joined the Commerce House community in their shared consultancy office.

Commerce House is a Grade II listed building which, with £1.2 million of investment, has been stunningly renovated to create an outstanding business service. It sits in the heart of Middlesbrough and means that Dr Best and Dr Pilkington are able to offer their clients the very best facilities in an accessible and highly professional environment.

Dr Best and Dr Pilkington have over 30 years' combined experience in delivering a range of counselling and psychology services. They met at Teesside University where Dr Best continues to work as a Senior Lecturer. Dr Best (of North Yorkshire Psychological Therapies) and Dr Pilkington (of Tees Valley Psychology) specialise in delivering psychological services to private clients and to those referred through solicitors and insurers who have sustained personal injuries whether that be in the workplace, in a road traffic accident or due to medical negligence.

Dr Best explained: "Psychology services need professional and discrete surroundings. We conduct a number of sensitive services and value the Commerce House environment as one which suits the needs of our clients. Dr Pilkington and I specialise in psychological services that can be

delivered beyond some of the restrictions that can, at times, be found in the NHS. The people we work with can be referred to us by third parties (e.g. solicitors, insurance companies) or they access our services directly, often because they value being able to be seen quickly and having the flexibility of securing the number of sessions they feel suit their needs."

Dr Pilkington, who had several years experience as a Counselling Psychologist with the NHS and as a Senior Lecturer at Teesside University before making the transition to private practice, said about the move: "Commerce House is perfect for our needs and those of our clients. Our consultancy room feels safe, comfortable and private. The reception area means that our client's needs are prioritized as soon as they enter the building. The fact Commerce House is easily accessible by public transport is ideal. The building itself is stunning and gives reassurance to the people we work with that they are in safe and professional hands. We can hold our events here in the boardroom and it is an absolute pleasure to work in an iconic Middlesbrough building."

Whilst both offer direct therapy, Dr Best also delivers training, consultancy and workshops to

businesses looking to develop a knowledge of how mental health issues can affect their business and workforce. Dr Best is hosting an event at Commerce House on the 27th September entitled "Mental Health Awareness and Interventions in the Workplace". This workshop is aimed at leaders and managers of small and medium sized businesses. The event will take place from 9.30-12.30 and will cost £100 per person. Delegates can expect to receive information about common mental health problems, be empowered to notice important signs and symptoms and feel equipped to respond in an effective manner. Information about how to book is available via email at [daisy@northyorkshirepsychologicaltherapies.co.uk](mailto:daisy@northyorkshirepsychologicaltherapies.co.uk)

The offices at Commerce House have filled remarkably quickly and whilst one or two remain, anyone interested in securing exceptional office space is advised to get in touch with facilities manager, Christine Huntington, as soon as possible. Christine said, "I would like to extend a huge welcome to Daisy and Lesley. We are delighted they have settled in so quickly, and it is fabulous to see their practice's thriving. Our team at Commerce House offer a fabulous reception service, in elegant surroundings, and it is very satisfying to hear that it meets their need perfectly!"

More information is available at [www.northyorkshirepsychologicaltherapies.co.uk](http://www.northyorkshirepsychologicaltherapies.co.uk) and by contacting [lesley@teesvalleypsychology.co.uk](mailto:lesley@teesvalleypsychology.co.uk) or on 01642 200749.

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Dr. Emma Black

## BORIS JOHNSON WINS TORY LEADERSHIP CONTEST, SECURING 66% OF THE VOTES

Having a new Prime Minister has an impact on the financial wellbeing of a country, and here Managing Director of Cascade Cash Management rounds up the changes to our government in the lead up to Brexit.

Boris Johnson has ended the Tory Leadership Contest victorious, securing 92,153 votes out of a total 138,809 cast, beating rival Jeremy Hunt to become Great Britain and Northern Ireland's 77th Prime Minister. Johnson had been favourite to win the contest since the outset having secured support from both sides of a divided Tory party. In his acceptance speech, Johnson joked that his supporters may now "wonder quite what they have done" before summarising his intent succinctly to "deliver Brexit, unite the country and defeat Jeremy Corbyn".

With 99 days to go until the 31st October 2019 Brexit deadline, the new Prime Minister promised that the UK will leave the European Union (EU) without further delay, with preparations for a "no-deal" scenario being stepped up should Brussels refuse to negotiate further. Johnson stressed that while a "no-deal" scenario is not desired, it is common-sense to prepare in the event that a fresh agreement is unable to be reached in time.

The new Prime Minister takes on the mantle to deliver the UK's historic exit from the EU at a time of great political division and strife within Parliament. Many Tory ministers resigned from their posts in advance of Johnson being sworn in, citing grave concerns around a "no-deal" Brexit. Such ministers included Education secretary Anne Milton, Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan, Chancellor Philip Hammond, International Development Secretary

Rory Stewart, Justice Secretary David Gauke and Deputy Prime Minister David Lidington.

Despite the resignations, Johnson has pressed onwards appointing his new cabinet with the key posts held as follows:

- Sajid Javid - Chancellor
- Priti Patel - Home Secretary
- Dominic Raab - Foreign Secretary
- Stephen Barclay - Brexit Secretary
- Michael Gove - Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
- Ben Wallace - Defence Secretary
- Liz Truss - International Trade Secretary
- Jacob Rees-Mogg - Leader of the Commons

In the aftermath, a senior European diplomat indicated that the feeling in Brussels is that London's central plan is for the UK to exit on the 31st October without a deal in place, with an intention to open negotiations for trade thereafter.

Downing Street has indicated Johnson's openness to negotiate but has affirmed such discussions will centre on the removal of the contentious backstop, under which no hard border would be created between the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland meaning that the UK would technically remain part of the customs union. The EU has indicated a reluctance for this to be removed and without suggestions from the UK on an

alternative, Brussels has indicated its expectation for negotiations to remain in stalemate.

There are no plans in place for new UK-EU talks and Westminster has been buoyed with action to prepare for a "no-deal" Brexit, criticising former Cabinet ministers, including former Chancellor Philip Hammond, for failing to make adequate provisions for a "no-deal" scenario.

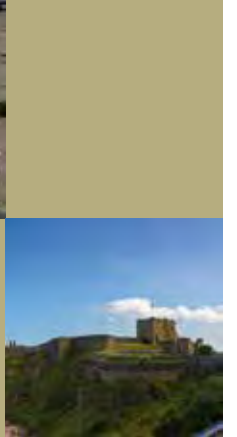
The Tory party remains divided however and many ministers have vowed to defect to opposition parties to prevent the UK crashing out. Conservative rebels and Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn are considering a vote of no confidence soon after Parliament's summer break in early September.

With the countdown underway to the 31st October deadline, Johnson has a big task on his hands and we'll be watching his next steps closely.

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

The Cascade team of eleven administer cash savings on behalf of clients and depositors, who 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. If you have concerns about your savings during these times, please do get in touch.





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# GLOBAL GROWTH – CONNECTING YOUR WORLD TO OURS

People have always looked beyond their surroundings, looking to succeed in unfamiliar markets and expand their empires.

Unlike our ancestors, who sailed into the unknown, we now have a wealth of knowledge and access to technology making navigation a great deal easier. But despite these modern advances, running a successful business internationally remains a challenge, with each global market having its own risks and vast opportunities to explore.

At RSM we recently conducted a survey of middle market businesses and of the 200 companies we spoke to only 14 per cent are not considering international expansion in the immediate future, due to political uncertainty and the current economic climate. However, 70 per cent of the businesses surveyed have already taken the opportunity to expand overseas or are in the process of doing so.

If you're looking to build and develop your company in the ever-growing international market, the right knowledge, advice and guidance is key. There are different risks associated with each international market, so knowledge is crucial when navigating potential pitfalls and utilising opportunities along the way to help to make your business grow. Never assume things are the same year on year or country to country. The value of quality, tailored assistance and management is immeasurable but wholly necessary to ensure your business continues to grow globally.

Through our research, businesses highlighted three key areas to research prior to expansion into overseas markets: the local political environment, IT security risks and the potential local demand for products and services. With this in mind, and with global mobility becoming increasingly common, we have put together key considerations and practical advice to help you ensure that your business prospers from global growth.

In the next few issues of Northern Insight, we'll be looking at the following three key areas to explore before embarking on your international expansion, options for which should all be researched and planned thoroughly with experienced advisers.



Rachel Fleming

## Exploring the global economy

The first step you should take in your international journey is understanding and planning.

Economic uncertainty leads to business uncertainty and there is a lot of it to go around both domestically and internationally. The increase in trade tensions between major economies and the rise in political populism has impacted, either directly or indirectly, upon macro and micro economic indicators.

With this backdrop, it's hard enough to plan your business strategy in just one or two markets, let alone across continents, different time-zones and varied cultures. It's therefore vital to be aware and ready to act should key economic and geopolitical indicators change significantly in relation to your sector, industry or business.

Additionally, strengthening your knowledge of the markets before embarking on your international business operations will ensure that you make the most of the opportunities available to you. Understanding the macro elements of international business will prepare you for the challenges you will face and will help you to decide which markets will provide the biggest opportunity for you.

## Managing international compliance and risk

Once you've armed yourself with a strong understanding of the market to help you navigate an international expansion, you can then move forward.

Effective global compliance and governance are the second steps to ensuring your business is on the right path. A detailed and tailored look at both the risks and possible pitfalls of growth allows you to avoid common traps and be prepared for every eventuality.

Be sure to draw on existing, and build new, market knowledge. Link this knowledge to your compliance and risk management and allow it to inform your business strategy.

## Sustainable growth

Cross-border joint ventures have many different and complicated moving parts. Understanding the difference between expanding internationally and acquiring a business is just the beginning, so you'll need to be able to navigate the many options available to you and ensure you balance your business overseas effectively.

In addition to this, the recognition that a business is only as strong as its staff is key, so your employees are one of your most crucial assets. International growth will depend on the mobilisation and incentivisation of staff, making the right decisions for them and understanding any common concerns they may have. Understanding not only how to encourage your workforce but what makes them tick is also essential to a strong business.

Look out for the next issue of Northern Insight where we'll look at exploring the global economy in more depth.



For more information on how we can help you expand into international markets, please contact Rachel Fleming at [rachel.fleming@rsmuk.com](mailto:rachel.fleming@rsmuk.com) or visit [www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/global-growth](http://www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/global-growth).

# WHERE NEXT FOR INHERITANCE TAX?

Back in January 2018 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond called for a review of taxation and the first report was published in November that year.

Since then we have now had the 2nd report into Inheritance Tax (IHT). The review was undertaken by the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS).

The key recommendations were:

- Replace the current multiple system of gift exemptions with a single lifetime personal gift allowance, set at a sensible level;
- Reform the exemption for normal expenditure out of income or replace it with a higher personal gift allowance;
- Reduce the period during which lifetime gifts may become subject to IHT from seven years to five years, but abolishing taper relief; and
- Remove the capital gains tax (CGT) base cost uplift if an IHT relief or exemption applies on death.

Reducing the seven-year period to five years is a major positive step however scrapping taper relief could cause some concern, given that it creates a five-year cliff edge scenario. Currently with taper relief, if an individual dies within three years of a gift, the full amount of IHT is payable, and if death is within four to seven years there are tapered amounts to pay.

The CGT change is a little more complex. Currently when someone inherits an asset, the asset is valued at the date of death. However, CGT is not actually payable on death and any gain on behalf of the



deceased is effectively wiped out for CGT purposes.

The OTS believes that this complicates things and can cause people to delay business succession and so make decisions that are tax-driven rather than for commercial reasons.

As a result, the OTS wants the government to consider amending the rules so that, if an IHT relief or exemption applies, the recipient is treated as acquiring the asset at the historic base cost of the person who has died. This would be a massive shift for business planning in particular.

As part of the review the OTS has also looked at the use of AIM portfolios, trusts, life cover and pension planning. These are all useful tools when looking to mitigate inheritance tax. It doesn't actually make any high level recommendations here but there are areas that clearly will be investigated further.

#### So what next?

There's no obligation for the government to act on these recommendations - it's up to government and parliament to decide on this. We will of course be closely monitoring the situation for our clients.

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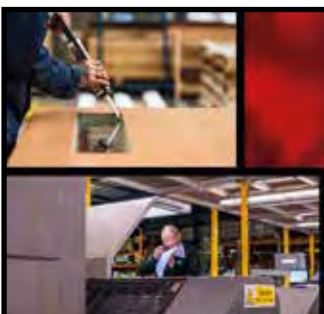


## NORTH EAST ACCOUNTANCY AWARDS

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

The evening which took place at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead was organised by Echo Events & Association Management, and celebrated a range of talented teams and individuals from firms and organisations across the North East. View all the photos at [www.accountancyawards.co.uk](http://www.accountancyawards.co.uk)





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# THE 14 YEAR RULE FOR INHERITANCE TAX GIFTS

This article is a little technical, but it covers an important and often ignored point.

One of the most common misconceptions people have about gifts is that a gift will pass out of an estate after seven years and that taper relief will apply in the meantime.

The rules, however, are far from straightforward and misconceptions easily occur. Therefore it is so important to seek professional advice when planning to reduce Inheritance Tax.

There are three ways to gift, an exempt transfer (ET), a potentially exempt transfer (PET) and a chargeable lifetime transfer (CLT).

CLTs are potentially chargeable to a maximum of half the death rate (i.e. 20%) when the value is transferred. Where the settlor dies within seven years, additional IHT may be due.

PETs are not subject to IHT at the time of the transfer of value but will become chargeable if the settlor dies within seven years of making the transfer.

Exempt transfers are immediately exempt and are not subject to the seven-year rule or potential 'entry charge' of 20% as with CLTs.

When creating PETs and CLTs as part of any IHT planning exercise with a clean gift history, creating CLTs before PETs will usually help to minimise any possible future IHT tax.

The normal issues that arise when considering gifts and IHT revolve around the element of control over how the money is to be used and protected from poor life choices.

ET's and PET's are straight forward, there is no control. CLT's and the use of trusts are where we consider how to protect our beneficiaries from themselves and potential predators.

However, for all those who now believe everything is straight forward beware the back shadow of PET's made where you do not survive the seven years. If multiple gifts have been made, when calculating what nil-rate band (NRB) is available on death, and



Peter Rutherford

whether additional tax is due on previous 'gifts', the calculation can require information from as far back as 14 years, not seven years.

An example; you gifted £200,000 into a Trust in August 2007 and £200,000 to your child in July 2014 and died before July 2021, the values of 2014 gifts will now be subject to IHT.

With the fourteen-year rule in place, you have effectively restarted the seven-year clock on the first gift as the initial seven-year period was not completed before the second gift was made. The value for the PET is now £200,000 + £200,000 = £400,000, which exceeds the NRB by £75,000 and is subject to IHT.

Taper relief may reduce the amount of tax payable however it is important to remember that the taper relief does not reduce the value of the gift, only the tax due.

And more, should an individual die within seven years after making a PET then the full value of that PET would be aggregated with the deceased's free estate to determine what, if any, IHT is due. The PET will therefore use up some or all the available NRB, potentially exacerbating or even creating an IHT liability for the estate.

Timing and planning of any gift are important. Equally, consideration should be given to alternative solutions to IHT planning such as Business Relief Schemes to potentially bring relief after just two years.

As always, it is essential to seek properly qualified advice.

If you would like more information, or would like to discuss your own position, then please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague, David Hughes.

**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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# JARROW ACCOUNTANCY PRACTICE HELPING CHILDREN ACROSS CONTINENTS



Andrew Potts

KP Simpson, a Jarrow based accountant, has recently been made a sponsor of global NGO Coaches Across Continents. CAC help educate young people in developing countries about health, diseases, leadership, and feminism, all through using soccer.

The accountancy firm is specifically supporting CAC's yearlong partnership with Association Internationale Femmes et Population, based in Cameroon. Their aim to help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality. They specifically do it with young people that are at risk in their community where there are social challenges such as equal access to education and healthcare and saving them from a life of substance abuse where drugs and alcohol are rife.

Over the last six months CAC have supported AIFP in creating an event on International Women's day promoting female empowerment. They have also helped create a play-based curriculum which helps address UNSDG five, helping teach the children about the importance of gender equality.

KP Simpson have already supported Coaches Across Continents by doing their accountancy at a lower price, so there is more money to

spend on helping the children.

This isn't the first time KP Simpson have helped a charity. Just earlier this year they hosted a Pink & Blue day to raise money for the Chloe & Liam foundation, set up in the memory of a young couple killed at the Manchester Arena bombing.

We always know that these companies will partner with charities and then never see anything come of it, this quote from the founder of CAC, Nick Gates, shows how valuable KP Simpson's sponsorship is for the charity, "On behalf of CAC and our partners AIFP in Cameroon we are delighted to work with KP Simpson CPA. Thanks to their fantastic support we are able to offer integral resources and consultancy to AIFP as they provide life-changing educational opportunities to at-risk youth in their community through play."

CAC are celebrating their tenth anniversary this year and have helped over 16 million people in over 110 countries by working with governments, corporations, foundations and community based-organizations. KP Simpson's sponsorship is sure to help make a difference in the lives of many young people far away from the North East.

For more information visit their website: [www.coachesacrosscontinents.org](http://www.coachesacrosscontinents.org)

And to keep up to date with KP Simpson visit their website: [www.kpsimpson.co.uk](http://www.kpsimpson.co.uk) or follow them on social media @KPSimpsonCPA.



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## SJOG APPOINTS BRAND NEW EXECUTIVE TEAM WITH HELP FROM UNW

SJOG Hospitaller Services has enjoyed growth over the past nine months following the appointment of an entirely new executive team, in a search led by UNW's Strategic Talent service.

First established in the United Kingdom in 1880, the registered charity SJOG has grown from its North East base to offer support to those in need across 35 locations in the United Kingdom.

We recently sat down with Paul Bott, who joined the organisation as Chief Executive in October 2018, to discuss the work they do, his experience working with UNW, and how the new executive team have dealt with the challenges that they

faced. When we spoke with him, the organisation was in the midst of a relocation to its new headquarters at Lingfield Point in Darlington.

When discussing the services that SJOG offer, Paul is particularly keen to point out the variety of support provided. He said, "We have a whole range of services across the country that support people with learning disabilities and complex physical impairments. It's very skilled work with

people that have high levels of need. We also provide support to the elderly, and are currently working with partners like the Salvation Army to deliver a number of services related to victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery."

Paul was appointed as Chief Executive of SJOG after a recruitment process led by UNW's Strategic Talent team, a niche service specialising in board level and senior finance recruitment. "I initially





missing in the charity. Lisa brought an established track record in care and support in both charities and private sector organisations.

Paul is adamant that the recruitment process was not about filling vacancies, but finding candidates with the correct expertise to address the challenges facing the charity sector. Reflecting on the transparency of Strategic Talent's approach, he adds, "The three of us came in with a clear understanding of the issues, and that was really useful in dealing with them quickly. What we achieved in two years in my previous organisation, we have done in six months here. We've refocused, rebranded, and restructured the organisation. We have a good plan and good people delivering on it."

"We've also organised our finance team and, through re-establishing relationships with the bank and amending our own reporting systems, have been able to address the financial challenges," Paul noted. "For the first time in six years, SJOG is starting to make small surpluses, and we've achieved that in a relatively short space of time."

Now that there is a clear strategy in place for SJOG, the team are looking to the future. On this subject, Paul said, "The quality of our services is continuously improving, and we're now better able to evidence that quality. This is supported by the development of our culture, concentrating on our five core values through our 'LOVED' programme – Living Our Values Every Day. By really considering how we can better support our staff and helping them to develop their skills, they will be able to support those in need better."

"Our mission is to effectively meet and address need where we find it, and we can't do that alone so we're continuing to build our partnerships and networks," Paul commented. "We're quite happy to work with people, or for people to get in touch with us, if they have any interests in the three main areas of work that we do: supporting older people, those with complex physical impairments, and people affected by human trafficking and modern-day slavery, which will be a huge area of growth for us."

With the executive team in place for six months, Paul considered the benefits of outsourcing recruitment to the Strategic Talent team. He said, "As a charity, using the team was an important investment for us, and it was one that really paid off. I'm not convinced that we would have been able to hire the quality of candidates that we did if it wasn't for Laura and Peter's vast experience and large networks across the North East. Because of their consultancy, we now have really skilled people who have helped put together a great strategy, and are delivering on that at a fast pace. I've already had conversations with Peter and Laura about the opportunity to do more work in the future – not just on senior posts, but to our Trustee Board as well."

L L P  
UNW

became involved with Strategic Talent as a candidate," he explains. "I established a relationship with both Peter Neal and Laura Dean, and found the entire process to be very personal. They were very knowledgeable and kept me well informed throughout, and we had very frank conversations about what the challenges would be."

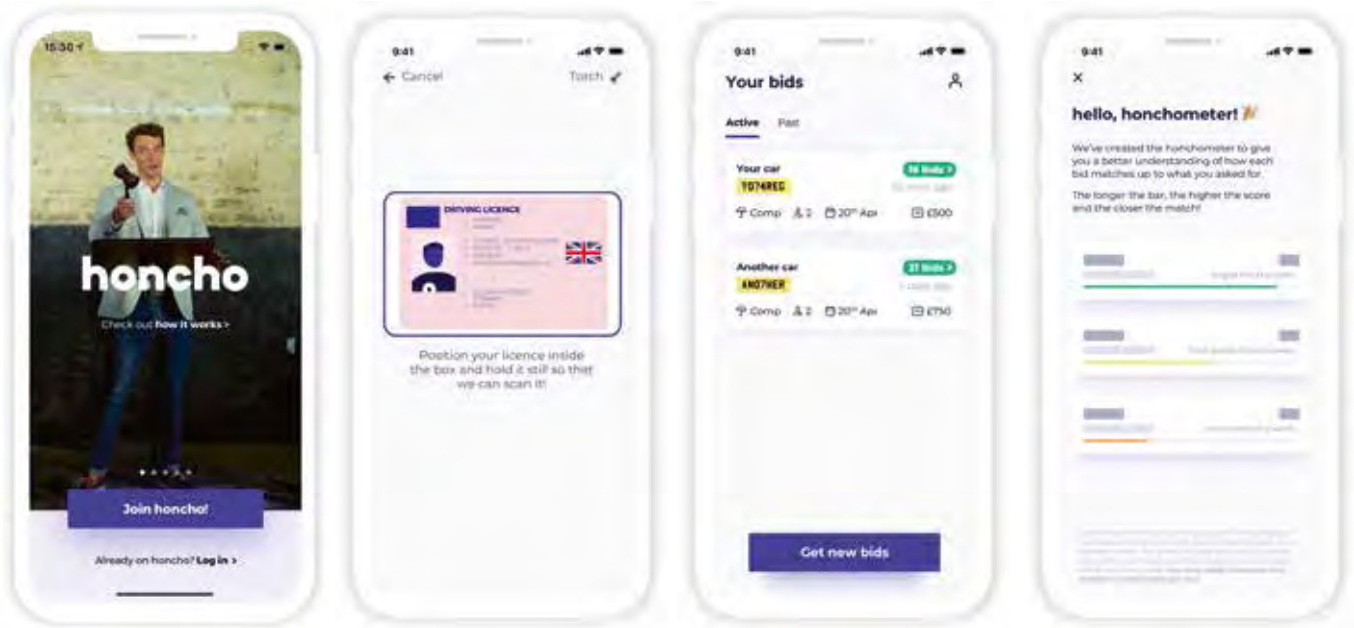
Following his appointment, Paul worked closely with Strategic Talent to fill the remaining vacancies on SJOG's executive team. "UNW completely understood what it was that we were looking for," he comments. "They were fantastic at getting down to the core of what our challenges were, and encouraged us to reflect on our options. We wouldn't have been able to access the wide range of credible and quality candidates we received without their skillset. We could have hired any of the candidates the team found us, but two particularly stood out as a great fit for the organisation."

Leanne Welford and Dr Lisa Alcorn then joined as Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operating Officer, respectively. Paul observed, "I spoke with Leanne about UNW and we both had a similar experience. As a candidate, the level of communication we had with the Strategic Talent team was of a different calibre to what we received elsewhere. They're very human, and they make you feel like you're important to them, rather than that you're just a number needed to fill a vacancy. There's a huge art to that, in terms of recruitment."

"Having the frank conversations about the issues that were affecting SJOG with Peter and Laura really helped us from the outset, because we knew what we were coming into," Paul noted. "They helped recruit a team with clear strengths and a wide range of experience. Leanne previously worked for a private equity backed engineering firm, so was able to offer a level of rigour and reporting that was

**For more information about UNW's Strategic Talent service, or to get in touch with the team, please visit: [www.unw.co.uk/strategic-talent](http://www.unw.co.uk/strategic-talent)  
If you would like to get in touch with SJOG if you have any interests in their three main service areas, please visit their website at [www.sjog.uk](http://www.sjog.uk)**

# MAVEN FUNDS INVEST A FURTHER £750,000 IN HONCHO



Follow-on investment will enable disruptive car insurance provider to further develop the platform and add new insurance product lines, supporting the creation of 10 jobs.

Maven Capital Partners has invested a further £750,000 in disruptive car insurance platform, Honcho Markets. The funding has been provided by Maven VCTs and Maven managed regional funds, the North East Development Capital Fund, supported by the European Regional Development Fund and the Finance Durham Fund, established by Durham County Council.

The follow-on investment will support the business as it enters its next phase of development to launch the product nationally, add new insurance product lines and make significant enhancements to its platform. The investment will also support the creation of 10 new jobs over the next 12 months, bringing the total staff numbers to 15.

honcho has developed an innovative platform which provides consumers with a transparent, cost-effective and engaging way of buying insurance products and services. Through honcho's reverse auction marketplace, insurance companies bid for consumers' business, which ensures a highly competitive quote and puts their interests at the heart of the transaction.

The firm raised £850,000 to fund its app launch last year, securing £200,000 more than it intended to raise and closing the investment window nine days early. Since the initial funding round the business has grown from strength to strength, adding three new developers to its technology operation and moving to larger premises within Salvus House at Aykley Heads to house its



growing team. Alongside its new appointments, honcho is working with Durham University to host paid internships for undergraduates looking to begin a career in technology development and other areas.

Michael Vassallo, Investment Director at Maven, said: "honcho's platform will provide a fun, engaging and more cost-efficient way of purchasing insurance products via its unique reverse auction marketplace model. The business has grown significantly since Maven first invested last year and Maven remains involved through every stage of the company's development. We look forward to working with the team as it enters its next exciting phase of growth."

Gavin Sewell, CEO at honcho, said: "The past year has been an incredible journey for honcho, and we are delighted to be able to today announce this significant investment to enable our next phase of growth. The team at Maven have been supportive

and engaged partners since early 2018, and we are encouraged by their continued belief in the honcho proposition, and in our ability to disrupt what is becoming an ever more distrusted market.

"Our growth plans are already well advanced as we look beyond our imminent full launch into the car insurance sector and into our next markets. These will include bringing honcho's disruption to the home and contents insurance market as well as to those of van and learner driver insurance. Our commercial team are already in negotiation with a number of potential market participants, including major household names, who see the value that honcho can bring to their businesses. This investment accelerates our next phase, and our talented team can't wait to get started."

Sarah Slaven, Operations Director at Business Durham, said: "Aykley Heads is fast becoming an important Fintech cluster for Durham, so it's extremely exciting to be able to support honcho, one of the leading companies in the sector. Their base at Salvus House offers them the room to grow and provides them with a prestigious location in the heart of the city. We've supported them from the beginning and really look forward to continuing to watch them fulfil their potential with the support of the Finance Durham fund."

The Maven investment team is looking for dynamic businesses, based across the North East, looking for funding to achieve their growth objectives.

If you're an ambitious business with plans to grow, contact Maven's local team or visit [mavencp.com](http://mavencp.com) to find out more.

# CREATING VALUE

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



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For more information please contact:

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# TODAY PLAYGROUP, TOMORROW UNIVERSITY

By Amanda Cowie, Chartered Financial Planner, Robson Laidler Wealth.



Someone (who shall remain nameless) said this to me about 18 years ago when their daughter, a similar age to mine, had just started playgroup. This mother, so upset about losing the company of her toddler, not long after started to home-school – successfully, huge admiration. At the same point, I practically jogged to the coffee shop with glee, time to myself!

When you read this article, results day will have been and gone and many of you will probably be helping your teen prepare for the Uni drop off. I remembered this comment when we dropped our daughter off at university a couple of years ago, and it struck me again, and probably millions of other parents, how quickly time goes.

When building up to this event, I realised just how expensive university is and how important it is to plan. My working life is devoted to helping my clients plan ahead and it's essential to "walk the talk" yourself. That's why we adopted some great software in our business a few years ago, so that we could help our clients see their financial future and give them confidence to make the big decisions. Before we "let loose" on our clients, we used it ourselves and could really see the benefits. I would advise anyone, who thinks their child might go into further education, to start planning for this when they start high school.

### What sort of things do you need to plan for?

- How much will they need to live on (excluding fees of course). It's easy for them to get a loan for the fees but the maintenance loan depends on your income). Don't be fooled into thinking a loan will cover all of it, and do you want them to have loads of debt anyway? If you have joint household income of £100,000 or above they can only obtain a £4,168 maintenance loan.
- The cost of university accommodation varies hugely from town to town – in somewhere like Belfast for instance, halls can be as little as £4,000 per annum whereas in somewhere like St Andrews it can be as much as £8,500. Do your homework as this might inform their choice.
- Also have a good look at rental costs for the following year when they move into a house/flat – in some towns this can cost less than University accommodation but in London, for instance, much more.
- Sit down and realistically discuss a budget for food/likely bills/clothes/going out and negotiate on what you feel is reasonable. This could be a challenging conversation!
- Set expectations – how full time is their course? Can they realistically get a part time job during term-time or just in the holidays?

This is just one of the 'big ticket' items that requires planning. There are many more.

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WEALTH

## LIFE PRESIDENT STATUS FOR NIGEL

A prominent resident from Northumberland has received a Life President Status for his commitment to youth work by Whitley Bay Young People's Centre and regional charity NE Youth.

Nigel Voules, 75, was honoured with the award at Whitley Bay Young People's Centre after being recognised for his 36 years' service, leading on numerous youth activity programmes for young people across the North East.

Nigel, originally from Ipswich, joined Northumberland Association of Boys Clubs in 1973, where his personality and enthusiasm made him a well-liked and respected Secretary of the association.

Nigel led on the development of a new county activity programme, which opened up a number of regional and national opportunities for young people.

Nigel led on the important rebrand in the 1990's, where the charity became Northumberland Association of Club's for Young People. The charity has since been renamed NE Youth in 2016.

A further landmark achievement for Nigel was that he supported members to take advantage of the early National Lottery funding and overseen the creation of three new buildings.

Current NE Youth chief executive Jon Niblo said: "Nigel is a much-loved member of the youth sector both regionally and nationally. The event



Sophie Morrow collected the award on behalf of her father from regional charity NE Youth.

was a fitting reward for his loyal service and valued contribution."

Nigel, who retired from his post in 2009 and was diagnosed with Alzheimers in 2017 and due to ill health, was not able to receive the award himself in person. His three daughters Kerry 44, Kimberley 42 and Sophie, 34 collected the award on his behalf.

Daughter Sophie said: "We are so proud to be accepting this award on behalf of my father, who

unfortunately cannot accept this himself due to his ongoing medical condition.

"His work was a true reflection of an inspirational man who always had everyone's best interest at heart, supporting and growing the dreams of youths of today to develop the local and national communities he supported."

During the Recognising Achievement evening more than £200 was raised for Alzheimer's Society.

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## CHRISTMAS PARTIES AT THE CTRL PAD

Have you got the impossible task of planning the Christmas party? Let us guide you in the right direction...

The CTRL Pad, located on the second floor of The Gate, is Newcastle's very own premier video gaming lounge, home to all the latest releases and retro classics, this venue is the ultimate place to party. No matter your age, gender or group size, The CTRL Pad has tons of fun for everyone.

Home to hundreds of video games and a fun-filled atmosphere, you can guarantee your staff a brilliant time to thank them for all of their hard work throughout the year. Battle it out in tournaments, gather into teams, or play solo against each other, however you want to party, The CTRL Pad's experienced hosts will be on hand to make sure everyone is involved.

The best part? It's totally budget friendly! With our basic package, you can enjoy two hours of gaming in the upstairs private arena with drinks, or, level up and get an extra 30 minutes play time, food and a prize-winning tournament of any game you please. Sounds good, right?

It gets better, our ultimate level 3 package, will get you all of the above PLUS unlimited access to the drinks vending machine and a pick 'n' mix stall as well as full use of a Polaroid camera and a free scrapbook to capture memories and take back to the office to reminisce.

With a 5/5 rating on TripAdvisor, The CTRL Pad is sure to provide a brilliant experience that will be one to remember. Forget the boring meal and over-done drinks, try something different this Christmas.



Book now by visiting their website: [www.ctrlpad.com](http://www.ctrlpad.com)



## A SENSE OF BELONGING

“Passionate People, Passionate Places” has to be one of the best phrases that truly reflects our wonderful region. The North East is filled with the very best of humanity; kind, caring, hospitable and friendly people.

**Our demography is diverse and beautiful. From bustling city centres to historic castles and keeps, sandy bays to green open expansive countryside's, whatever your mood, there is a space to suit.**

I feel a true sense of belonging in the North East. I will never forget when I went off to work in the big smoke, excited by the prospect of working in the capital, this magical place where fortunes were found, having finished my studies. Managing to secure a great job working in the Civil Service at the British Council and then at a cinema in the evenings. I made more money than I could waste on a weekend. However, even with friends and associates, it was still a lonely place.

People were suspicious if you tried to talk to them in the street or God forbid help them. And what is sad is roll forward a couple of decades and London, our great capital, has not changed. It is a great city, that we should be very proud of, but still an impersonal place.

After only a year I longed to get back to my North

East where I was born, where I belonged. And I did having become homesick. Maybe missing mums cooking and washing had something to do with it too.

A sense of belonging is one of the most precious and important aspects of life. We all want to belong to something, to somewhere and to somebody. And over the years I have joined various groups and networks, as one of the key lessons I had learned early on was to increase your network you needed to increase your net-work. Not only from a financial point of view, but specifically to learn from other people and gain insights, advice and guidance.

Having subscribed to a number of trade bodies and networks, including creating my own, the one that I have been particularly impressed with and gained significant value from, is the Institute of Directors (IoD). Having become a company director in 2003 it was the first trade body I wanted to join. A prestigious organisation that has been around since 1903 with a Royal Charter to support, represent

and set standards for business leaders nationwide.

My experiences of IOD events, the people involved and the development opportunities have been first-class. The organisation is inclusive, dynamic, forward looking and the largest business community within the UK.

In August I was appointed the IoD North East (North) Chairman which is a very proud moment for me. Not only does it provide a platform for us to celebrate all of the great current, and future, business leaders that we have in the North East on a national and international stage, but allows me to further my ambitions of working collectively, collaboratively and cohesively for the betterment of everyone. Our finest achievements are only possible when we come together to work for a common cause, proudly and passionately, providing us with a true sense of belonging.

(And now that I am part of the largest business community in the UK, I am sure every city, including London, will become more personable.)

**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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*We are delighted to support the upcoming Power of 10 ABC Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony. After sponsoring the event last year, we were very keen to be involved again in what I'm sure will be a fantastic night and a chance to get to meet lots of great new people.*



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# THE FASTEST GROWING COMMUNITY FOR TECH AND DIGITAL PROFESSIONALS IN THE NORTH

Launched just two months ago, DevHub North has taken the industry by storm.

DevHub North's July meetup was the first of its kind and welcomed professionals from the Technology, Digital and Marketing industries across the North East to get together in Newcastle City Centre.

Over 70 people headed to TusPark Eagle Labs on Grainger Street, Newcastle, to enjoy talks around the latest trends in Front End architecture, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Beers and soft drinks were provided along with a mountain of 'Pizza Punks' finest creations to refuel the delegates

over the course of the evening.

The event, hosted by DevHub North and Ronald James Group, is designed to bring together like-minded professionals from across the region to knowledge share and build relationships, providing a community 'hub' in the North East.

Moving forward, DevHub North meetups will occur bi-monthly, with the next get together planned for Thursday 12th August. The meetups will be accompanied by a series of DevHub North

webinars, resulting in fresh new content available to the network on a monthly basis.

To get involved with the network, contribute to the content, sponsor the event, or become a speaker, get in touch with [kelsey@ronaldjamesgroup.com](mailto:kelsey@ronaldjamesgroup.com).

The team are always on the lookout for valuable knowledge and insights to share with the DevHub network. The next event will take place in September, to sign up for a ticket follow @ronaldjamesuk on Twitter and LinkedIn, or visit...

[www.ronaldjamesgroup.com](http://www.ronaldjamesgroup.com)



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## AMBITIOUS NORTH EAST BUSINESSES ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR SCALE-UP ACADEMY

North East businesses with ambitious growth plans are being encouraged to apply for the Entrepreneurs' Forum's fourth annual Scale-up Leader's Academy.

Starting in January 2020, the Scale-up Leader's Academy delivers practical advice through a mix of inspirational events, team sessions and scale-up coaching workshops with Gazelle International Coach Ian Kinnery.

Exploring what it means to 'scale-up', the Academy prepares ambitious business owners to face the challenges of business growth, helping them to build an actionable 'One Page Strategic Plan' to achieve their goals.

For the first time, those interested in the Academy can attend one of two upcoming preview events held on Thursday 26th September in Newcastle and Friday 27th September in Darlington.

The preview events offer those interested in the Academy the chance to hear first-hand from its alumni about their experience and the Academy's impact on their businesses, as well as the course content and delivery. There will also be representatives on the day to share the different funding options available.

The events follow the third cohort's successful completion of the Academy earlier this summer

where business owners explored the key issues relating to business growth including people, culture, and strategy.

Among these was Andy Greener, founder of digital agency Komodo, who said, "I decided to get involved with the Scale-up Leader's Academy to unlock the potential in the business and push the scale of the company beyond where it was.

"The One Page Strategic Plan is something we're going to be able to work together on as a team over the next 3-6 months and on an ongoing basis to give us a framework from which we're going to build the future company and scale it out into its full potential."

Since launching in 2017, the Academy has supported almost 30 entrepreneurs across the North East to focus on achieving sustainable high growth by creating a blueprint for future business success.

The first cohort of businesses, which were the subject of research conducted by Newcastle University, reported a 66.37% increase in their business revenue since completing the Academy –

equivalent to an added average value of £668,413 per business.

Jonathan Lamb, Chief Executive of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, said: "The Scale-up Leader's Academy is delivering a toolkit of invaluable knowledge to business owners that allows them to prepare for rapid and sustained business growth.

"As in previous years, the feedback we received from our latest cohort has been fantastic and truly demonstrates the strength of the Academy.

"For each cohort, we refine the programme to reflect our members feedback and to address the key challenges faced by scale-ups in our region such as access to talent and leadership development.

"On completion of the Academy, our members are fully equipped with everything they need to grow sustainable companies with the ongoing support of their senior leadership teams. We look forward to welcoming another 15 ambitious entrepreneurs to the Scale-up Leader's Academy in the new year and encourage anyone who is interested to get in touch."

**Applications are currently open for the 2020 Scale-up Leader's Academy, to register your interest, please contact [info@entrepreneursforum.net](mailto:info@entrepreneursforum.net) or visit [www.entrepreneursforum.net/scale-up](http://www.entrepreneursforum.net/scale-up)**

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Ryan Davies

An Entrepreneur Interview with...

## RYAN DAVIES

Managing Director, Surge

When a company he co-founded closed its doors in 2018, it didn't take too long for perennial scale-up entrepreneur Ryan Davies to continue making waves in the growing tech sector.

In just one year, he has built up a £1m business in Newcastle's city centre with a rapidly expanding workforce that is on a path for continued success.

In the latest Entrepreneurs' Forum member interview, Ryan delves deeper into his entrepreneurial journey and his latest venture, Surge, which specialises in delivering technology solutions for a range of different organisations.

### Tell me about your background in business

I started my first business in 2010 with my business partner Michael, where together we built up a software development company. However, my business experience goes back much further, as I started working at 13 holding a number of jobs whilst I was at school in places such as a petrol station and a scrapyard. When I was about 15, I became part of a sales team that was importing cars from Europe. This job helped me through university and the development of a range of business skills, most notably, of course, sales.

### How was Surge founded?

Like many start-ups, Surge began as an idea discussed around the kitchen table. It's a great example of how entrepreneurs take an idea from conception and see it through. It's really satisfying to see something that started as just a conversation becoming a successful and sustainable business.

### In your own words, what is it that the company does?

Surge is a management consultancy, which engineers technology solutions for business clients. Our key values are helping businesses work smarter, faster and more efficiently, by improving business processes that help them to thrive. That could be anything from apps, to websites and all the design and architecture in between right through to support and hardware. Surge is also currently developing products which support medical compliance and incident logging for emergency response.

### What is your proudest moment to date with Surge?

Without doubt Surge reaching almost £1million worth of sales in our first year. This was achieved thanks to our fantastic team that work towards a shared vision and goals, which enables the business to flourish.

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

There are too many to mention, but I have learnt from them all. One of the most important aspects of developing a business is the ability to understand the mistakes that are made and how to overcome them.

No single experience in the world of business is the same, which is why our own mistakes allow us to adapt and grow in our own circumstances and environment. There are plenty of books on how to be successful, but nothing quite beats the experiences you gain when overcoming challenges, including mistakes that are made.

### What is Surge's USP?

Our unrivalled customer service experience. We pride ourselves on going the extra mile, always striving for the best possible solution by working closely with clients throughout the entire development, testing and roll-out process to deliver a bespoke and robust solution.

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

Our rapid growth is undoubtedly a reflection of our people. From our close-knit team of five, we're now a team made up of 12 talented developers and designers, who are committed to Surge's vision.

So far this year, we've recruited three new faces who have helped to further strengthen the team. It is because of the skills, expertise and aptitude of our team that we've been able to deliver an array of tech services to such a high standard, so we're careful to choose the perfect person for every vacancy we have, measuring all applicants against our core values.

Delegating responsibility and ownership of projects across the entire team, combined with trust from the senior team, is integral to how we work at Surge. We know that in order to attract and retain great talent, it comes down to culture. It's a case of doing more as an employer, building an environment where hard work is acknowledged, and people are encouraged to take their own initiative.

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

Throughout my business career I have enjoyed a lot of success working with great teams. There's a particular quote by Patrick Lencioni on managing teams that is my favourite, which has helped me frame everything from the ground up; covering core values, how we communicate and, most importantly, trust: 'If you could get all the people in the organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time'.

We've also defined our ten core values at Surge, which the team live and breathe by, and anyone who visits Surge's offices will see them pinned up on our walls, as well as our 'North Star'. The 'North Star' concept refers to the overarching goal a business has, but in the Surge offices you're more likely to hear us referring to it as our 'BFG' or 'Big F\*cking Goal!'

### What are the future plans of Surge?

Summer 2019 saw us allocate our first budget for marketing, having successfully generated all our existing clients so far from referrals and recommendations. We recognise the need to keep ourselves visible, which is vital for any tech services company, so our investment in marketing and promoting the company will allow us to continue to grow at a greater pace.

We're now embarking on an exciting transformation aimed at growing and servicing the successful product side of our business while continuing to build amazing products for our clients. I'm incredibly proud of what our team has achieved in just one year, and I can't wait to see our plans for Surge come to fruition in the coming years.

**Ryan Davies is a member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, a group of like-minded people who come together at inspirational events to share best practice, create valuable connections and help each other to grow their businesses. For more information, visit [www.entrepreneursforum.net](http://www.entrepreneursforum.net)**



## GREEN HYDROGEN – WHAT’S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

Currently, hydrogen is mainly used as a raw material in industry but is increasingly in focus as a medium for storing energy and as a fuel in the transport sector.

**Matt Doyle, Commercial Director of Jarrow-based Wescott Industrial Services, Offshore Wind Farm coating specialists, explains exactly what Green Hydrogen is and how we'll probably be hearing lot more about it in the future.**

Hydrogen, without going too much into the Chemistry lesson, is used extensively in the petrochemical industry, particularly in the production of ammonia for fertilisers and methanol for the plastics and pharmaceutical industries. It's also used to remove sulphur from fuels, as a welding gas and as rocket fuel to name just a few uses, but the exciting new technology is using Hydrogen as a clean fuel for transport, emitting only water as a by-product. If this technology develops as many seem to feel it will, demand will increase vastly, especially for hydrogen produced by green technology.

'Green' Hydrogen' is produced by running an electric current through water using an electrolyser powered by renewable energy. Whilst the technology for the production has long been around, the viability of the process depends on the demand for hydrogen as a fuel and the price of electricity for production.

Enter the growth in offshore wind farms, in particular, and the resultant fall in price of the electricity they produce. When the increasing requirement for energy storage technology to take advantage of electricity produced at times of low demand is also factored in, the production of 'Green Hydrogen' becomes viable and increasingly popular as environmental pressures for low carbon and energy efficiency increases on power companies.

It's early days for sure with very few large scale PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) electrolysers actually in production as yet, but the signs are all positive for the new technology whether the resultant hydrogen is used in the chemical sector or as fuel.

Japan, for example, plans to have 5.3m household

using hydrogen-based fuel cell micro CHP (Combined Heat & Power) systems by 2030.

In 2017, the EU awarded the H2FUTURE consortium the contract for the construction of one of the world's largest PEM electrolysis plants at Linz in Austria powered by hydro-electric green power. Construction is now complete and the facility is now under test, producing hydrogen primarily for use in the steel industry.

In May this year, Spain's Balearic Islands unveiled the Power to Green Hydrogen Mallorca project, promoted by the regional government and four private companies. The project involves what has been described as the largest renewable hydrogen plant in Europe intended for transportation fuel as one of eight regeneration projects in the Lloseta area of the island of Majorca.

Set to be operational in 2021, the green hydrogen production plant – powered by solar – will supply 10 MW worth of non-polluting energy to sustainable mobility vehicles, hotels in the bays of Alcúdia and Pollença, and to the industrial estate of Inca. The new facility will provide sustainable fuel for public and private transport, in the form of public transport buses and privately owned fleets such as rental and courtesy cars.

Closer to home, the 'Building Innovative Green Hydrogen systems in an Isolated Territory' (BIG HIT) has carried out the first refueling of five hydrogen-powered Renault Kangoo vans in the Orkney Islands with hydrogen produced via a 1MW PEM electrolyser with electricity from the wind turbines on the nearby islands of Shapinsay and Erday. Scotland, particularly, is looking very closely at the new technology as part of their Electricity and Gas Network Vision for 2039.

European power companies such as the German power giant, TenneT are now seriously researching the viability and practical engineering required to

create artificial islands off the North Sea coast to house PEM's, using offshore wind farm-generated electricity. This not only gets around the cable power losses or drop, especially high in the armoured cables required due to the extra heat coming from the residual current flow, and expense of transmitting large amounts of energy to the coast, but also uses up electricity produced at times of low demand. The hydrogen and synthetic methane can be transported through the existing mainland pipeline system.

One of the latest developments in the field is Norway's 'Deep Purple' project which takes the electricity-to-gas concept a stage further by investigating the viability of solutions which allow the energy from OWF's to be converted to hydrogen but stored on the seabed. This would enable a stable supply of renewable electricity to offshore oil and gas platforms (which currently generate their own electricity through carbon-emitting gas turbines) and hydrogen for other uses. PEM's and hydrogen storage tanks would actually be integrated within the turbine installations in one scenario.

Where the new technology will go to is anyone's guess and depends on a mix of economics and politics – what will Green Hydrogen and the resultant uses cost and how committed will local and national governments become to a green economy but there's little doubt we're going to hear a lot more about Green Hydrogen in the very near future.

Established in 2010, Wescott Industrial Services employ some 50 full time managerial, supervisory and multi discipline operatives with the ability to employ temporary onsite crews employed for specific projects to suit requirements. As of 31 March 2019 the company has enjoyed working over 1,000,000 hours LTI free. The company has their own training subsidiary at Jarrow providing rope access and safety training.

For further information please visit [www.wescottis.com](http://www.wescottis.com) or email Matthew Doyle, Commercial Director – [matthew.doyle@wescottcoatings.com](mailto:matthew.doyle@wescottcoatings.com)



# HORIZON WORKS APPOINTED TO STRENGTHEN PROFILE OF LOCAL CHARITY



L-R: Andrew Watts, chief executive at Groundwork South and North Tyneside and Antonia Edwards, account director at Horizon Works

Leading B2B marketing agency Horizon Works has been appointed by local charity Groundwork South and North Tyneside to strengthen its regional profile.

Part of the Groundwork federation of charitable trusts, the organisation offers a wide range of services which aim to improve South Tyneside and North Tyneside and the lives of their residents. Its divisions include TEN North East, an employment and training services provider; the Route2Work special needs educational programme; and Commercial Services which delivers landscaping, environmental improvements, and recycling services.

The organisation also manages cultural and heritage venue Jarrow Hall in partnership with South Tyneside Council, and West Boldon Lodge which is part of the National Grid Environmental Education Centre Network.

Horizon Works has worked closely with Groundwork South and North Tyneside to develop the organisation's marketing strategy, as well as integrated campaign plans for each of its divisions. Acting as an extension to its team, Horizon Works will raise awareness of Groundwork South and North Tyneside's services and offerings to beneficiaries, volunteers, stakeholders and the wider community through a range of marketing tactics including PR, digital marketing, social media

and targeted campaigns.

Founded in 2010, Horizon Works supports innovators in complex industries with a full range of marketing services. The company, which recently invested in a new 2335 sq. ft purpose-built headquarters on Northumberland Business Park, works across sectors including manufacturing, engineering, healthcare and life sciences, technology, professional services and the public sector.

Andrew Watts, chief executive at Groundwork South and North Tyneside, commented: "We believe that the most powerful transformations begin at a local level, and our team is committed to delivering impactful and sustainable economic, environmental and emotional change. The strategy and campaigns devised by Horizon Works have truly captured this ethos, as well as our diverse service offering.

"Horizon Works has already become an extension of our team, quickly understanding our needs and objectives. I am confident that our strategy and targeted marketing campaigns will further strengthen our engagement with volunteers,

stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as support us in further raising our profile and increasing service uptake."

Antonia Edwards, account director of Horizon Works, said: "We are delighted to be working with Groundwork South and North Tyneside to raise the profile of the invaluable support and services it provides. As Groundwork South and North Tyneside's marketing partner, we are looking forward to combining our strategic approach with creative thinking, to generate results for the charity and to promote its inspirational work."

Horizon Works has a diverse portfolio of clients including: INVISTA Performance Technologies, one of the world's largest integrated producers of chemical intermediates; Middlesbrough-based hydraulic engineering specialist Industrial & Marine Hydraulics (IMH); The Expanded Metal Company, an expanded metal mesh manufacturer based in Hartlepool; and Fera Science, a national and international centre of excellence for interdisciplinary investigation and problem solving across plant and bee health, crop protection, sustainable agriculture, food and feed quality, and chemical safety in the environment.

For more information visit [www.horizonworks.co.uk](http://www.horizonworks.co.uk)

# NEWCASTLE-BASED EDUCATIONAL TRUST AWARDED RESEARCH SCHOOL STATUS



Debi Bailey, Chief Executive Officer at Newcastle East mixed multi Academy Trust.

A mixed multi academy trust in Newcastle has beaten competition from over 200 applicants across the country to have one of its schools named as one of 10 new designated Research Schools.

Led by Walkergate Community School, which operates as part of the Newcastle East mixed multi Academy Trust (NEAT), the Newcastle Research School at Walkergate will receive £140,000 funding from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) over the course of three years as part of its Research Schools Network.

The EEF is dedicated to helping break the link between family income and educational achievement. Through its Research Schools, the independent charity aims to collate evidence-based research which will help to boost the quality of teaching in schools across the UK.

From September 2019, the Research School will become a regional hub for monitoring and assessing the impact of different teaching methods and strategies implemented at schools in the North East.

Projects highlighted for assessment by the EEF will vary in scope and complexity, but will all come back to the core theme of impact and how staff, pupils and communities might benefit from improved resources, training and infrastructure.

"We are delighted to have been successful in our application to become one of only ten Research Schools nationally," said Debi Bailey, chief

executive officer at Newcastle East mixed multi Academy Trust.

"As a Trust, we are very proud to serve an area of socioeconomic disadvantage. The opportunities that will be provided through the Research School Network for partnership working and innovative, evidence-based research, will be key for us to ensure that we continue to make a positive difference to outcomes for young people.

"We believe passionately that schools are the difference and collaborative, school-to-school support is the solution - a view strongly supported by EEF. We have had the privilege of supporting schools both within Newcastle and beyond for some time and we are delighted to have been given an opportunity to build on these successful relationships to the benefit of our pupils, staff and the local communities we serve.

"Our common purpose as a multi academy trust is to Nurture, Educate, Achieve and Transform and we feel the partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation and Institute for Effective Education will support us in realising this vision both within NEAT schools and across the entire North East region."

Sir Kevan Collins, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, commented: "We're at an

important moment in the potential of evidence to improve teaching and learning in England's schools, particularly for our most disadvantaged young people. Not only is this country now a world-leader in producing high-quality evidence, but there is also a large and growing appetite among teachers and senior leaders to use this research to underpin their school's improvement.

"However, too few schools have the time and resources to take on and implement evidence. The expanded Research Schools Network will engage with schools, local authorities, multi-academy trusts and other practitioners to improve teaching and learning in their region. They'll develop practical tools, training courses, professional development and coaching, all based on the best available evidence."

The bid to become part of the Research Schools Network was driven by Newcastle East mixed multi Academy Trust's ambition that the status would benefit all of its schools.

Established in 2017, the Trust, which alongside Walkergate Community School also includes West Walker Primary School, Tyneview Primary School, Benfield School and the Central Walker Church of England Primary School, collectively has over 2,000 pupils and employs more than 350 members of staff.

For more information, visit [www.neat.org.uk](http://www.neat.org.uk)

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## SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON FAIR PAY

Caroline Theobald, CBE, Director of the North East Initiative on Business Ethics (NIBE), explains why it's time to get serious about fair pay.

**If your business has ever been a victim of late payment, you'll know just how debilitating it can be.**

It can cripple your cashflow and have negative consequences for you and your staff in terms of morale and potentially delayed salary payments. And not only that, you feel embarrassed and very, very alone.

I know, because I've been there and I'll never forget it - it very nearly took Bridge Club Ltd under.

When we launched NIBE in 2013, late payment was the issue of most concern to our small-business audience and it continues to be an enormous worry.

Our intervention and challenge resulted in an improvement for a period in the earlier payment of bills and there continues to be litigation over matters connected to the unwillingness to pay.

Late payment causes 50,000 small business failures annually and while various Governments have tried to legislate/regulate against it, it's simply not getting better.

According to colleagues at the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in the region, the issue is actually getting worse. North East England Development Manager Simon Hanson tells me he gets two complaints a week from member companies.

Indeed, current research from the FSB shows a third of payments to small businesses are late. Some 37% of small firms have run into cash flow difficulties, 30% have been forced to use an overdraft and 20% cite a slowdown in profit growth. Shockingly, nine out of ten public sector suppliers say they have been paid late.



Caroline Theobald CBE

No right-thinking business person thinks that's acceptable. Late payment /unfair payment terms are wrong but because of the embarrassment factor and the fear of losing big clients or being penalised within a supply chain, a lot of the pain is hidden.

Poor payment practices hurt the UK's small business community and hold back the economy.

NIBE, the FSB and Sage (signatories to the Government's Prompt Payment Code) want to do something about that so our next North East Ethical Business Network on September 10th will bring people together to share their stories, get support and receive practical advice on how to avoid unfair payment terms.

At this event, held at Natwest Business Bank, we will focus on 'fair pay and the importance of paying your contractors on time'. We have an excellent line-up, with talks from Seamus Smith, EVP of Global Payments and Banking at Sage, and Simon Hanson, from the FSB.

There will also be an opportunity to network with

the other participants and to discover how they are striving to be more ethical in their approach to business.

But we want to do more than that. We want your help to raise the bar and start shouting about the heroes and devils. Companies, large and small, that pay on time need recognition for that.

It's heartening to see the Good Work Business Pledge being developed by North of Tyne Combined Authority to promote better business conditions and behaviour. We know that we have a supporter in Jamie Driscoll, new mayor of North of Tyne, to take action against late payment.

But if we're going to eradicate the problem in the North East region, encourage business growth and un-glue our economy, we need to do more and take responsibility ourselves as business owners. We need to put systems in place to protect ourselves, and be courageous when customers don't pay.

Join us on 10th September and help us raise our regional voice against late payers.

Visit [www.nibe.org.uk](http://www.nibe.org.uk) for more details. Tickets can be purchased from [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

# VALUE-BASED RECRUITMENT FOR EOTHEN HOMES

With care homes in Whitley Bay, Gosforth and Wallsend, Eothen Homes prides itself on going the extra mile for both residents and staff. HR Manager Denise Hall explains more.



Carer Lola and resident Ted

## What do you think makes Eothen Homes such a special place to work?

Eothen prides itself on having a good reputation for being person-centred and providing a loving, caring and homely environment for our residents. Our staff are committed to maintaining these standards and will often say they wouldn't work in a care home where they wouldn't be comfortable placing their own loved ones.

## Eothen pays its employees the Real Living Wage - why did you decide to do this?

We knew we had to raise our game within the sector and stand out from the crowd to attract and retain staff.

The Real Living Wage is independently calculated and based on the real cost of living; this is currently £9 per hour in the North East, higher than the Government's National Living Wage of £8.21.

Care workers are often portrayed as low-skilled, which reflects the pay rates across the sector. We wanted to change that perception and offered these pay rates to show our employees that we value their hard work and commitment.

## What other benefits do Eothen employees enjoy?

We recently introduced a Bupa cash back plan, where staff can benefit financially and access shopping discounts. We have long service awards, attendance awards and a company sick pay scheme.

## Is Eothen recruiting at the moment?

We are currently recruiting for several roles over all three of our North East homes. We believe that it takes a special person to care for others and have adopted a holistic approach to recruitment, with values and behaviour being very important qualities. We aim to attract people with potential

[www.eothenhomes.org.uk](http://www.eothenhomes.org.uk)

and not necessarily with experience, training and qualifications.

Our Christian values of empathy, openness, trustworthiness, honesty, equality and nurturing play a major factor in our recruitment process.

## How can people learn more?

Our website [www.eothenhomes.org.uk](http://www.eothenhomes.org.uk) is kept up-to-date with all of our vacancies. We often hold recruitment open days which we post on our Facebook page @EothenHomesLtd. Alternatively, we are always available for a chat.



Denise Hall

## THE PERFECT MAN TO MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM

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# df

David Fairlamb Fitness



## RDA HOST FIRST CHARITY GOLF DAY IN AID OF THE ANTHONY NOLAN TRUST

Award winning design and installation company, RDA recently held its first Charity Golf Day raising hundreds for blood cancer charity Anthony Nolan.

Anthony Nolan saves the lives of people with blood cancer and blood disorders by making lifesaving connections between people with blood cancer and incredible strangers ready to donate their stem cells.

Industry colleagues from across the UK joined the RDA team at Beamish Park Golf Club in Durham to enjoy a day of networking, golf and fundraising. The Club shares the beautiful Beamish valley with Beamish Museum and Beamish Hall Hotel.

On the day, guests were treated to a welcome reception followed by an afternoon of Golf, a BBQ Buffet and most importantly, a charity raffle which raised £1235.

Roy Addyman, Managing Director at RDA and Chairman at Beamish Hall Golf Club said: "What a fantastic day. It was great to see so many colleagues, many of whom had travelled some distance to be with us. I want to say a personal thank you to everyone who donated prizes and helped us to raise funds for such a deserving cause."

Beatrix Passmore, Community Fundraising Manager at Anthony Nolan, said, 'The work that RDA is doing makes such a big difference to people with blood cancer. It costs £40 to recruit each person to the Anthony Nolan register, so fundraising is a vital part of our lifesaving work. The more fundraising, we do, the more potential donors we can recruit onto the stem cell register, and the more lives we can save.'





# GOING BUT NOT YET GONE



Paul Nixon

Paul Nixon, a leading figure in the North East property landscape, has announced his forthcoming retirement from Henry Riley, a national multi-disciplinary construction practice where he’s worked for more than 31 years. Today he highlights the journey he’s enjoyed, a life-threatening incident and what the future holds.

**Why have you decided to announce your departure now?**

It seemed like the perfect time. Henry Riley celebrated its 30th anniversary in the region last year, coinciding with my own length of time with the firm, which I joined in 1988. The Newcastle office has never been in a stronger position – with an impressive client list across many different sectors. I also have a great right-hand man in Joel Neasham, who will step into the role when I leave. And at 57, I’d like to spend more time doing the other things I love.

**How have things changed during the last three decades?**

When we set up in 1988 Newcastle United were in the old Second Division and places like the Quayside and the Ouseburn were complete no-go areas. Since then, of course, there’s been fantastic regeneration along the Quayside, north and south of the river. More recently, the city centre has exploded with new build student accommodation and a more ‘user friendly’ and leisure focussed approach to the city centre. There has been a phenomenal transformation across the whole Newcastle city area.

**How has Henry Riley changed?**

Originally, much of our work was for major national

retail clients and for many years we were known as ‘Sainsbury’s QS of choice’. That gradually changed and in recent years we’ve seen significant changes in the diversity of sectors we work in and local projects we’re involved with. We’re a growing practice with residential, commercial, infrastructure, leisure and health clients along with our steady retail work.

**What have been your most memorable moments?**

Becoming a partner in 2002 and then an equity partner in 2007 were special moments. But I’m particularly proud of helping steer the firm’s diversification strategy. Less than 10 years ago, one client represented around 60pc of our business while today that has dropped below 5pc and we’ve still grown. I’m also pleased to have been one of the founding members of the relaunched North East branch of Interact, a professional property forum, where members network and secure new business.

**Any lessons learned?**

Always be willing to go that extra mile for a good client; it will pay dividends in the long run. Also, surround yourself with the best possible staff and fellow consultants.

**Any other career-defining moments?**

It was more a life-defining moment that’s had an impact on my career. It happened one morning in February 2015 when I was involved in a bad road traffic incident when cycling along Stamfordham Road, near the Jangling Gate Pub. Following the crash, I was rushed to hospital with life threatening injuries. I had a shattered pelvis, a severed artery and bad internal damage. My wife was warned to call our children to hospital because the medical staff weren’t certain I’d survive the emergency surgery. I did but it was a long, slow recovery which involved almost a month in hospital and five months at home before I could start a gradual return to work. Something like that gives you a different perspective on life.

**What next? How do you intend to relax?**

I’m not leaving Henry Riley until next March, allowing me to finish some projects and hand over others. The office is in a strong position and I have a fantastic successor in Joel Neasham. I will remain as a consultant next year but will find more time to spend with my wife Maura and family and devote to my other passions – cycling, travelling and the unpleasantness of the fortnightly trip to St James’ Park.

More details: [www.henryriley.com](http://www.henryriley.com)



## RDA CREATE NEW BUDWEISER BAR AT THE O2



RDA, an award-winning design and installation company was recently appointed by a leading contract caterer and AEG at The O2 to create a striking new Budweiser bar at The O2 arena.

As part of a programme to enhance the premium customer experience, the brief was to transform a concourse space on the Suite Level and design a bar that elevated the guest experience inside & outside the suite and encouraged a "social hub" atmosphere.

RDA's team worked alongside AEG's commercial team and Budweiser to design the bar & seating area. The designs are based on Budweiser's distinctive branding and specification, with an urban industrial twist which matched the aesthetic of the building.

The centrepiece is a long concrete bar with bespoke,



hand applied Budweiser logo and bowtie pattern on its front, red LED strip lighting, Edison bulbs illuminating the above bar gantry, an antique effect mirror and large neon Budweiser light above the bar.

In addition, RDA was tasked with ensuring that the layout and equipment in the Suite Level's back of house "pantry" spaces, allowed for efficient operation on event nights.

Installation involved considerable re-modelling of the two pantry areas using both new and existing equipment. Coldroom's were installed in both, along with service hatches for the Food and Beverage

teams. RDA's team also had to work within the operational and safety parameters involved with a venue of this kind.

Nick Bradley, Director at RDA said: "This is the third project we have completed at The O2. The Bud Bar was tired and underused, so its transformation has made it a destination in its own right, enhancing the overall executive experience on suite level."

The O2 is the world's most popular music and entertainment venue. Since opening in 2007, it has been visited by more than 70 million people and in 2017 was named Pollstar 'International Venue of the Year' for the tenth time.

For further information on RDA visit [www.rdalimited.co.uk](http://www.rdalimited.co.uk) or call 08448734993.



*In our series of features, we explore the dynamics of family life in business.*

## ...Keep it in the family...

On the face of it husband and wife team Karen Lee and Maurice Duffy are polar opposites. He is from a family of 12 from the West of Ireland and she is a single child raised on Tyneside. They are totally different in nearly every way but they have found a way to build successful businesses together.

### **Maurice says:**

The year was 1998 and I was working as European Director at Nortel when I was told by HR, they had met someone I must hire as they just knew I would love her. Little did I know then that I would marry her and we would have a beautiful boy.

Karen came into my life as a ball of energy after working for John Major's office. Bright orange hair, huge positivity and very cosmopolitan outlook versus a gregarious West of Ireland farmer's

son, which soon caused some cultural comedy. To this day, I still wonder what she saw in this Irish man. In fact, for the first three meetings she thought I was Scottish!

Now, being one from an Irish family of 12 with three teenage kids of my own, versus Karen, a single child from a very small, peaceful family, challenged the equilibrium and serenity of Karen's life then and has made for many interesting episodes along the way. Karen and I first decided to go into business together, fell in love and got married.



Karen adds so much to my life. Bravery, fearlessness, sociability, a willingness to not allow others to deflect or delay her, and a huge calming influence on my volatility. She is a magistrate, politician, legally trained and one of the best sales people I know. She sees the best in people.

I am a misfit who has been lucky enough to find a safe harbour. It's unknown how many times she has saved me from myself. In business it can be difficult to work with your partner. She bosses me around and over a drink in the evening I get told!

The business becomes your whole life. Yet Karen manages to drag me away from it and has taught me some balance and is a perfect foil to my madness.

I would have achieved nothing without her and my life would have been dull and ordinary without her influence and magic.

**Karen says:**

Maurice is often called 'a big animal in any jungle'. I didn't know what people meant by that until I went into business with him in the late 90s. I was happily working in London, in Great Portland St, as a headhunter, recruiting speech writers for 10 Downing Street and big corporates like BT.

One day I took a call from another headhunter! They wanted me to meet 'this Irish exec at a Telecoms firm in Maidenhead'. He was building an internal global 'talent management team' and he wanted me to drive it.

The rest is history, as they say. We went into business together within six months of meeting. When you're in business with someone and you're

generally driven, ambitious and a little obsessive, you lose sight of what you're doing. I was consumed by work. You keep thinking 'in a few months time I'll get back to being a good wife and spend more time at home'. That never happened. I was traveling the world every week! I'd desperately wanted 'a life less ordinary' and boy did I get one.

It's been a colourful and eventful journey. Life with Maurice has never been boring! From coaching the very top business people in billion-pound projects around the world, to working with sports stars like Australian cricketer, Steve Smith, through Sandpapergate, to dealing with top politicians and the traumas they create, to the untold charity work he does in schools in preparing kids for a different world where he feels education fails them, there's an intensity and kindness to living and working with Maurice.

Most people see the tough exterior and judge him on it. Few see the chances he takes on people and the trust he places in them. I see him so often knocked back by people he gambles on, yet he continues to try and save people's careers and lives, or give them a lift, often at a big cost to himself.

There is huge spontaneity to him, also. For example, Maurice came home last year and told me. 'I've bought a Land Train'!! We do certainly live what I call 'a life less ordinary' here in Tynemouth. It can be tough at times. I hate to say it but Maurice is a very smart, relentless, driven and determined character. A Doctor, a Professor, a relentless learner with a ceaseless thirst for knowledge, he never stops!

He's a mindset coach, so he sometimes drives me nuts with his intensity. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

**On September 18 Maurice is hosting 'Elite Performance' in Newcastle, featuring premiership footballers, politicians and high achievers from the corporate and public sectors. To register go to [www.mauriceduffy.com/events](http://www.mauriceduffy.com/events)**



## SUMMER BBQ CELEBRATION

A fundraising Summer BBQ Celebration was hosted by Sam Hackett in Gosforth on 21st July raising funds for Child Rescue Nepal, a charity close to her heart.

'So many people fund-raise for so many good causes, I wanted to do something different, and thought that having a party to celebrate just how fortunate we are to live such safe lives would be a fun way to raise some well needed funds.'

The day saw delicious burgers and sausages made by Charlotte's Butchery, cooked on the amazing new Grillique outdoor cooking station. There was live music from Lottie Appleton. It was a great fun celebration and lots of funds raised!

Sam is going to Nepal in November, trekking to orphanages and schools sponsored by the charity.

If anyone would like to donate please go to [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/samantha-hackett5](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/samantha-hackett5).





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# EVER WONDER WHY YOU CAN'T FILL A JOB VACANCY?

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, talks about the most common reasons why a business could struggle to fill their job vacancies.

It's an age-old conundrum when your company is hiring, you have what you believe is an attractive job opportunity, but you don't seem to be able to find the right person.

When recruitment is an add-on to your full-time job and you're struggling to fill a vacancy, it can be difficult to work out why, so, here are five things that could potentially be holding you back.

## 1. Market Knowledge

If you don't know the recruitment market it can be very difficult to know whether what you are looking for is realistic, let alone assess the quality of a candidate's CV; particularly if you're hoping to bring new skills into a business. Without this essential insight, it's easy to miss people who are worth investigating further because they don't appear to tick all your boxes at first glance.

## 2. Company Culture

In a candidate-led recruitment market, the importance of your company's culture cannot be underestimated. The best people often have choices when it comes to deciding on their next employer, so the thought of working for you should not only be appealing, it must be projected clearly, honestly and consistently at every stage of the recruitment process.

## 3. Employer Brand

The view you have of your company as an employer might be very different from your reputation so, if you don't already know what people are saying about you as a place to work,



Bryony Gibson

then you need to find out. If you have high staff turnover, then you must build a plan to proactively influence people's perceptions in order to attract good people to join your team.

## 4. Salary & Benefits

Not always the deciding factor, but the compensation package you offer will be an important consideration for future employees and must be fair and reasonable as a bare minimum. Try to get your hands on a current industry salary survey or seek some advice to ensure you stay in-line with market levels and your benefits remain attractive.

## 5. Sales Technique

If you want to attract the best people, you must clearly demonstrate why they should join your team and, while you are assessing candidates, throughout every stage of the recruitment process they will be forming opinions about you. Start with a well-crafted job description and targeted advert. Think carefully about who will field enquiries, as their communication skills will

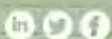
be crucial to the way you are perceived. Each interview should be treated as a two-way process, giving you the opportunity to establish common interests and explain why someone should want to work for you.

If you have been struggling to fill a vacancy and don't have a recruitment strategy or plan in place, then you need to make time to get one or, at the very least, speak to a specialist recruitment consultant.

There are so many potential touchpoints during the recruitment process that it often feels difficult to find the time to manage them all, especially if this is on top of your day job.

If I had to offer you only one piece of advice, it would be to make sure you dedicate time to engage and communicate with potential new recruits. Keep in touch with people regularly throughout the recruitment process, into their notice period and beyond, until they join your business. A lot can go wrong in recruitment and making someone feel like the decision they are making is the right one will make all the difference.

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](mailto:bryony@bryonygibson.com) | (0191) 375 9983.



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## ROSETTE OF APPROVAL FOR MORPETH RDA FOLLOWING AKZONOBEL MAKEOVER

A popular North East horse-riding school which provides therapeutic horse-riding sessions for children and adults who suffer with multiple and complex learning and or physical disabilities has been given a new lease of life thanks to a generous donation from AkzoNobel Ashington.

The Pegasus Centre, home to the Morpeth group of the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), received over 100 litres of specialist paint from the manufacturing giant to refresh its indoor arena and stable block ahead of hosting a major regional competition.

Having been selected to host the 2019 Northern Regional Championships, staff and volunteers at The Pegasus Centre set about making the Centre ready to welcome riders of all ages and abilities from RDA groups across the North East and Cumbria.

One of the trustees at Morpeth RDA, had read about another project that AkzoNobel had been involved with locally and decided to reach out to them about supplying some paint.

"We're very fortunate to have such a fantastic facility here in Morpeth but in order to make the best first impression possible ahead of the competition, we wanted to tidy the place up a bit," said Sue Thompson, trustee at Morpeth RDA.

"The paint provided by AkzoNobel completely transformed our indoor arena and stables, we were also able to paint the outside of our main barn using special masonry paint which has made a big



difference to the overall look of the Centre. Seeing the Centre looking so bright and clean really lifts the spirits of our volunteers but it also has a positive impact on the children and adults that we support with riding and of course, our horses and ponies too."

Alex Wardle, process engineer at AkzoNobel Ashington, commented: "AkzoNobel believes in the power of colour to transform lives. We are committed to helping community organisations like the RDA, and showing the world AkzoNobel

Cares, with donations of paint and volunteering time wherever possible to help uplift communities, change behaviours and make living and working spaces more fun, inspiring and enjoyable.

"We were delighted to make a donation of paint to the Morpeth RDA group and we're thrilled that the makeover has been so well received by staff, volunteers and the people who use The Pegasus Centre."

For more information about AkzoNobel, visit [www.akzonobel.com](http://www.akzonobel.com) or for more details about Morpeth RDA, visit [www.morpethrda.com](http://www.morpethrda.com)

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Michelle Rainbow

## WILL THE UK'S NEW EDUCATION SECRETARY DELIVER FOR THE NORTH EAST?

As the new Education Secretary takes up his post, North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Skills Director, Michelle Rainbow, addresses the priority areas for skills and education in the North East.

**On 24 July, Gavin Williamson was named as the new Education Secretary, taking his seat on the front benches in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's cabinet.**

As well as heading up the Department for Education, Mr Williamson has responsibility for skills and apprenticeships – a portfolio previously overseen by Anne Milton.

Mr Johnson has been quoted as saying that his job is to make sure that children have access to a "superb" education, regardless of where they live in the country. So when it comes to children and young people here in the North East, what are the key changes we need to see in terms of support for education and skills development in our region?

Firstly we have to address the issue of funding. As he entered Downing Street, Mr Johnson pledged an extra £4.6 billion for schools by 2022/23. Any news of extra funding is always welcome, but we need to know how this funding will be allocated.

We know that many pupils in our region face significant social challenges compared to their peers, and these challenges can often lead to lower

levels of achievement. In the North East, as well as better funding right across the education system, we'd like to see extra targeted funding to support the pupils that need it the most.

Gavin Williamson has campaigned for fairer funding for schools in the past, so I hope that as Education Secretary he'll prioritise work to close the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.

Also on our list of priorities for education in the North East is a focus on Further Education, particularly around the introduction of T-Levels.

Last year, Williamson's predecessor Damian Hinds set out his vision for a world-class technical education system, with T-levels offering a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience.

The introduction of this new qualification will offer 16-year-olds a choice between academic and technical education, potentially leading to a generational skills-shift and helping to grow our economy and productivity as well as helping the UK to compete globally.

However, the success of T-levels is dependent on

the support of employers who'll help to develop and deliver them. Mr Williamson and his team need to help employers to understand the opportunities that T-levels can bring and how they can contribute to the success of our long-term economic future.

Next we turn our attention to teachers. Of course, the success of our schools is down to our fantastic teachers and I hope that Mr Williamson's previous experience as a school governor has given him an insight into the importance of investing in the recruitment and retention of good school staff. And it's not only about attracting high-quality trainee teachers to the profession. It's also important that we hold on to our experienced teachers by providing the right ongoing support and working conditions.

And finally, more than anything, the school system needs stability. Mr Williamson is the fifth Education Secretary in five years and our schools have seen many changes during that time. Giving them stability, alongside the freedom and financial support to get on with what they do best, is vital if we are to provide children and young people with the superb education they have been promised.

Visit [nelep.co.uk](http://nelep.co.uk) to find out about the North East LEP's work with schools and employers in the North East.





Group CEO Steven Rawlingson welcomes senior appointments to support USA expansion.

## NEWCASTLE RECRUITMENT FIRM CONTINUE EXPANSION WITH CHICAGO OFFICE

Newcastle head-quartered energy and rail recruitment firm, Samuel Knight International, recently announced plans to extend its US operations with a new head office in Chicago, as the need for industry talent looks set to grow.

**A fast-rising star in the recruitment world, Samuel Knight's impressive growth is testimony to the unrivalled services, people and project solutions the company has provided to clients.**

Demonstrating phenomenal growth since its formation, the business was awarded significant investment in early 2019, from Gresham House Ventures, using funds from the Baronsmead Venture Capital Trusts which will fund Samuel Knight's near-term growth plans. Plans include increasing headcount at the offices in Bristol and London and adding local talent to the Newcastle team, from entry level graduates to experienced consultants.

Additionally, the business has appointed several senior key team members to support and drive forward the US expansion and is now actively hiring for both UK and US office locations.

David Allen, Associate Director for the US renewable energy division, said: "The US energy market is set to boom, particularly within the renewables market. We already have long term, established relationships with our American clients and having a presence on the ground in the states will be extremely advantageous to our operations, allowing us to strategically support clients and candidates alike within the country."

The recruitment drive is geared up to support expansion across the energy and rail space given increasing demand from the industry. Samuel Knight are focusing on achieving greater market share and boosting awareness of the brand through targeted marketing and business development. The investment will also allow Samuel Knight to further invest in technology to continue innovation within the business.

With a strong track record in supporting some of the world's most exciting engineering projects in over 30 countries, the £16 million pound (\$20 million) turnover business plans to extend this expansion across Boston, California and Atlanta to support employment as demand for niche energy and rail professionals increases in the States.

Commenting on the move to the US, Steve Rawlingson, CEO of Samuel Knight and President of Samuel Knight Corp, said: "We know from experience that the States offers a wealth of opportunity for rail, energy and infrastructure recruitment and as we've seen demand for our services increase in the US, expanding our physical presence across the States made complete sense. Now really is the time for excellent growth for us which is why we're investing in these four new offices - with the potential for more to be opened further down the line."

For more information about Samuel Knight International visit [www.samuel-knight.com](http://www.samuel-knight.com)



Chris Milnes

# YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

## CHRIS MILNES

Managing Director, BMC Recruitment

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

I'm a boomerang! I grew up in the suburbs of Durham and then left the region for higher education and subsequently, I have lived and worked in various places including Dubai and London. I moved back to the region four years ago and whilst I don't have much of a North East accent I am exceptionally proud to call it home.

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

In the North East, talent in business is exceptional. Being a businessperson here means investing in this regional talent both through the services we offer at BMC Recruitment and in taking the time to get to know and forge meaningful connections with other businesses here and the people that drive them. We are a region with a diverse offering and outstanding capabilities in a variety of industries and it's important as a businessperson to also be a protagonist of our peers. Ultimately, being a businessperson here means fully immersing yourself in the sense of support and community locally and being proud of contributing and adding value to the business community.

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

The North East is the best place I have lived because of the sense of harmony between work and life. Based in the heart of the city by day for work, my wife and I live in the countryside and enjoy long walks with our dogs at weekends, exploring the glorious North East; it's the "best of both Worlds".

### **Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?**

We operate on the basis of what is best for our candidates and clients and where they feel most at ease. I personally am a fan of locally owned restaurants and pubs if the meeting is informal. We do hold meetings at our Milburn House office, which goes down especially well with lovers of Art Nouveau!

### **Where do you like to eat out in the region?**

Completely randomly, there's a fantastic Indian restaurant just off the Bigg Market, Raj Tandoori, which might not sound like the most salubrious of locations, but the food and the service is absolutely top notch, a bit of a hidden gem. Whilst I do go quite a bit, I'm not a local yet, I think I've got another ten years or so before I qualify.

### **Where do you like to unwind within the North East?**

Recruitment really is 24/7, so getting down time with the family is so important. We've recently bought an OS map of

"Outstanding Circular Walks" in the region, and we're currently working our way through that. In addition to this I'm still trying to play rugby (something I think I've been saying since I was 14!), and we're in the throes of pre-season. It's good "craic", inclusive, and blows the cobwebs away at a weekend.

### **Are the people really friendlier?**

Everywhere I have worked people have been reciprocally friendly as I have always been labelled that person who "gets on with everyone" but there is something to be said about Northern charm. People here are happy to spare time to chat and get to know others, which I think is why they are viewed as being friendlier; they take a genuine interest in you and what you're up to.

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

I spend a lot of time on the train travelling to see clients and candidates nationally and every time I return home there are two that really jump out. Firstly the view from the viaduct at Durham, which shows the history of our region, and, secondly, the view down the River Tyne (in its vibrant glory) when coming back in to Newcastle, which matches the magic of any other major UK city.

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

At BMC, we work with clients nationally and internationally. The World is a small place, thanks to technology and transport links! Undeniably, the local economy here in the North East is smaller than some, but our ability is mighty. We're hardwired to work hard, and I feel there is as much opportunity here than anywhere else in the UK, if not more, which is evidenced in us having one of the fastest growing start-up communities than anywhere else in the UK.

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

I've worked in Liverpool, London and in the Middle East and Northern Africa, and now here at home. Everywhere is different with slightly different nuances, but at the end of the day people are just people, trying, on the whole, to do the best for themselves and their families. You're never going to be able to please all the people all the time, but spending time understanding individuals and what motivates them enables you to get an insight and figure out how you can help them, and develop mutually beneficial business relationships.



## CXY PARTNERS WITH EQ CONNECTS

On October 15th, the North East will play the part of host to EQ Connects at the Gateshead and Newcastle Hilton Hotel. This immersive conference is the first of its kind and will focus on emotional intelligence and the benefits that developing such like can bring to yourself and your organisation.

### But firstly, what actually is Emotional Intelligence and why is it important in business?

Emotional intelligence (also known as emotional quotient or EQ) refers to having the ability to recognise and understand emotions and their impact on behavior and attitudes.

EQ is becoming increasingly vital to humans and business' success as the future of the workplace becomes increasingly digital. The World Economic Forum, ranked EQ sixth in their list of top ten skills that employees will need to possess in order to thrive in the future.

Psychologist Daniel Gorman tells us that there are 5 core components to EQ which are:-

- Self awareness
- Self regulation
- Internal motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

It affects progression at work, ability to interact with the team, peers and the experience your customers have with you as well as having an impact on physical and mental wellbeing. This then



impacts on everyday decisions employees need to make such as hiring, firing and promotion.

It makes sense that leaders and managers with a high level of EQ, and therefore already in tune with and aware of their own emotions, will help their teams to collaborate more effectively. Those teams can then go on to develop an emotional intelligence of their own which in turn filters down to the organisation's customers.

EQ Connects is a fantastic opportunity for leaders

and professionals to share ideas and experiences and learn about new tools and fresh thinking around emotional intelligence, ultimately helping to build and develop a happy sustainable and thriving workforce, customer base and ultimately organisation. EQ Connects will host internationally renowned keynote speakers and EQ thought leaders from across the globe. The conference will be chaired by the BBC's Charlie Charlton and speakers include EQ thought leaders Joshua Freedman (CEO, Six Seconds), Martyn Newman (CEO, RocheMartin) and Gary Hosey (El Company) amongst others.

Several celebrities will also be making an appearance to discuss about how they use EQ as the tools of their trade, including Robert James-Collier (famed for his role in Downton Abbey) and Rory Underwood (England Rugby & RAF Pilot).

The packed program also includes a full day of training by the very best in the industry and a range of fun, experiential sessions will help you to strengthen and develop EQ understanding and apply the latest EQ tools in action.

For more information and tickets to the event please visit [www.eqconnects.com](http://www.eqconnects.com)

# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

## MARIE ERRINGTON

Office manager, Hodgson Sayers



### What were your career ambitions growing up?

My career ambitions were probably like most other children growing up. I was certainly not set on a particular career path, I thought I had plenty of time and the world was my oyster. My weekends were filled with activities including climbing, caving or walking. So, as a young child, I imagined myself either as a designer, a pilot or working outdoors.

On completing my A Levels in Business and Accounts my focus changed again. I longed for variety and to learn something different. I went back to college to complete a two year uniformed services course, where I spent a lot of time attaining new skills for a career in the services, pushing myself to the highest fitness levels and completing a half marathon "Yomp" with the marines.

### Tell us about your role at Hodgson Sayers

Fast forward and today I am office manager for Hodgson Sayers, a title which some may find strange having had so many different dreams growing up. Hodgson Sayers has been a big part of my life and has assisted in my personal development for the past fifteen years.

My role involves supporting all business functions, working alongside our managing director and management team.

### What services does the company provide?

Hodgson Sayers is a construction company with its history steeped in roofing and this year we are celebrating 40 years in business, which I think is a testament to the business ethos and commitment of our executive chairman, Billy Hodgson, managing director, John Sayers, the management team and our stakeholders. Looking to the future, we are firmly set on expanding our client base, along with our continuing development within the utility security sector.

### What's your proudest business achievement?

One of my proudest business achievements is being part of the team that helped secure the British Chamber of Commerce National Winner "Business of the Year" in 2015.

### What challenges have you encountered?

Being a woman in construction, you are sometimes overlooked or not given the respect you deserve. I have been very lucky to work for a business that has seen my skill set and not my gender. However, I have encountered issues throughout my time working

within the industry, with people having preconceived perceptions about my role or my intelligence based upon my gender. We are glimpsing small changes in attitudes but it will take time to overcome old fashioned viewpoints that "construction is a man's world."

### How has the industry changed since you arrived at the company?

Changes is constant, with continual business development required to be sustainable and meet industry demands. Changes along the way have included enhanced compliance levels, increased procurement requirements, communication improvements, technological advances, client demands and corporate governance.

### Who are your heroes in and out of business?

Where governments and others have failed, Sir David Attenborough has managed to provide a voice for the environment, changing perceptions and attitudes, highlighting environmental issues and tackling plastic pollution, so for that he will forever be a hero.

### Is there a mantra you always aspire to do business by?

I am not really a one for mantras, but as a business our guiding principles are honesty, decency and integrity.

We believe operations should be conducted in an open, honest, respectful and collaborative manner. We target to continually exceed expectations by building positive relationships, going that extra mile and giving back to the communities in which we operate.

### Which fictional character do you most relate to?

I am not sure who I most relate to but if you were to ask the people around me they would probably say either a "Tazmanian Devil" or "Road Runner" as I am a little crazy when annoyed and constantly on the go both at home and at work.

### How do you like to unwind?

There is nothing better than being outdoors in the countryside or at the coast to relax, getting back to nature puts everything into perspective.

After a long day in the office I always find that coming through my front door and being mobbed by my excitable Cocker Spaniel helps to snap me back to reality and take my mind away from the office.

Other than that I enjoy spending quality time relaxing with my family and friends. I also love pottering in the garden and will never say no to a night out my friends dancing into the early hours, it's all about work life balance.

## FANNING THE FLAME OF SUCCESS

In 2011, John Savage was working for a national heating and plumbing merchant. Things were good, business was buoyant, and he was plainly doing a great job.

**But at the back of John's mind was the nagging desire to set up his own business. His favourite part of working for a national firm was dealing with customers at the trade counter.**

So, he took the plunge and set up Flame Heating Spares. He would supply spares for boilers and work closely with the heating and plumbing trade to provide them with equipment, tools, radiators, pipes, thermostats etc.

It was the back end of the recession, so it proved a difficult time.

"It was tough," said John, "but it meant that the company had to work hard to give customers great service and top-quality products at a competitive price from the very start. Looking back, it was probably a good thing because we couldn't take anything for granted. We learnt a lot in a short space of time, and it showed the importance of having knowledgeable staff who cared about the business and went the extra mile to help customers."

Fast forward to 2019 and John's Flame Heating Group is the fastest growing Heating & Plumbing merchant in the North East of England, operating eight trade counters throughout the region, three in Scotland and one in the North West at Carlisle.

Over the next couple of years, John is aiming to add four more branches to the company and expand his workforce beyond the 70 who currently work for the business. Flame Heating Group has also moved to new headquarters in Boldon.

So, how has the company developed since he opened his first trade counter in 2011 and how has the heating and plumbing trade changed?

"When we first started the company, our main business was supplying boiler parts and spares to the trade, but we have steadily grown to now supplying a full range of heating spares, commercial plumbing & heating, boilers, pumps, controls and everything you need for a fully fitted bathroom. We're proud to stock the industry's biggest names, working closely with Worcester, a UK leader in boiler manufacturing, as well as being suppliers for Intergas, Ideal, Baxi and many more."

One of his most recent developments is adding bathroom showrooms to his trade counters. He's launched Azure bathrooms which as well as allowing customers to view the full range of bathroom furniture and fittings, it also gives them the chance to experience virtual reality. Customers are provided with headsets which will then show them how their bathroom could look. Flame have their own in-house design team who can bring dreams to life. It's all part of making the buying of a bathroom suite an enjoyable experience. This is also something that makes Flame unique.

Another change has been a move to renewable energy. "This is becoming an increasingly more important part of the business. We are now one of the leading suppliers of biomass boilers and heating systems in the region and are helping both commercial premises and private houses reduce their carbon footprint. It is also something that helped us being named Scale-Up Business of the Year by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) at its national Celebrating Small Business Awards earlier this year. This latest success came hot on the heels of Flame Heating Group winning the North East award in March. We're really proud of this recognition and it shows that all of the hard work behind the scenes is paying off."

John is also quite rightly very proud of the contribution that Flame Heating Group makes to charity every year. The company has various fund-raising events culminating in a race night at Newcastle's Gosforth Park. This year Flame Group is raising money for Sara's Hope Foundation which helps families from the UK affected by the devastating impact of cancer. It gives those families a much-needed break from long hospital stays, traumatic medical procedures and cancer related treatments so that they may spend some quality time together.

"It's all part of the family atmosphere we have at Flame Heating Group," added John. "If it hadn't been for the contribution of all the staff, especially in the early years, it would have been impossible to grow the company to this extent."

There's a full list of their trade counters and contact details on the website, including opening times, address and phone numbers.



John Savage

# ENTREPRENEURISM IS IN OUR DNA

By Lucy Winskell OBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Employability and Partnerships, Northumbria University, Newcastle

As a University, a city and as a wider region we can create our own opportunities for economic development and success.

One of the ways we can do this is by harnessing the talent we find in our students and graduates and matching it with what we have – and what we need – in the city.

Here at Northumbria University, we have innovation and entrepreneurship in our DNA. This is evident in the huge number of business success stories that come from this university alone. Thanks to the success of our support for entrepreneurialism, we are rated by HEBCIS as the number one university for business start-ups in the UK, based on turnover.

For more than a decade we have been helping our students and graduates to create their own businesses. We have assisted them in the formation of their ideas through to the provision of support, mentoring, advice and office space and we continue to support them as their businesses grow and develop.

Today, graduate start-ups from Northumbria University collectively have an annual turnover of £81 million. 97% of these businesses operate here in the North East and they have created over 1,000 jobs in the region. We have ambitious targets to significantly improve these figures in the next few years.

From self-employment and initial business start-up to supporting businesses with the potential for significant growth, Northumbria University is a home for entrepreneurship and enterprise, and we try to engender this spirit in all of our students, whether they seek to create their own businesses or not.

We attract a special breed of undergraduate to study here. Generations Y and Z are looking for different career options, with far more considering



freelancing, self-employment or business start-ups. With Northumbria's well-established reputation for equipping students with real skills, knowledge and expertise, it is not surprising that we have spawned a whole host of new business start-ups.

In addition to a great academic launch pad for new entrepreneurs and graduate start-ups, the city, its geography and its business community all combine to encourage graduates to stay in the region to build and grow their businesses here.

We have a goal to maintain, and indeed, improve our position as the UK's leading university for graduate start-ups. Importantly, our aim is not to create lots of new businesses for the sake of it. We want to ensure that we support sustainable business ideas that will survive and thrive into the future.

We currently average between 30-35 new business start-ups each year and many more graduates move into self-employment. We want to double – or even triple – this and with 30,000 students across three campuses in Newcastle, London and Amsterdam, we know we have this potential within our community.

While we work to raise greater awareness amongst our student body about the help and support we can provide, we're also looking to better engage and support employers through degree apprenticeships, internships, placements and close working relationships with businesses through live projects and consultancy.

One example of this is our Business Clinic on New Bridge Street which connects our students and graduates, with live briefs from real clients.

The resounding success of the Clinic has led to us taking the strategic decision to extend and deepen this offer through our new Incubator space, also on

New Bridge Street, which is due to open in Autumn of this year.

The Incubator fits perfectly with our vision to deliver a step change in the support we offer and the impact we make. Our aim is for the Incubator to offer the perfect environment to help the next generation of student and graduate entrepreneurs. It will provide purpose-built workspace with hi-tech connectivity, access to a range of business support and mentoring services all from its prime location in the centre of Newcastle.

The great business support networks here in the city and across the North East offer a strong and supportive business community for Northumbria's fledgling companies. NE1 Ltd, the Business Improvement District Company for the city centre, local enterprise partnerships and the Council all contribute to creating the right environment for new businesses.

When you combine this support with the fact that the city is small and easily navigable, with excellent digital connectivity and costs far less than those in London now, there is no need for businesses to be based in the south.

The new Incubator has already been extremely well received by the North East business community. We have had huge interest from organisations and individuals keen to work with us in all sorts of ways, from mentoring students through to offers of financial support.

With the new Incubator space providing our students with a facility that taps into the region's business community and forges strong links with organisations across the North East, this is an obvious win/win. Not only for students, but also for the wider business community and the local economy. We're excited about the future.

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/incubatorlaunch](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/incubatorlaunch)





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## FUNDRAISING CYCLISTS PEDAL THEIR WAY TO £3K CHARITY DONATION

A two-day cycle challenge undertaken by a generous group of cyclists has resulted in a welcome fundraising boost for a Northumberland charity.

Twenty four cyclists took part in the Matfen Over Border Outing earlier this summer, which saw them cover 160 miles over two days – raising an impressive £3,000 for Carers Northumberland, which provides vital support for unpaid carers across the county.

The charity is the nominated good cause of Matfen Hall Hotel in Northumberland, which served as both the start and finish lines for the cyclists. The vast majority of them are members of Matfen Hall's Aqua Vitae health club and regularly take part in spinning and training classes together.



## BLUEBIRD CARES AND GAINS AWARD

A Gateshead-based care provider that specialises in working with customers requiring care in their own homes has been awarded a prestigious award from the social care and health champion, Healthwatch Gateshead.

Bluebird Care Gateshead is based in the city's Team Valley and offers personalised home care visits, from 30 minutes to full live-in support. One of its clients nominated the service for a Star award. The Healthwatch Star scheme enables patients to nominate members of the caring professions who they feel have gone above and beyond in their care. The scheme is anonymous and the recipient receives a certificate to display at their place of work.

Bluebird Care's client said: "They look after my care needs on a daily basis and care and compassion ooze from them. If my needs change they look after me and the carers that they employ are brilliant."

## HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE IN NORTH TYNESIDE

It's a well-known fact that North Tyneside Business Forum has its finger on the pulse of industry, commerce, retail and technology but now they're asking the community for help to identify businesses that have a big heart.

The special "Heart of The Community" award will be presented following a period of public voting as part of the forum's glittering awards night on 21 November at the Village Hotel to a deserving North Tyneside SME business that has gone the extra mile to help their local community.

David W Bavaird, Chair of the Forum said, "The Heart of the Community award is our way of encouraging people to say thank you to a small to medium sized business which has made a significant contribution to the local area. The award recognises businesses which show that it is not just the cash flow of a business that counts; it's about making a positive difference to the people of the borough."



## ARMY OF FROGMEN DESCEND ON TYNEMOUTH TO SUPPORT CHARITY

More than 60 front-line attack frogmen travelled from all over the world to support a former colleague's fundraising benefit at Coast Kitchen, Tynemouth.

Nick Pietrafesa, a former Royal Navy clearance diver, and member of the Royal Navy Clearance Diver Association (RNCD) was diagnosed with terminal Pancreatic Cancer in January 2019.

Following the fantastic support he and his partner, Rachel Errington, owner of Coast Kitchen in Tynemouth, received from doctors and staff at Ward 5 at the Freeman Hospital, Nick and Rachel decided to raise as much money as they could for Pancreatic Cancer UK.

The couple initially hosted a charity night at Coast Kitchen on Sunday 30th June, with live music all afternoon and a raffle and were thrilled to raise £3,500 for the charity. But Nick didn't know that Rachel was planning an even bigger event and had enlisted the support of the RNCD to get as many of his old colleagues there as possible which raised a further £7000 for the charity.



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# COUNTY DURHAM HANDYPERSON SERVICE REACHES FINALS FOR TOP NATIONAL AWARD

A popular service that helps people to live independently for longer has been shortlisted for a top national award.

The Bernicia County Durham Handyman Service, which is headquartered in Pity Me, has been placed on the finalists list for the Foundations National Healthy Housing Awards 2019 – an accolade that recognises the excellent practice in delivering handyman services.

The service provides practical support and advice to individuals who are over 60, disabled or at high risk of falling or are vulnerable in other ways. In particular, it offers a lifeline to some of the oldest members of the community, helping them to live independently, safely and comfortably in their own homes for longer.

Over the last 10 years, it has become a trusted and respected handyman service, supporting over 77,710 customers and completing over 136,000 tasks.

Dave Thatcher, from Bishop Auckland, is a recent customer and is fully behind the team to scoop the award. He said: "It's a brilliant service. They came round and fixed handrails in the bathroom and made some improvements to the steps in the yard. It means my wife, who has Parkinsons, can get around the house and it's improved her access to the yard. I couldn't fault the service, the lads were



The Bernicia County Durham Handyman Service team.

very good and professional. The Handyman Service thoroughly deserves the award and I wish them all the best for the finals."

Service Manager, Steve Errington added: "Being shortlisted for such a prestigious award is truly a testament to the hard work of everyone who works here. From those who take the calls, book the jobs and take queries to the individuals out and about carrying out the work, we have a fantastic team that is dedicated to helping people across County Durham to live independently.

"The team has built up a service that people trust and rely on. What we offer goes beyond just changing a light bulb or putting up shelves. Customers and

professionals proactively seek our advice and support and we refer and signpost customers widely to services including Fire Service, Adult Services, Citizens Advice, Alzheimer Society when we identify needs when speaking or visiting customers, helping them to engage with the right services to meet their needs.

"I'm proud of all of the team and delighted that their work has been recognised in a national shortlist of providers. We're all looking forward to hearing how we get on in the finals."

Winners will be announced at a ceremony on September 25 at Central Hall in Westminster.

For more information about accessing the Bernicia County Durham Handyman Service, please call 0300 456 2220, text 07764 241076 or email [handyperson@bernicia.com](mailto:handyperson@bernicia.com).

## GRAEME COOK JOINS AVID TECHNOLOGY GROUP AS OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Award-winning, North East automotive clean-tech firm AVID Technology Group has strengthened its leadership team with another strategic appointment.

Graeme Cook joins the business as operations director to assist in the delivery of AVID's growth strategy which aims to capitalise on the global boom in vehicle electrification and clean automotive technology.

He brings over 15 years' experience leading high-skilled engineering businesses in the aerospace, automotive, defence, rail and energy sectors. Graeme's most recent roles include executive director at Reece Group, the North East-based global exporter of defence, energy, and utilities technology.

He's also held senior management roles at Responsive Engineering and CAV Aerospace, where he ran a large-scale operation and set up manufacturing facilities around the world producing safety critical aerospace structures.

A mechanical engineer by trade, Graeme began his career as an engineering apprentice in Cramlington before securing his first managerial role responsible for manufacturing engineering at NSK Steering Systems Europe, a global tier one supplier to the automotive industry manufacturing safety critical components.

Ryan Maughan, managing director at AVID Technology, said: "Graeme brings some amazing



(L to R) Graeme Cook, AVID Technology's new operations director with Andrew Hodgson, non-executive chairman and managing director Ryan Maughan.

experience to AVID. His appointment is hugely significant as we begin to rapidly scale-up our manufacturing operations. Attracting someone with his breadth of experience in setting up and running manufacturing facilities, particularly specialising in high-volume and safety critical components and systems, will be a great benefit to AVID as we move forward."

Describing his focus for leading the operations team at AVID's HQ in Cramlington, Graeme said: "I am

thrilled to be joining AVID Technology at such an exciting time in its development. The electric vehicle industry is thriving globally and going through a period of rapid development and innovation.

"My aim is to support the team in delivering its strategy for growth, add value through my expertise industrialising products, establishing rapid manufacturing solutions and managing production to meet quality and ensure supply.

"I feel very passionate about what Ryan and the AVID team is seeking to achieve in developing clean technology power systems to transform the automotive industry and help the environment. It feels great to be part of such a talented and ambitious North East business."

Graeme's appointment follows Andrew Hodgson, one of North East England's most prominent business figures, who joined the AVID board as non-executive chairman in May this year.

AVID Technology Group develops batteries, electric motors and powertrain components for next generation hybrid and electric vehicles across the world. Its customer base includes tier one automotive suppliers and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

To find out more, go to: [www.avidtp.com](http://www.avidtp.com)



Sarah Burns and Jason Turner

## DATA DRIVES DIRECTORS IN A NEW DIRECTION

A pair of directors who swapped the insurance industry for the tech sector are reaping the rewards with the continued expansion of their fast-growing start-up.

Jason Turner and Sarah Burns launched Data2Action in 2017, having worked at insurance giant BGL Group as operational directors for a combined total of nearly two decades.

Originally working from home, the pair launched the business by combining their extensive operational and business transformation experience to provide support to companies wanting to grow and improve their operating performance.

"Initially, we provided operational and data protection services to a number of large clients spread across the country," Jason said. "Then, we started to see a real rise in demand from companies in the North East including those in the tech sector."

"Having both held senior positions at BGL Group, the parent company of Comparethemarket.com, we'd both witnessed first-hand the importance of using data effectively to drive operational performance."

"With the ever-present advancement in technology and the desire for most organisations to optimise their performance, many are looking at ways to transform what they do in order to future proof their business."

"Whilst buying technology goes some way to help that, creating a data centric culture is paramount to success and we believe as a centre for excellence, the North East has great potential."

The introduction of GDPR last year had a huge impact on the business world, harmonising data privacy laws across Europe and ensuring businesses give greater protection and rights to the individuals whose data they capture and store.

Data2Action helps companies understand, use and protect their data, increasing the value of this important asset and enabling them to gain a predictive insight into not only business performance but also into identifying opportunities for innovation and product development.

## BRICKLAYING FIRM CEMENTS 20 YEARS IN BUSINESS



Owner of SJL Brickwork Steven Lynn, with Quantity Surveyor Liam Cowell and Administrative Assistant Beth Dyer.

Specialist brickwork contractor, Steven Lynn, is celebrating the 20th anniversary of running his own business.

Steven, from Grangetown, Sunderland set up his building firm SJL Brickwork in May 1999 with a small advert in his local newspaper after returning to the North East from working across the UK and in Europe.

A former student at the old Wearside College where he gained his Level 1 and 2 in Advanced Craft, his first job as a business owner was a brick pillar gate post. Since then his company has gradually increased in size specialising in small to large projects in the commercial, education, retail, industrial, housing and health sectors.

Steven has also used his own experience to train local apprentices with one coming third in the national finals in Scotland after winning the regional North East competition.

In 2009 Steven moved into his premises at the North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) on Sunderland Enterprise Park. Having become a Limited company in 2007 with a workforce of around 25 Steven then faced some tumultuous times as the recession took a hold, and the work began to dry up. However the business owner was not about to give up, Steven said: "When the recession hit in 2008 all housing sites stopped and work dried up so I had to scale right back and take on any jobs I could get with a small team."

"I have learnt from mistakes along the years and I think the most important thing for any business owner is to never give up."

"It wasn't until 2012 when things picked up properly again and I got the chance to do bigger jobs with a bigger workforce, which is what I always wanted to do."

## SHEILA'S MINI MART FILLS GAP IN FILIPINO MARKET



Marc and Sheila Hodgkinson outside of their new store on Hylton Road, Sunderland

A husband and wife team with experience of working as a joiner and an architect, have used a gap in the market to set up their own business specialising in Filipino food products.

Marc and Sheila Hodgkinson set up Sheila's Mini Mart in Sunderland after Sheila was made redundant from her career as an architect and decided to do something she had always wanted to do – open her own shop.

Sheila, who is originally from the Philippines, noticed there was a lack of shops in the area to cater for the large Filipino community who live close to the hospital where they work, and seized the opportunity.

Sheila said: "I always had a dream of opening my own shop and wanted to take this opportunity to do something completely different so I thought why not? We'll take the plunge! I now love the freedom of being self-employed. I was used to being stuck in an office on a computer all day but now I get the chance to meet lots of new people."

"I know what it's like to miss a particular food from home and I'd struggle to get it locally or would have to travel. I researched shopping trends and various wholesalers and found products that would be attractive to the Filipino community. I also wanted to sell everyday essentials for local people in the area and for visitors to the hospital. So it's a real mix."

Sheila was supported by the business start-up team at the BIC and the New Enterprise Allowance programme, a national government initiative.

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## BREWIN DOLPHIN HOST TYNEMOUTH GOLF DAY

Brewin Dolphin recently hosted a "Financial Wellbeing Golf Day" at Tynemouth Golf Club. Six fourballs, each hosted by a representative of Brewin Dolphin took to the fairways for a round.

Gary Fawcett, Divisional Director at Brewin Dolphin said, "I think having conversations with people in a relaxed environment like this is a great way to get to know people and understand their needs – it's also a lot of fun too. Tynemouth were the perfect hosts helping us organise every aspect of the day, and it's a great venue to play."



## NORTH EAST ENTREPRENEURS CALLED TO ENTER BALDWIN'S AWARDS

The North East's up-and-coming entrepreneurs are being given the chance to kick-start their business ideas with a five-figure investment.

Baldwins, a CogitalGroup company, which has 11 offices in the North East, is hosting its KickStart Young Entrepreneur Awards for the seventh year. The awards are open in England, Scotland and Wales for 18 to 25-year-olds and have invested £180,000 in start-up businesses since 2013.

The winner of the awards will be given a grant of £10,000 along with £10,000 worth of mentoring, and accountancy and business advice from Baldwins. Two runners-up will each receive £5,000 worth of mentoring, and accountancy and business advice.

Ten people will be selected to be interviewed about their ideas, which will then be whittled down to a final three.

This year's three finalists will then be invited to present in front of more than 400 people at Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham on Thursday November 14th.

## CONTINUED GROWTH FOR SINTONS' DEBT TEAM

The specialist debt recovery team at Sintons is continuing to grow on the back of new client wins from across the world and a three-fold increase in fee income over the past two years.

The team, from its base in Newcastle, acts for companies and individuals across the UK and internationally, offering specialist advice on matters of all complexities to clients ranging from multi-national corporates to sole traders, with new instructions continually being received on the strength of its reputation.

As a result of the significant increase in workload, the department's turnover has tripled and three debt recovery managers - Amy Carlton, Caitlyn Elliott and Jill Galbraith - have also been appointed in the recent past, with further recruitment planned.

The significant growth in the debt team comes at a time of development for Sintons as a whole, with its Strategy for Growth underpinning the progress and recruitment across all areas of the business.



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Sue Shaw-Toomey

## ARE YOU GOING ON HOLIDAY SOON? THINKING AIRBNB? THEN READ THIS!

If you are about to go on holiday, you may be thinking of renting out your home on a short term letting site as a means of funding your holiday.

### Whether you do or not, you need to think about the following points:

1. If you have a lease, then you will probably need the consent of your landlord to do this. Without this consent, you could be in breach of your lease and find that you lose your home.
2. You are also likely to be in breach of your mortgage conditions so the lender can ask for its loan to be immediately repaid or they can repossess your home to be able to recover their money.
3. You will be in breach of your home insurance policy unless you have notified them and got consent to this. If anything happens to your property (whether caused by the occupiers or not) you are likely to not be able to claim on your insurance.
4. It can also be considered an unlawful change of use. Residential use does not allow multiple short term lets so you could also find yourself in trouble under planning law.
5. You may have trouble getting back possession if the occupiers want to stay. Even if you give them an assured shorthold tenancy, you can only get back possession if you have served a long list of requirements on them before the tenancy started (you will not do them all without professional advice) or if they are in breach such as not paying the rent.
6. You may find that your neighbours have reported your property to the local authority to make a noise complaint. Any notice registered against the property will affect its value if you want to sell. And your neighbours will not talk to you anymore.
7. Any income you make needs to be declared to the government as part of your income with whatever consequences for tax or benefits that entails.

If you wonder how other people do this so successfully then you are probably not aware that the majority of property now offered for rent are actually owned by letting agents. They often use the name of an employee to represent themselves as individuals with a great knowledge of the local city.

Things are often not what they seem.

*Sue Shaw-Toomey is the managing partner of Toomey Legal Limited the specialist property lawyers for the North East.*



Oliver Gray

## NEW ASSOCIATE AT ST JAMES' SQUARE

Commercial law firm St James' Square has appointed an experienced Associate to strengthen its Corporate and Commercial department.

Oliver Gray is a multi-sector practiced lawyer who has previously worked at a leading international law firm in London, with time spent working in its Bangkok office, and also worked at a corporate law firm in the North East.

He said: "I'm really pleased to have joined the team at St James' Square. Everybody has been so welcoming and I'm looking forward to getting started on some exciting projects."

Oliver will be initially focusing on mergers and acquisitions, management buyouts, reorganisations, joint ventures, private equity investments and commercial agreements.

Paul Monaghan, Managing Partner, commented: "Oli is an excellent addition to the team at St James' Square and we're really looking forward to working with him. His legal expertise and experience are excellent and complement our existing services extremely well."

Oliver's appointment comes at an exciting time for the firm who are currently experiencing unprecedented demand for their services and are growing their staff numbers as a result.

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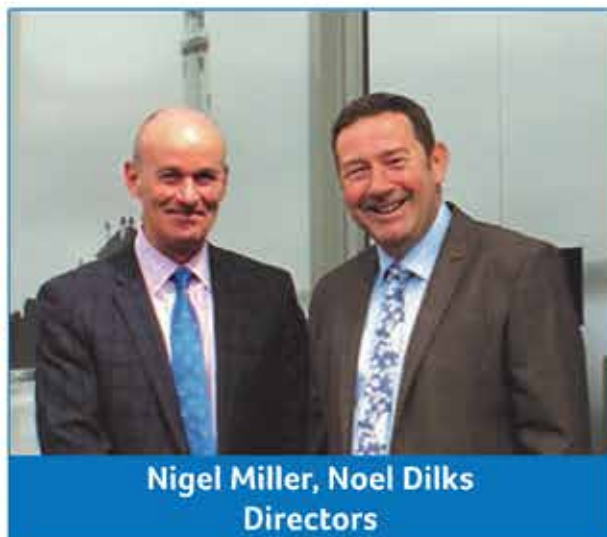


# CARE FEES THE MYTHICAL 7 YEAR TIME LIMIT

Putting aside the politics all of us need to think carefully about future care, whether it is for ourselves, our parents or our grandparents.

There is so much information in the media, exchanged in conversation and broadcast daily that confusion has spread very quickly.

In one sense the publicity surrounding social care is positive, because it is generating debate. It has started to make us all consider the reality of care seriously. On the other hand, many of the rumours and political messages are not accurate and, in some cases, misleading. There is NO 7 year time limit. In fact there are no time limits at all



At Kidd & Spoor we have been striving to deal with many misconceptions and misunderstandings about care costs, financial assessment rules and connected issues for decades. We have succeeded where many others have not. There are complexities but they can be simplified.

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**KIDD & SPOOR  
SOLICITORS GOLF DAY**

Kidd & Spoor Solicitors recently held their annual golf day at Tynemouth Golf Club. The event was attended by 20 teams of golfers who enjoyed a great afternoon of golf and hospitality at the nineteenth hole. The attendees were very complimentary about the course condition and the catering provided. A raffle raised £585 for Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Charity and Noel Dilks and Nigel Miller, directors of Kidd and Spoor, wish to thank all those who attended and contributed generously.





# NO CLEAR CUT RULE ON EQUAL DIVISION OF PRE-MARRIAGE ASSETS DURING DIVORCE CASES

By Nicola Matthews, partner and head of the specialist family law team at Hay & Kilner Law Firm in Newcastle.

The division of a couple's assets is often one of the most challenging aspects of divorce cases, and it can become especially taxing in relation to the assets that each party owned prior to their wedding.

---

The law makes a distinction between non-matrimonial and matrimonial assets, with the former defined as assets that one party either had at the time of the marriage, or inherited or received by gift during it, while the latter are those 'acquired by the labours or endeavours' of one or both parties during the marriage.

However, while it might seem likely that there would or should be, there is in fact no automatic disregard of non-matrimonial assets in the process of working towards a divorce settlement.

Courts consider the nature and value of the assets, as well as when and how they were acquired, and have a great deal of discretion in how they are then assessed in each individual situation.

In many instances, it would only seem fair that the person who owns the non-matrimonial assets should be allowed to keep them, but this depends on whether their spouse's needs, as defined by the court, can be met from assets acquired during the marriage.

Different courts have taken different approaches to resolving this issue, and there is no 'one size fits all' formula that they will follow.

In one instance, a husband argued that his wife should not receive a 50% share of the couple's assets at the end of their 20-year marriage and that she should receive only an award based on needs, because most of them were pre-acquired non-matrimonial assets derived from the husband's



Nicola Matthews

property owning business, which was set up before the marriage.

The judge ruled that, while this was not a case in which the wife's award should just be confined to her needs, the husband's pre-marital wealth justified a 60/40 division in the husband's favour.

In another situation, the couple in question enjoyed an extremely modest standard of living despite the very substantial amount of shares held by the wife in a family company.

Neither party generated any earned income during their 21-year marriage, living instead off the dividends paid on the wife's shares.

The husband sought a lump sum divorce settlement of £18m, but was instead awarded £5m by the court on the basis of needs. He appealed, but was unsuccessful as the shares, which had always been ring-fenced in the wife's name, were the source of the parties' entire wealth.

Given these clear complexities, there is a strong

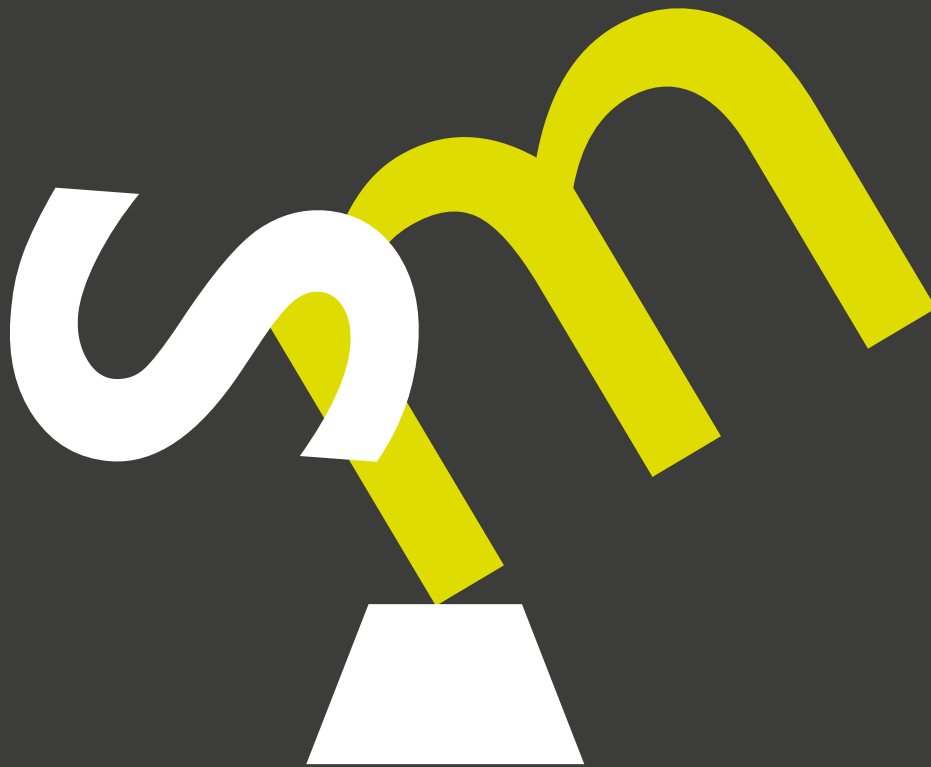
case for all couples to sign a pre-nuptial agreement before they wed or a post-nuptial agreement during the marriage, to provide added protection for both sides.

While not currently completely legally binding, the details of such agreements are taken into account as one of the circumstances of a case if either of the divorcing parties applies to the court for a different settlement.

Nobody wants to go into a marriage with their focus on what might happen if things don't work out, but if you wish to preserve assets that have been inherited or gifted to you by your family, it is far better to put a pre/post-nuptial agreement in place to at least establish a reference point in case one is required in the future.

*Hay & Kilner Law Firm's specialist family law team provides the full range of family and divorce law services.*

For further information, please contact [Nicola.matthews@hay-kilner.co.uk](mailto:Nicola.matthews@hay-kilner.co.uk), visit [www.hay-kilner.co.uk](http://www.hay-kilner.co.uk), or call 0191 232 8345.



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# DEFINING AN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STRATEGY FOR YOUR BUSINESS: TOP TIPS

## Defining Your Strategy

You should bear in mind firstly that there is no "one size fits all" strategy as far as intellectual property (IP) is concerned. Your strategy should be carefully tailored to the needs of your business. You should think about the industry and market sector in which you are active, the level of risk you want to take, what financial means you have at your disposal and whether your IP portfolio is to be used as leverage when seeking finance. The guide below provides a brief outline of key IP areas of focus.

## Trade Marks

You should think about any trade marks you use or plan to use, and seek to protect these at the earliest opportunity. Another thing to consider is whether you are offering a range of products or services under one "family" brand, which can also be protected by a trade mark. You should always consider professional advice on choosing distinctive word and logo trade marks. Carrying out searches at an early stage is also a good idea, so that you can check that your marks won't infringe the rights of other parties. This is a fairly simple task, and can be done professionally, which can prevent legal issues arising. It is also important to consider the countries where you want protection, and any other emerging markets that you may enter in the future.

## Patents

If your business involves developing new products and services with a technical element, patents may offer the best protection. You may



Elliot Stephens

consider introducing a "new invention" procedure, perhaps with inventor rewards, to identify innovations at an early stage so that you can make effective decisions about patent protection. It is also important to educate your staff on the importance of confidentiality, as a public disclosure before filing a patent application can have severe consequences. Optionally, initiate a patent search to check that the idea is patentable, or to find similar ideas already known. Do you have key competitors abroad? If so, consider patenting in their home countries as well as in your major overseas markets. It is wise to budget for ongoing costs over the 20 year life of a patent, including renewals after grant.

## Design Rights

In creative industries where product appearance is important, consider registered design protection. This can be a cost effective way of protecting

multiple different designs. It may be worth establishing a review procedure to decide at an early stage if and where a new design should be protected by registration, or whether it is sufficient to rely on unregistered design rights (UDR). UDR is a free right which lasts for 10 years in the UK and provides useful protection against direct copying.

## Other Key Areas

Make sure you know who owns the copyright in material you use. It is also important to consider who has access to important business information, and to keep this confidential within your business. Additionally, an IP audit can help you identify all your business's valuable information and help you to develop an effective IP strategy.

*Contact the Murgitroyd team to help define an effective IP strategy for your business.*

Elliot Stephens is a Patent Scientist in Murgitroyd's Newcastle office. T: 0191 211 3550 E: [elliott.stephens@murgitroyd.com](mailto:elliott.stephens@murgitroyd.com)

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# WHAT IS AN OPTION AGREEMENT?

An Option is a contract between a landowner and a potential developer where the developer has the opportunity (but not an obligation) to purchase the property from the landowner at an agreed price within a certain period of time.

An Option Agreement is a legally enforceable, binding document entered into between the parties and this is often used by developers to secure the property whilst they are exploring the planning potential of the land.

The purchase price for the property may be agreed between the parties at the outset of the Option. Alternatively, a mechanism for calculating the final price may be inserted into the document and this may be by reference to a formula (such as by reference to the market value of each plot developed on the land).

### Protection for the developer

The Option Agreement blocks the landowner from selling the property to a third party during the Option period whilst the developer is exploring the viability of the project, thereby reducing the risk and potential cost to the developer. Once the developer has satisfied himself as to the feasibility of the proposed development, he can trigger the purchase of the property by 'exercising' the option. Once the Option has been exercised, it becomes an agreement to purchase making it obligatory for the landowner to sell and the developer to purchase on the terms set out in the Agreement.

On the other hand, if it turns out that the project is not suitable, then the developer can simply walk away and let the Option lapse without any penalties or legal repercussions.

### Are there any advantages for the landowner?

An Option is an 'option' to purchase the land and not an 'obligation'. Therefore, by its very nature, it is designed to be more useful to the developer than the landowner. On entering into an Option Agreement, certain restrictions would be entered on the landowner's title to secure the Option in favour of the developer and the landowner will not be able to do sell or dispose the land to a third party for the period of time agreed in the option. The downside for the seller is that the developer may decide, well into the Option period, that the proposed development is



Surbhi Vedhara

not viable and pull out of the option. Therefore, there is no certainty for a landowner that the property will in fact be sold. However, if used correctly, the Option can also be a valuable tool which could allow a Seller to profit-share and maximise the return from the land without having to take on any of the risks and investment associated with a large-scale development.

### Are there other kinds of arrangements that may be more suitable?

Although an Option is one of the most common methods used to structure and secure a potential development, there may be other types of arrangements that may be more suited to give effect to the intentions of the parties, such as:

- **Conditional Contracts** – This is a contract for sale where completion is contingent upon the occurrence of a certain event (such as the grant of planning permission). This grants certainty to the landowners that if certain trigger events are met, then the developer will in fact proceed with the purchase. There may also be certain positive obligations inserted within the contract to use its best endeavours to achieve the trigger event within a certain period of time and penalties for non-compliance.

- **Promotion Agreements** - A Promotion Agreement may contain similar obligations (such as to pursue planning permission), but does not give the developer the right to buy the land. Instead, the developer would be entitled to a percentage of the sale proceeds as and when the land is sold.

- **Pre-emption Agreements** – This is also known as a 'right of first refusal' and can be secured by the developer against the land, should the landowner decide to sell in the future.

Every situation requires careful thought and professional advice to ensure that the documentation is suitable for the intended purpose. As with any other legal documents, it is extremely important that you obtain professional legal and protection advice to give effect to your specific requirements and to ensure that that you and your business are fully protected.



Sweeney Miller Law's Commercial Team headed by Surbhi Vedhara can assist with such matters. For a no obligation chat, contact our Newcastle office on 0345 900 5401 or email Newcastle@sweeneymiller.co.uk

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# PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

Senior Associate at Collingwood Legal, Jane Sinnamon, provides business protection advice to employers following a recent Supreme Court decision.



Jane Sinnamon

As an employer, have you ever found yourself in a hostile termination situation with an employee thinking "I wish our contracts had said this..." or "what do you mean there is nothing stopping you from poaching our key customers"? You are not alone.

Never has the need to protect business interests and confidential information been more prevalent than now, when digital media has the power to share information at the click of a button.

From experience, many businesses consider their key assets to be confidential information and knowledge. Departing employees possessing such information are therefore well placed to take advantage of it, for instance by sharing it with a competitor employer or to set up a rival business.

### Confidential Information

Relying on the implied duty of confidentiality or telling employees something is 'confidential' is in itself not enough to rely on should the employee breach its confidentiality obligations during or post-employment. An employer needs to expressly specify in an employment contract for instance what information is confidential, that the disclosure of such information is prohibited and the consequences of any disclosure. Whilst it may seem obvious what information is confidential, it should never be assumed. For instance, contacts made by an employee via LinkedIn could be classed as confidential information belonging to the employer.

### Social Media

The huge growth in popularity of social media has created challenges as well as opportunities for every business. Whilst employment relationships have an implied duty of trust and confidence, this can be tested where an employee shares information on social media that potentially damages the business. Defining the importance and use of social media, having procedures (which have been communicated to staff and implemented) in place to monitor employees use of social media which clearly outlines standards of behaviour and consequences if there is any breach are essential to protect business interests.

### Post Termination Restrictions

Restrictive covenants ('restrictions') should be used in the employment contracts of senior employees and those who handle confidential information to ensure that the business is protected from the issues caused by an employee leaving to join a competitor or set up in competition. One of the main restrictions used is a non-compete clause which essentially prevents an employee from working for a competitor for a period of time after their employment ends. This is the most powerful

form of protection for an employer, but the most limiting for an employee therefore it is essential that such a restriction is reasonable and goes no further than is necessary to protect the company's legitimate business interests.

The enforceability of such restrictions was recently determined by the Supreme Court in the case of *Tillman v Egon Zehner Ltd* whereby an ex-employee (Ms Tillman) argued that a non-compete restriction in her contract was unenforceable because it was too wide and went further than was necessary to protect the company's legitimate business interests.

The court agreed with Ms Tillman, however, they felt the clause would still make sense and be enforceable if some wording was removed. In removing such words, the non-compete clause did not fall away meaning Ms Tillman's challenge failed.

Whilst this decision gives employers some breathing space should the words of a restriction be challenged, employers should look to avoid a lengthy and costly legal battle of this kind. It is therefore essential to take advice on the most appropriate wording to improve the validity of restrictions.

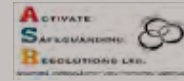


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# Care Sector Professional Advisory Conference

The Care Sector Professional Advisory Conference is made up of a group of professionals passionate about supporting local care homes with all their business needs. The group would like to invite any Care Home Owners / Care Home Managers / Clinical Leads or anyone working in the care sector to join them.

**Date:** Tuesday 17 September 2019

**Time:** 11.30am to 2.30pm

**Venue:** Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service HQ, Barmston Mere, Nissan Way, Sunderland, SR5 3QY (Free Parking Available)

**Timings:** 11.30am – Networking  
12 noon – Lunch (Free buffet lunch provided)  
12.30pm to 1.30pm – Introduction from specialists  
1.30pm to 2.30pm – Q&A  
2.30pm – Close and Networking

The care sector attendees will have access to a team of support advisors specialising in:

- Safeguarding (Activate Safeguarding Resolutions)
- Moving & Handling of People (Impeller Assurance & Resilience)
- Fire Safety (Impeller Assurance & Resilience)
- Employment law / HR advice (Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP)
- Wills, LPAs and Deputyships (Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP)
- Funding Information (North East Growth Hub)  
(North East Local Enterprise Partnership)

To book a place at the Conference please contact Wendy Peffers,  
**Email:** [wendy.peffers@gbf.co.uk](mailto:wendy.peffers@gbf.co.uk) | **Tel:** 0191 389 5181  
Spaces are limited, book early to avoid disappointment.





## 5 TIPS FOR ROLLING CONTRACTS

Perpetual bliss or purgatory? Henry Mullen, dispute resolution lawyer at Muckle LLP, picks out the key pitfalls for businesses to avoid on rolling contracts.

From supply and maintenance agreements to mobile phone contracts, so called “rolling contracts” are common place in commercial and consumer agreements. Although they can take many forms, rolling contracts usually provide that the contract shall continue or “roll over” after the end of the initial term of the contact, often on the same terms.

On the one hand they can conveniently allow for parties to continue a successful relationship on agreeable terms. On the other hand, if the original relationship was not successful, or the terms are disagreeable or unappealing going forwards, rolling contracts can tie parties into an unattractive and potentially costly agreement.

So how can you make use of rolling contracts and avoid the pitfalls?

### 1. Read the terms carefully – do you have a rolling contract?

It sounds like an obvious point, but it’s surprising how often businesses are unaware that a contract may roll over automatically after the expiry of the initial term.

### 2. Check the terms – are they acceptable?

In some circumstances it may be beneficial for the contract to roll over on the same terms. For example, if you expect the cost of goods/services you are paying for to rise you may wish to make use of the benefits of the lower rates set in the initial agreement. Conversely, if you are the seller or supplier you want to ensure that the contract will still be profitable if it rolls over.

### 3. Check the tenure - how long is your new contract?

It is also important to check the length of the new

contract once it has rolled over. In some cases the contract will roll over on a month by month or yearly basis. On others, the contract will effectively renew for the same duration of the initial term of the contract. In these instances you could risk being tied into unattractive agreements of 3-5 years or longer.

Businesses dealing with consumers should be aware that some terms, which automatically renew consumer contracts, may be considered to be unfair and therefore unenforceable. The Competition and Markets Authority have provided some guidance with examples online at gov.uk.

Henry Mullen



### 4. Check the termination provisions – am I still in time?

Often, rolling contracts provide that the contract will automatically renew after the expiry of the initial term unless one of the parties provides notice to terminate the agreement. Notice periods vary so be sure to make a note of it and set a reminder to trigger when it is nearing expiry.

You should also ensure that you comply with any notice provisions in the agreement. If a notice is served incorrectly it may be invalid and not prevent the contract rolling over.

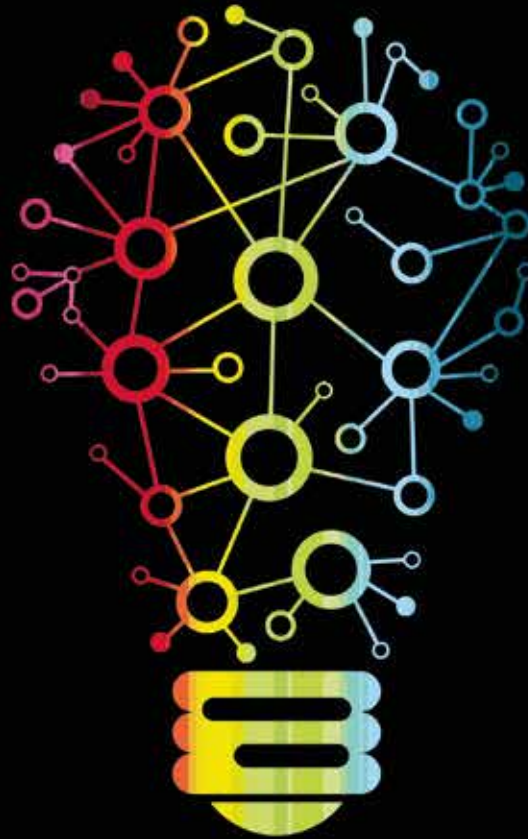
### 5. I’ve missed the deadline – don’t panic – you still have options

If you do not want to continue with the contract but have failed to serve the notice in time, you have several options.

- A.** Continue with the contract (it may be that you can still derive benefit from it).
- B.** Determine whether there is a break clause which would entitle you to terminate the agreement early.
- C.** Consider whether you have some other right to terminate (for example for breach of contract by the other party).
- D.** Negotiate a termination of the agreement with the other party (they may not wish to continue the agreement either).
- E.** Terminate the agreement. This is likely to entitle the other party to claim damages. These damages may be limited to its loss of profit (although not always). In some circumstances it may be preferable or more cost effective to pay the other party’s losses rather than continue with the contract.

**This advice is by no means exhaustive and often these matters are heavily fact dependant. If you have any queries about your documents, or for a free consultation, please call Henry Mullen on 0191 211 7894 or email [henry.mullen@muckle-llp.com](mailto:henry.mullen@muckle-llp.com)**

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## CHARTERED SURVEYOR GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

Jonathan Wallis has outgrown his previous office and moved his firm, Jonathan Wallis Chartered Surveyors into his old infants' school at Startforth. The school coincidentally also houses Kirklands Nursery where he was a pupil shortly after it first opened more than thirty years ago.

The move to his new premises allows Jonathan to practice in a quiet, rural setting that his clients enjoy visiting.

"It's very quirky going to work in my old school building. It holds lots of good memories for me and I find that very conducive to efficient working. I provide advice on rural and specialist commercial property to my clients so in effect, I'm practising what I preach," he said.

From professional property valuations to advice on landlord and tenant matters and troubleshooting for development agencies, Jonathan has a wealth of knowledge and experience built up within his own business over the past two years and prior to that, more than a decade working at one of the region's biggest estate agencies.



## BOOST FOR BOLDON BUSINESS PARK AS KNIGHT FRANK SECURES MAJOR NEW LETTING

Knight Frank has let 28,000 sq. ft. of warehouse and office space at Boldon Business Park in South Tyneside to growing global baby brand, Nuby™.

The deal, brokered by Partner, Simon Haggie, sees the firm lease a property more than six times larger than their last premises, to facilitate their expansion.

Nuby™ now has 42 staff, with further recruitment planned across the firm, and a projected turnover of £17.5million this financial year.

Partner at Knight Frank Newcastle, Simon Haggie, said: "Nuby™ were existing occupiers at Boldon and were keen to remain on the estate. They looked at a number of properties we were marketing but none had the mix of office and warehouse space that satisfied their immediate needs and allowed the expansion of the business.



## DONATION FROM HOUSEBUILDER SIGNALS FUNDING BOOST FOR LOCAL CRICKET CLUB

A cricket club in Ingleby Barwick has received a helping hand from the housebuilder which has a new development just down the road.

Bellway – which is building new homes at Ingleby Manor off Welwyn Road – has provided Maltby Cricket Club with a £250 donation towards its fundraising campaign.

As part of a long-term future project, the club has been seeking funding towards an umpire's changing room and score hut to upgrade its current facilities at Francis Park, off Low Lane.

Chairman of Maltby Cricket Club, Chris Francis, said: "As a club, Maltby are always looking to develop our facilities and we are delighted that Bellway have been able to support our plans to improve our facilities for umpires."

Maltby Cricket Club is a family-friendly community club that is open to all players regardless of age or ability and was founded in 1946.



## PLANS COULD SEE NEW MULTI-MILLION POUND APARTMENT COMPLEX FOR NEWCASTLE

The regeneration of a site overlooking the River Tyne in Ouseburn has moved a step closer following submission of plans for a new £7.5m apartment complex.

If it gets the green light, the move could see the creation of a multi-storey residential scheme on derelict land off St Lawrence Road close to the confluence of the Tyne and Ouseburn rivers and to the east of the Free Trade Inn.

Plans drawn up by McLundie Geddes Architects will see a mix of 50 one, two,

three and four bedroomed apartments with onsite under-croft parking.

The new scheme will offer a greater choice to local homeowners, particularly first-time buyers and families – they will be able to take advantage of accessible and quality accommodation that is within easy reach of local shops and amenities.

The scheme is seen as a welcome boost to regional housing provision, contributing to the demand for quality housing across Newcastle.



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# DRIVING DESIGN INTO LUXURY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

He may drive in the fast-lane but Northumberland architect Ollie Currie takes his time on bespoke property projects particularly his flagship passion, Coach House, a luxury development near Hexham.

### Why is Coach House such an important development for you?

It's become personal. Having found the site at the start of 2017, nurtured through the planning process, designed bespoke house types to suit the site and its constraints, and now being involved in interior design services for clients, it's more than a standard project. This isn't the biggest scheme I've undertaken at 33 Architecture, but its luxury scale and location make this a flagship for me and the practice. I'm Hexham born and bred so to get involved in such a luxury scheme on my home patch on the outskirts of town, is a real pleasure. I am determined to make this a real stand-out development.

### What makes Coach House so special?

It's a fabulous location – scenically and practically. It's got a lovely woodland backdrop and is perfect for families who want a semi-rural setting while being within easy access of schools and all the amenities of a popular market town. From a design perspective, the homes are built with traditional materials while also incorporating many contemporary features within the home and externally. It's a very bespoke development.

### How does it differ to other local developments?

The scheme is small and compact. There are eight detached four and five-bedroom homes, in a countryside setting. The materials we've chosen to build with are a much higher quality and spec than anything nearby. There are four house types combining traditional materials like stone, brick



Coach House



Ollie Currie

and slate with more modern design features incorporating zinc, a high amount of glass and timber composite cladding. Our external design features are creating a varied and bespoke streetscape. This is not another template-driven scheme that a volume house-builder might knock out – it's highly bespoke and contextual to the surroundings.

### What else is 33 Architecture doing?

We're a busy little practice. Having set up the firm in 2015, after leaving the larger practice of Alston Murphy Associates, I've grown steadily year-on-year. We've always focussed on designing high-quality, bespoke properties – both residential and commercial. Many of these have-been one-offs but more recently we've started working with developers on some interesting larger residential projects. The firm, which now includes my wife Rachel and technician Otis, recently completed a 14-home development for Gatsby Homes at Bedlington and we hope to handle more projects around that scale.

### What have been your biggest challenges?

Coach House has been the most challenging project but also the most rewarding. It's been a long process in the planning, from finding the site to gaining permissions and to today, almost completing the build and development. A show home is due to open shortly.



### Your most memorable moments to date and proudest achievements?

Setting up the new business and then designing my own office and opening that in Corbridge at the start of this year. Coach House has also been another professional milestone - particularly securing planning permission after 12 months.

More personal ones must be linked to my love for motorsport. Building our rally car from scratch was a big achievement. I think the pain, blood and sweat that went into that made me forget about it! We bought it as a shell in October 2012 and competed our first stage rally in March 2014. I was also proud to have been chairman of the Wickham Motor Club, which I stood down from earlier this year.

### How do you relax?

With my wife Rachel and our children (soon to be three). Motorsport remains a big passion, although finding time is getting harder. And there's tennis in the summer months.





## ORCHARD VALE, CORBRIDGE



## PRICE GUIDE: £2.75 MILLION

Orchard Vale is a magnificent detached family home with a linked cottage and outbuildings, close to the centre of this highly sought after village. The house has been extensively renovated and has tremendous style, character and architectural appeal with its fabulous fireplaces and magnificent windows with their stone sills and lintels, whilst the internal presentation is complemented by the modern improvements that have been added including the beautifully equipped kitchen/breakfasting room supplied by Newcastle Furniture Company. The most impressive features of this six bedroom property are undoubtedly the 1 ¾ acres of grounds, which include a small paddock, a former tennis court, lovely manicured paths and lawns, as well as open terraces and patios including a BBQ area and newly created gymnasium; the grounds extend principally to the south and lead down to the adjacent river.



Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 2233500 [ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk](mailto:ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk) [www.sandersonyoung.co.uk](http://www.sandersonyoung.co.uk)



## Danemead Melbury Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

This magnificent property provides one of the most outstanding, luxurious, bespoke family homes within Newcastle. Danemead occupies a prime corner plot and has been refurbished to an exceptionally high standard with many unique features including wall finishes and fabrics, lighting and design.

**Price Guide: £3.5 Million**

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**Ashleigh Sundin**  
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**rare! Office:** 0191 223 3500  
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## Trees Middle Drive, Woolsington

5 4 3

This Grade II listed modernist house, designed and lived in by renowned architect, Gordon Ryder and his family, occupies a 0.6 acre site with open views. Trees has been sympathetically refurbished with a new kitchen and bathrooms, and the addition of a fabulous Ecospace garden office/studio.



**Price Guide: £850,000**

**Ashleigh Sundin**

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**rare!** From Sanderson Young



Ashleigh Sundin



West Farm Steading

## BOOM IN LUXURY HOUSE SALES BOOSTS NORTH EAST PROPERTY MARKET

A boom in summer sales of exclusive residential homes has bolstered a North East property market that’s traditionally slow and quiet during the summer period.

All the signs show 2019 is bucking that trend, with leading independent estate agent Sanderson Young experiencing an increase in transactions managed by its exclusive Rare! brand, which markets high end and luxury residential properties with a minimum value of £700,000.

“We’ve never experienced such a busy summer with Rare! properties, where we’ve been dealing with multi-million-pound house sales, week in week out,” says Duncan Young, Chairman of Sanderson Young, which has offices in Alnwick, Gosforth and Ponteland.

“Over the last six months, the market for luxury homes has been extremely active. Completions on houses have been carried out swiftly with buyers moving quickly to secure their next home.

“There’s certainly been a summer boom in high end properties and our Rare! team have been at the very centre of it; driving sales through and meeting the housing desires of our clients.”

In the last three months alone, Sanderson Young has received 42 instructions to sell within the Rare! estate agent team. The total value of this property is over £37 million, with average house sales ranging from one and a half million pounds to three million pounds.

Duncan continues: “Just three sales in Jesmond, Gosforth and Northumberland had a combined value of £15 million.

“We aren’t talking about small change here; wealthy people within the region are focused on their next move up the property ladder and eager to pay beyond the asking price; with many properties proving to be so popular they’re going to what we call in the industry ‘best and final’ stage and selling for way beyond the asking price.”



Mitford, Morpeth

### Exclusivity

Rare! is marketing several exclusive developments including West Farm Steading, an extraordinary boutique residential development in Earsdon, Whitley Bay and Ashford Grove, an exclusive set of eight detached country homes in Mitford, Morpeth.

“The new Earsdon development is a luxurious set of six houses that combines a rustic and modern design, set within a beautifully converted farm steading,” explains Duncan.

“Four are already sold; a great result given the high value of the homes and the time of year.”

Rare! has also just brought to the market Ashford Grove, an opulent and innovative residential development in Morpeth. The homes are built within a secluded retreat, with the largest plot 1.4 acres, that also offers a wildlife pond, ancient woodland and idyllic river frontage including fishing rights.

“Ashford Grove is a fantastic development,” adds Duncan. “We’ve already received huge interest in the homes there despite only being on the market for just four weeks or so.”

### A trusted and experienced agent

The Rare! team includes eight senior estate agents, handpicked on their experience and knowledge of the North East luxury homes market. Greg McCarthy is the latest addition to the team, joining in the summer as a regional valuer.

Rare! is managed by Sales Manager Ashleigh Sundin, who has over 30 years’ experience as an estate agent and has been the driving force behind the brand for the last seven years.

“It’s not only our experience within the high end North East residential market that appeals to clients,” explains Ashleigh. “It’s also our connections within the business community and our focus on providing a highly personalised customer service based on our expertise and knowledge of premium properties.

“Many of our clients don’t want to go out and search for an estate agent who will heavily market their current home via online portals and for sale boards.

“They want to work with a trusted and knowledgeable agent who understands their unique needs and respects their wishes of discretion in finding a new home.

“If you’re looking to buy your next home and need advice on selling your current property and evaluating your buying options, then please do get in touch with our Rare! team.

“I’ve personally seen some stunningly unique houses go onto the market that are being snapped up really quickly. Buyers aren’t holding their breath and although it’s been an unusually busy summer, we don’t expect the market to quieten down any time soon.”

For more information about Sanderson Young’s rare! office and team, please visit: [www.sandersonyoung.co.uk/office/rare](http://www.sandersonyoung.co.uk/office/rare)



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# YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

## NICKY WATSON

Director, JDDK Architects

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

I'm afraid I'm only an adopted Geordie having grown up in the South East until I came to study at Newcastle University in 1986, complete with all the usual Southern perceptions of a dirty, depressed region of slag heaps and pigeon lofts which I quickly found out were total rubbish! I graduated from my Masters degree in 1992 after spells studying in France and Italy and working in Botswana and have never wanted to leave the NE region since.

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

The construction industry is maybe a bit different from others - in the North East we tend to be shielded from the extremes of the 'boom & bust' cycle of elsewhere in the country so in some ways maybe it's actually easier to retain a stable business. Certainly at JDDK, we have an extremely low staff turnover with a very loyal and close-knit team who share common values with a mutual commitment to each other and the business.

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

Where to start? Culturally, I love the fact that on the doorstep are great restaurants, world-class theatre, music and art and fantastic nights out! Then there's the natural landscape with beautiful Northumberland & Durham just 30 minutes away offering some of the most spectacular scenery and beaches anyone could want.

### **Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?**

We're very fortunate to have our office in Millmount, one of the best examples of Arts & Crafts architecture in the region, now internally updated with the very latest AV technology for meetings and conferences so that's probably my favourite. When we redeveloped Jesmond Dene House into a hotel for our clients in 2005, we discovered two 'listening' rooms above and either side of the magnificent fireplace in the Main Hall. Sir Andrew Noble had installed them for his clerks to listen into supposedly private conversations his guests and customers had whilst warming themselves, so maybe we should move our meetings there!

### **Where do you like to eat out in the region?**

Well, we always like to support our clients, so Jesmond Dene House hotel is a magnificent treat and St Mary's Inn at Stannington is another great venue, as is the Briar Dene pub at Whitley Bay, but I really like the Ouseburn Valley which has great pubs and restaurants for food and drink in wonderfully relaxed surroundings.

### **Where do you like to unwind within the North East?**

I love singing and have sung since I was a small child, returning to it with lullabies for my children, so I joined the Sage Gateshead

Chamber Choir about 10 years ago. We sing every Monday and have concerts not only at Sage Gateshead but also all over the region and trips abroad - I love it!

### **Are the people really friendlier?**

YES - without a doubt! Just last month, we were cycling through North Tyneside and Northumberland in beautiful weather and everyone we met had a smile on their faces and greeted us with a friendly hello - it just doesn't happen elsewhere. I represent the NE on RIBA Council and am RIBA Vice President for Education so do spend a bit of time in London where people are sometimes a little different. The local RIBA architects community in the NE is a great bunch - very active and interested in the mutual benefits of working together to support the profession to be the best it can be.

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

That's the hard one - looking out west along the river from the Free Trade Inn must be there, as will be the view from sitting outside the Ship Inn at Low Newton, but I think the views along Hadrian's Wall probably win - we designed and delivered The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre for the Northumberland National Park Authority in 2017, so have spent a good deal of time there and never tire of the amazing Whin Sill.

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

I think the region offers way more in terms of quality of life and creativity as well as now digital expertise, a sector in which we are world class. Certainly in architecture and construction, the region has become a hub in digital technology creating highly paid employment and attracting some of the best people worldwide. We really do lead the rest of the country in many sectors from sub sea engineering to creative arts - long may it continue!

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

I've worked elsewhere, but my professional life has always been based here although, through our own work and my RIBA work, I have a great deal of contact with construction professionals nationwide and abroad. I came here knowing nothing about the region and really did think it was just old coal mines and redundant shipyards. Whether it be the sight of the bridges over the Tyne when returning from London, or the glorious views across the Northumberland landscape whilst travelling to a site visit, I am frequently reassured that I made the right decision when I came here at such a young age and grateful to the North East people for adopting me as an almost local!



Nicky Watson, JDDK Architects



## MORTGAGES AND BREXIT - ARE LONG TERM RATES THE SOLUTION?

In short – probably not. Lewis Chambers, Director of Mortgages and Finance at Bradley Hall, discusses why borrowers shouldn't panic.

Despite mortgage rates hitting a historic low and an abundance of fantastic deals on three- and five-year fixed rates, Brexit still seems to have encouraged borrowers to enter panic mode. A range of 10 year, and even 15 year, fixed rate mortgages have recently hit the market due to demand – however, is this really the best option for homeowners?

The obvious advantage of taking out such a long-term commitment is that it provides borrowers with peace of mind. It is assumed by many that our economic upheaval will bring changes to interest rates, and to many they are unsure whether rates will increase or decrease accordingly. Contrary to popular belief, evidence from economists suggests that there is no indication that the Bank of England

would increase its interest rates this year – meaning that mortgage rates are unlikely to become out of control within the near future.

The same thought process has also contributed towards the decline in tracker rate mortgages, which now only account for less than 5% of residential mortgages. One in ten of these are also confined by a collared rate – which means the interest fluctuations are limited and the borrower may not benefit from any decreases.

Choosing one of the 157 10-year fixed rate mortgages which are now available may seem like it will provide security, however, it could provide to be a costly exercise. If your circumstances change and you decide to move or sell up, you could be

faced with a substantial Early Repayment Charges (ERC) or porting fees, which may well equate to thousands of pounds. Virgin's new range of long-term mortgages has an ERC as high as 8% in the first five years which, based on the average UK house price of £229,431 could mean an extortionate charge of £18,354.48.

Interest rates on a 10-year fixed mortgage currently stand at an average of 3.01 per cent, whereas buyers could benefit from as low as 1.72 per cent on a five-year fixed rate. This option has been by far the most popular, with many banks offering a number of options to suit individual borrowers. The total has reached almost 2,400 loan types – meaning lenders must create attractive deals to stand out from the rest.

If you are looking for your first home, looking to move or remortgage please contact our specialist mortgage team 0191 260 2000 or email [mortgages@bradleyhall.co.uk](mailto:mortgages@bradleyhall.co.uk)



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# SERVICE CHARGES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

By Catherine Affleck, Group Operations Director and Head of Property Management

Due to central government cuts to local authority budgets, councils have had to reconsider the services they can afford to provide to local residents.

When developers create a new housing scheme it is now the norm that the local authority will not adopt the roads, footpaths or street lighting. Often the council will also not collect refuse and recycling waste. This means that these services need to be procured through private sector contractors, and managed accordingly, and this is where a service charge comes into play.

Since the launch of our Land, Development & New Homes department, our Property Management team has been asked to provide specialist advice in relation to the implementation and management of service charges across a range of the new build schemes upon which our residential operation is instructed in the sales and marketing.

In our experience many people are not aware that service charges are often applicable to developments other than apartment blocks. We are increasingly becoming involved in schemes where the individual house plots are sold on a freehold basis subject to an obligation to contribute towards a service charge for shared services. These services commonly include landscaping, refuse collection and the maintenance and repair of unadopted roads, footpaths and street lighting. Depending on the legal set up of the shared land ownership additional costs to provide public liability insurance and health and safety risk assessments are often necessary.



We are often asked why a service charge is payable in addition to council tax and, as there is no reduction in council tax offered for those residents who also must pay a service charge, it is often misunderstood that residents are paying for services twice. Council tax and service charges are mutually exclusive with council tax also covering a

wide range of other local services such as planning, transport, public roads and footpaths, police, fire service, libraries, leisure centres, parks and recreation spaces, refuse collection and disposal, environmental health and trading standards for the whole of the local area.

As RICS Regulated Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents Bradley Hall understand that, due to their usually uncapped nature, service charges can be an off-putting concern for buyers. It has been reported recently that the national average annual service charge in the UK is £1,863 per annum, with the average new build service charge being £2,777 per annum. In our experience developers do want to reduce the ongoing liability for their buyers and we therefore work closely with our developer clients during the initial stages of the development process to ensure that their schemes can be designed with the service charge set up in such a way as to mitigate the ongoing liability and, therefore, future service charge costs for purchasers.

Service charges run on a no profit, no loss basis and can only be used to pay for the services provided on site. To ensure transparency any future cost headings are identified in the initial budget and prospective buyers are invited to discuss their ongoing obligations with our Property Management team should they require any further information or reassurance.

For more information on our Property Management services please call 0191 232 8080 or email [catherine.affleck@bradleyhall.co.uk](mailto:catherine.affleck@bradleyhall.co.uk)

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The estate comprises 21 stunning, rustic-style and carefully planned homes, on generous sized plots, accompanied by landscaped communal spaces and car-friendly access. A total of nine barns - modelled on the original working barns of the farm - and twelve new homes designed to accompany the original

structures make up West Chevington Farm.

Generous open-plan living areas range from 1,500 to 2,700 square feet, complete with skylights, sun-rooms, bi-fold doors, balconies, contemporary courtyards, water features and beautifully landscaped walkways.

Stunning open-plan living areas, beautiful yet functional kitchens, luxury bathrooms and sanctuary like bedrooms blend the timeless aesthetic of classic looks with contemporary twists and conveniences.



Contact the Bradley Hall New Homes Team on  
01670 518 518

[morpeth@bradleyhall.co.uk](mailto:morpeth@bradleyhall.co.uk)





# SUCCESSFUL FIRST HALF OF 2019 FOR INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY MARKET, REVEALS NEW REPORT

A new report released by Knight Frank reveals a successful first half of this year for the North East’s industrial property market – with take-up of large units more than doubling since H1 in 2018.

Despite political uncertainty, take-up of units over 50,000 sq. ft. totalled 3.22m sq. ft in H1 2019. This represents a 7 percent increase when compared to the previous six months and is more than double the total recorded in H1 2018.

Notably, the Tritax letting to Amazon at Integra 61, Durham, underpinned the rise accounting for 60 percent of take-up.

Simon Haggie, partner at Knight Frank Newcastle says the “pleasant surprise” is that 70 percent of these transactions are pre-lets which, in addition to the Amazon deal, includes two new builds.

The new units are 131,000 sq.ft. on the International Advance Manufacturing Park in Washington - let to Nissan supplier, Faltec - and The Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing (CESAM) in Sunderland which is 126,279 sq.ft.

The Logic Report details other notable deals, in terms of scale, which are the sale of the Coty factory in Seaton Delaval (370,000 sq.ft) to Vbites Foods owned by Heather Mills-McCartney. This is in addition to the 180,000 sq.ft. the company acquired last year from Walkers Crisps. “Clearly, the demand for vegan foods is growing rapidly,” says Simon.

As would be expected, supply of units over 50,000 sq.ft. has fallen again and currently stands at under 2.45m sq. ft. – down from a high in 2017 of over 4.2m sq. ft.

### Shortage of modern sheds

Simon talks us through the state of the market: “The worrying fact is that only around 300,000 sq. ft. of



Simon Haggie

the region’s 50,000 sq. ft–plus units can be described as modern. There is a crippling shortage of up-to-date sheds over 100,000 sq. ft. – there are actually only two currently in the North East region.

“There is nothing to suggest that developers will speculatively build big sheds, although Highbridge Properties have just been granted planning consent for 155,000 sq. ft. of space on their Jade site at Murton on the A19 in Durham. This scheme comprises 7 units, the largest of which will be 45,000 sq. ft.

“Like many of the other newly serviced estates in the region, Jade at Murton has received significant infrastructure funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership and has Enterprise Zone status but is still likely to require a further leg-up before we see any buildings constructed on site.

“The demise of British Steel has dealt a further body blow to the region or Teesside to be more specific, which is still planning a regeneration strategy following the closure of SSI’s Redcar Steelworks. The latest Liquidation affects the Skinningrove Works at Saltburn which employs around 700 people and has existed in this location since 1874. It is a relatively remote location which will struggle to attract new industry in the event that a buyer isn’t found for the plant.

### Scarce investment in sheds thanks to Brexit

“Despite the fact that we have many foreign-owned businesses in the region, there have been relatively few retrenching to home soil. So, for the most part, they seem to be toughing out the Brexit situation. That said, a very limited number are actually investing in their UK facilities until they can see what the economic landscape will be post-Brexit.

### Loyal workforce is major strength

“The North East region has a reputation for loyal and hardworking staff and that, along with lower wage rates and cheaper property costs, will, I believe, keep the area competitive on the international stage. It is no coincidence that Amazon is building 3.5m sq. ft. in a region with a population of only 2.6m. They have struggled to recruit staff in more recognised distribution locations and despite the higher levels of mechanisation, labour is still a major part of their costs. Interestingly, they are still rumoured to be considering further opportunities in the region. We remain hopeful rather than optimistic,” said Simon.

Simon Haggie is Partner in the industrial agency team at Knight Frank Newcastle. He can be contacted on 0191 594 5009 or [simon.haggie@knightfrank.co.uk](mailto:simon.haggie@knightfrank.co.uk)

# LAND TO SELL?

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Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The law of unintended consequences has long been familiar to economists and is rapidly becoming a fixture here in the private rental sector.

**Well meaning legislation where the intent is wholly good, but somebody really hasn't thought it through.**

The most obvious example was the scrapping of letting agency fees, greeted with glee by tenants and consumer rights champions who completely missed the elephant standing in the corner of the room. These fees were not going to magically vanish with the stroke of a pen. Agents still need to perform all the tasks they did before but now the financial burden is removed from the tenant and onto the landlord. And guess where the landlord passes those fees? Yep, straight back to the tenant in increased rent so everyone is back to square one.

Another unintended consequence of recent legislation is a small number of landlords giving up on the long term tenancy market and renting short term through Airbnb. There are now property management companies that specialise in managing short term tenancies for landlords using Airbnb.

While £200 or more per night may seem attractive, many of these landlords seem oblivious to the risks. With a long-term rental, references and bona fides will have been checked by the letting agency who will hold a deposit to cover any damage to the property. Airbnb does none of these things.

Not all Airbnb users are Stag 'n Hen do's but it doesn't take many to get a property listed for anti-social behaviour. Alarmingly, the police have recently been briefing on pop-up brothels using short term lets to operate in residential areas. With these short 'holiday' lets, landlords really have no control over who is going to occupy their property.

And it is not only landlords attracted by the chance of a quick buck. We have recently come across a small number of tenants prepared to sub-let their property for a weekend while they 'sofa surf' at a friends flat. We called one tenant to warn them they were in breach of their tenancy agreement and could face eviction if they continued to sub-let. They asked how we knew they were sub-letting.

'Airbnb' written in black felt tip with an arrow to their apartment bell was a clue.

Most landlords adjust their business model to deal with increased legislation and costs but many have simply had enough, selling their property portfolio to seek easier investments. Again, the law of unintended consequences means legislation intended to protect tenants is actually reducing the available private rental stock.

It was American writer and film critic Richard Schickel who observed "The law of unintended consequences pushes us ceaselessly through the years permitting no pause for perspective". The next piece of well-meaning legislation that will undoubtedly backfire would be any attempt to fix rents through central or local government rent control. It is inelegant to jump up and down shouting "TOLD YOU SO" but I fear that is exactly what I will be doing should this one backfire and go horribly wrong.

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# “BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE” - KARPET MILLS OPEN NEW BENTON BRANCH



Karpet Mills, the North East’s leading quality carpet retailer, have announced the opening of a new branch in Benton, building on what has already been a very successful 2019 so far.



Joel Dickinson

Opened in June, the new 3,000 sqft Benton branch becomes the 5th Karpet Mills superstore in the North East region, and the second new branch in two years, with the Hexham store opening in early 2018. The new branch is located in the busy North Tyneside Industrial estate, opposite the ASDA megastore.

“We are delighted with the new store location” says Karpet Mills director, Joel Dickinson “We are excited to expand into North Tyneside, and bring our signature first-rate customer service and unbeatable deals to the region.”

Karpet Mills are also delighted to announce further expansion plans for Autumn 2019, with the flagship Kingston Park branch doubling in size. The new showroom will incorporate their Designer Flooring premium department, featuring famous luxury products such as Amtico, Moduleo, Hugh Mackay, Crucial Trading and many more. The total 9,000 sqft premises will display the very best flooring products available in today’s market, all at unbeatable prices with first rate customer service.

With stores in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland,

Hexham, and now Benton, the 6th generation family run business is able to offer even more quality carpet and flooring deals. “We offer consistently high-quality products at consistently low prices. Recent growth of our business has significantly boosted our buying power. We source ‘A-Grade’ stock from across Europe and buy in bulk to pass the savings directly to our customers” these are the words of Joel Dickinson, Operations Director of Karpet Mills, the North East’s biggest stockist of quality carpets. He adds, “We are able to sell famous branded products at prices not normally seen by the general public. We sell Axminsters, heavy weight 80/20 wool twists and stainfree saxonies to our customers at better than wholesale cost.”

Karpet Mills combines the experience gleaned from over a 140 years trading with the modern day expectations of quality and service to provide the full package for every customer. All branches (Kingston Park, Gateshead, Hetton-Le-Hole, Hexham and now Benton) are open for trade seven days a week.



# THE SEVEN KEYS TO HOUSE SALES AND LETTINGS

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Most people find their new home via a web search, so why not sell your property through Seven Keys and maximise that online exposure?

They'll give you guidance and advertise your home on a selection of property portals including Rightmove, Zoopla and On The Market. If you're the kind of person who likes to leave things to the professionals, then Seven Keys are exactly that. They'll take down your sales particulars, including photos, floor plans and property descriptions, all at highly competitive prices starting from just £299!

Have a look at the properties below to see what some of the Seven Key clients paid to sell their properties.

What about if you own a property and would like to let it out?

No problem. Seven Keys are a fully accredited lettings agency. As with their house sales packages, you can choose the level of involvement you like. Landlord fees start from as low as £99 including listing your property on the main portals as mentioned above. If you're after an agent to fully manage your property, they work to fixed fees and they'll take care of everything for £299 plus a £49 monthly fee.

"We're a family run digital hybrid estate agency," said MD Ross Parker. "With our combined backgrounds in finance and property, we're able to combine our skills to make it easier and much cheaper for clients to sell or let their properties."

So whether you're looking to sell or buy, let or rent, click onto the Seven Keys website at [www.sevenkeys.co.uk](http://www.sevenkeys.co.uk). You'll find all their packages and fees, along with a full selection of properties which are currently available.

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Young people from Hope Church in Sunderland raised £700 for Oasis Community Housing by taking part in the Tired Soles event



Elizabeth House supports young women and babies who would otherwise be homeless.



The Black and Gold ball fundraiser takes place on October 18th at The Vermont Hotel. Photo credit: Nastya Gepp



JMDA Ltd and their team recently renovated Basis@Gateshead to mark their 10th anniversary.



Oasis Community Housing offers a wide range of support to root out the causes of homelessness.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1984, a group of young Christians wanted to offer affordable tenancies to young women. Minutes from a 1985 meeting make for depressing reading; members felt defeated by the lack of interest from churches and trusts and the group almost ended. Fortunately, there were not enough members present to dissolve the project.

By 1987 though, the group had purchased their first house, and local support had grown, to the extent that five young women were able to move in. From there, the charity began to gather pace under its original name, Aquila Way, and more properties were added. In 2014, the charity became part of the Oasis family, and last year was renamed Oasis Community Housing.

### OASIS COMMUNITY HOUSING - AT A GLANCE

- Two drop-in centres in Sunderland and Gateshead for people experiencing homelessness.
- Supported housing for young women - No.3 in London and the Naomi Project in Gateshead.
- Supported housing for women and their babies – Elizabeth House.
- Tenancies for people journeying away from homelessness, through the Basis Beds project, which includes ongoing support to help people maintain a tenancy successfully.
- Karis project, for mums and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse.
- Aspire programme – support for those furthest from the job market, since unemployment is a common cause of Homelessness.
- Empower programme – help for women living with domestic abuse.
- Supported housing for young men and women in Croydon – the Foyer.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Support the Elizabeth House renovation:** 10k is needed so that the second part of the Elizabeth House renovation can begin this autumn.

Elizabeth House is for mums and expectant mums who have survived trauma and mental health problems that most of us couldn't imagine. As a result their little ones are placed under child protection orders, but Elizabeth House is a chance for these families to stay together and get the happy ever after they deserve. The team work night and day to help mums build the life and parenting skills they need to help their babies thrive.

[www.justgiving.com/campaign/10kforElizabethHouse](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/10kforElizabethHouse)

### BECOME A REGULAR DONOR

- Go to [oasiscommunityhousing.org](http://oasiscommunityhousing.org) or email [bdu@oasiscommunityhousing.org](mailto:bdu@oasiscommunityhousing.org)
- £10** buys enough tea and coffee for one day in the charity's drop-in centres in Sunderland and Gateshead.
- £25** buys a move-in pack to welcome a new resident (toiletries, bedding and towels).
- £50** buys a move-on pack for a resident ready for their own tenancy (pots, pans, crockery and cutlery).
- £100** buys a week's worth of emergency accommodation for someone in housing crisis.
- £250** pays for five days of accommodation in one of the charity's residential projects.

### COME JOIN IN

The charity is hosting several events this autumn, not to be missed.

#### 35th Anniversary Celebrations

Thursday, December 5th  
Hilton Hotel, Gateshead

#### Black and Gold Ball

Friday, October 18th from 7pm  
The Vermont Hotel, Newcastle

#### Sing for the Soul service

Sunday, October 13th from 6.30pm  
Newcastle Cathedral



## ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS

By Alison Goulding

Thirty-five years ago, a group of young Christians pooled their funds to offer affordable housing in Gateshead. From those seeds, one of the North East's foremost homelessness charities, Oasis Community Housing, has gone from strength to strength.

CHRIS\* had never expected to find himself homeless. After his marriage broke down, he went to live with his daughter, but the house was so crowded that he felt like a burden and he left, thinking there must be some alternative.

He spent the night on a park bench, and when he woke, his bag had been stolen. Shaken and upset he walked into Basis@Gateshead, Oasis Community Housing's drop-in centre for people in housing crisis.

The team made him a hot drink, and sat him down to find out what was going on. That night, Chris was able to sleep safely in emergency accommodation sourced by staff, who went on to set him up with a long term tenancy. With some support to find work, Chris soon had a job, and came back to volunteer for the charity. He would make a hot drink for people in the same situation as him, knowing from his own experience that things could get better. Chris has never been homeless since that terrible night.

In the past year, Oasis Community Housing has walked with 3,000 people facing homelessness for many different reasons. The charity believes that homelessness does not have to become a downward spiral, and runs a broad range of projects to tackle its causes and support people working to get their lives back on track.

Chief Executive David Smith joined the charity two years ago, and has pushed for an even bigger and broader service, while retaining the same level of love and care.

He said: "We are a mission-centered charity, and our mission is urgent. Between 2010 and 2017, rough sleeping increased by 169%\* [Statistics courtesy of Homeless Link]

"And it's not just numbers that feed this urgency, we see every day the growing demand across our projects.

"We run a range of projects that aim to root out homelessness and its causes at every level. Education, aspiration, empowerment and the practical tools to achieve run through the core of each.

"Life has become more complicated for many of us in the last ten years, and this is particularly true for the people we serve. Mental health, addiction, government austerity and local council cuts are squeezing people who cannot cope with any more pressure in their lives.

"But complexity doesn't scare us – we're really good at getting people back on track and fulfilling their potential."

As it gets ready to celebrate its 35th anniversary, the charity also

prepares to extend Basis@Gateshead into a sit-up service for people who need help outside working hours. Government funding, managed by 13 North East councils, will enable the project's work to greet people released from hospital in the middle of the night or during the weekend, as well as expanding tenancy services into South Tyneside.

Basis@Gateshead is a sanctuary for men and women who are sleeping rough, or are in housing crisis. From the early days, the service has grown into an 18 plus provision, offering a chance to shower, do laundry, eat and get warm again. As the years have gone by, the help on offer has deepened to provide pathways into housing, support into employment and a multitude of services that tackle systemic injustice, such as benefit sanctions and illegal evictions.

The programme has broadened to include Help to Rent, Help through Crisis, Basis Beds, Fulfilling Lives, and the Social Impact Bond team. Aquila House, on Warwick Street, became the hub for all this last year, and a Basis@Sunderland which replicates the service is thriving at Park Road Church in Sunderland.

Phil Conn, Director of Programmes, said: "The growth of the service has been organic and that's helped. Recruitment has been key as well. It's finding people who have real heart for this work. It's finding people who have that capacity to connect and have a real sense of compassion for people who don't often experience that."

David is quick to echo that the success of the charity is down to the commitment of the staff.

He added: "Our project teams deserve recognition for all that they have achieved in the past year. They bring extreme grace, compassion and perseverance to the people we serve, who often live with layers of trauma.

"This year, on top of the huge demands of their jobs, they've found the time and creativity to start a pop-up choir, a baking club that we hope to turn into a social enterprise and art classes for the people we work with.

"In our supported housing projects they've clubbed together to help young women with their homework, cooked Sunday lunches, had countless heart to hearts and attended a graduation for a resident as she completed the first six steps of the 12 step programme after a long battle with alcohol addiction. They are nothing short of incredible."

*\*Not his real name.*

To find out more, follow Oasis Community Housing on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram or email [bdu@oasiscommunityhousing.org](mailto:bdu@oasiscommunityhousing.org)

## RAMARKETING EXPANDS MANCHESTER OFFICE

Pharmaceutical and life sciences marketing agency, ramarketing, is continuing its recruitment drive following the appointment of two new staff members and the expansion of its Manchester office.

To support increased demand for its PR, content and digital services, the company has appointed PR manager, Eleanor Harms and digital content manager, Amy Hirst with business development manager, Yasmin Davoodi also moving to the Manchester office from the agency's Newcastle HQ to support the business' continued growth in the region.

The agency has now expanded into larger premises in the WeWork development to accommodate its growth in the city as it plans to build its Manchester based team. Since opening its second UK office in WeWork Spinningfields in 2018, the company has grown by 40%, doubled its workforce and taken on a number of new clients across North America, Europe and Asia.

The news follows the opening of the agency's first US office earlier this year with company founder, Raman Sehgal moving stateside to head up operations in Boston.

Emma Banks, managing director of ramarketing's UK and European operations said: "The last 18 months have been really exciting for ramarketing as we've launched our first US office and started to build our team in the North West. With a thriving life sciences sector and a vibrant creative community, Manchester has been the ideal location for our second UK office and we are committed to continuing to invest in the region.

"In addition to the positions we have already filled, we have an immediate need for experienced PR professionals in Manchester to help us meet our ambitious growth plans."

ramarketing was set-up in 2009 and now has over 35 staff delivering design, digital and PR services to companies operating in the global pharmaceutical, biotechnology and life sciences space. Its clients include some of the biggest names in the sector along with many fast growing life science companies.



## RAFT OF CLIENT WINS AND RETENTIONS FOR BLUECLAW

Leeds digital marketing agency Blueclaw is celebrating a bumper 12 months with a range of new client wins and retainers.

The agency has picked up briefs for cloud computing supplier Iomart, group tour operator Tucan Travel, ski break specialist Skiline and holiday lettings agency Travel Chapter, which has 30 different brands including Holiday Cottages. Blueclaw has also landed new contracts with bookmaker Mark Jarvis, igaming specialist Gaming Innovation Group and sports betting tips provider Online Betting Guide (OLBG).

The search marketing specialist has also been retained by cruise line Royal Caribbean, car leasing specialist AMT Leasing and global gaming firm Betway.

Blueclaw strategy director Larissa Green said: "This reflects how significant a specialist the agency now is in these sectors, and is proof of our skills in achieving results in those fields.

"It is an incredibly exciting time for us. We are very much looking forward to working with our new clients to deliver great campaigns and boost their business, and to continue the high standard of work for our newly retained clients."



## FOSTERING AGENCY SHORTLISTED FOR NE MARKETING AWARD

Team Fostering has been selected as a finalist in this year's North East Marketing Awards in the 'Not for Profit Campaign of the Year' category.

The agency has been shortlisted following a campaign in January 2019 that celebrated ethical fostering across the region, providing a deeper understanding of the difference between not-for-profit providers and for-profit organisations.

The campaign was led by Charlotte Brydon, Marketing Officer who commented, "Operating as a not-for-profit agency is a significant part of our service provision, supporting our mission statement to put children's futures first."

"To be shortlisted for this award is a fantastic achievement, both for Team Fostering and for all not-for-profit fostering providers that seek to promote ethical fostering. The other finalists in the category are incredible and we're thrilled to be recognised alongside such organisations."

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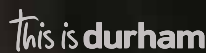


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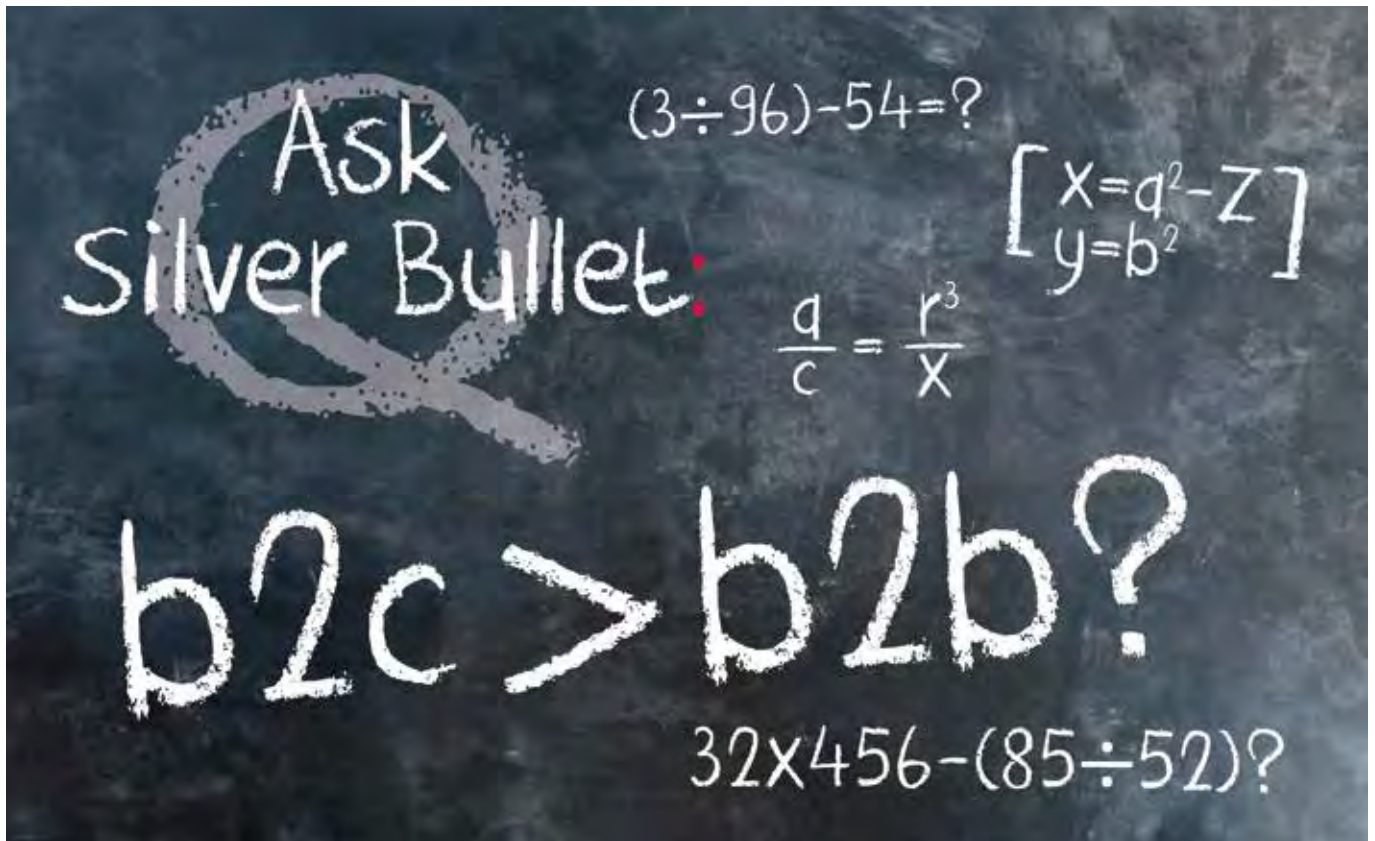
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“Understand the reason for branding and marketing in consumer goods, but are these important for business to business brands?”

The short answer is yes, but I'd have to admit a vested interest in this considering around 80% of Silver Bullet's current business is from B2B companies for whom branding is a huge factor in their success and of vital importance in their marketing.

However, there has long been a perception, which actually still exists in a decreasing number of organisations, that whilst branding is important in consumer goods ranging from detergents and other FMCG to major purchases such as cars and new homes, it is of less importance for B2B companies where sales are driven by the product or service and the sales force. In fact, it is now increasingly recognised, that nothing could be further from the truth and marketing is just as important, if not more, in B2B sales as it is in the B2C sectors.

One of the best ways I came across to differentiate the two sectors is that in B2B you're marketing a product or service that the buyer doesn't want, but needs, whilst in B2C you're marketing something he or she doesn't need but wants. In simple terms, I don't want to shell out for a new van for my business but I need one, whilst although there's nothing wrong with my current TV, I'd like this new one.

So the old perception was that you simply stated the facts or features in B2B whilst B2C sold the benefits or the dream – as the old "Mad Men" used to say, "Selling the sizzle, not the steak" with B2B marketing

rational rather than emotional.

Moreover, B2B purchases are usually higher cost, long-term affairs with an extensive buying process and also often involve different people purchasing than those who will be directly involved with the product or purchase. In addition, sales targets for B2B goods and services are inevitably short-term so that brand building is increasingly important and beneficial to sales – creativity, story telling and relationship building pay very real benefits – and it shouldn't be forgotten that procurers of B2B services and products are human too and just as influenced by the power of brand their B2C colleagues. As one marketing consultant put it, "Businesspeople do not park their emotions and personality in a cardboard box when they come to work and buy products and services."

Historically, B2B in-house marketing staff were generally seen as the poor relations of the sales team – the people who organised the corporate golf days and the product photography! Fortunately the Internet changed that perception by clearly showing how leads were generated – the sales forces began to understand that buyers were not simply interested in a list of functions but were buying into the stories and content behind them – the brand was clearly important, especially given the fact that the purchase decision would probably be made by more than one person, would be taken over a long period and would probably involve a considerable investment.

Recent research by the global marketing agency, FleishmanHillard, into how brand affects B2B marketing and sales revealed that 32% of people rank brand reputation as the most influential attribute they look for in a supplier, second only to value for money (57%). Buyers also want to work with brands that have built up a reputation and management is now paying closer attention to how branding can help businesses stand out in a crowded market where the buying process is long and complex.

Claudia Bate, head of technology at the agency, commented, "Modern B2B marketing needs to appeal to both hearts and minds. The decision-makers that matter do not leave their emotions and personalities at the door when they go to work. Creative storytelling, quality content and a distinctive brand identity are hugely important tools for breaking through the noise to drive real business value."

What's really interesting and incredibly effective is when marketing tactics from one sector can be used in the other and 'hybrid' marketing, where a company with both consumer and corporate customers applies B2C techniques to B2B markets, and vice versa, tapping into emotion through creativity and storytelling. The sales person used to be the face of many companies – today their story is told through a host of other channels including their B2B marketing and website.

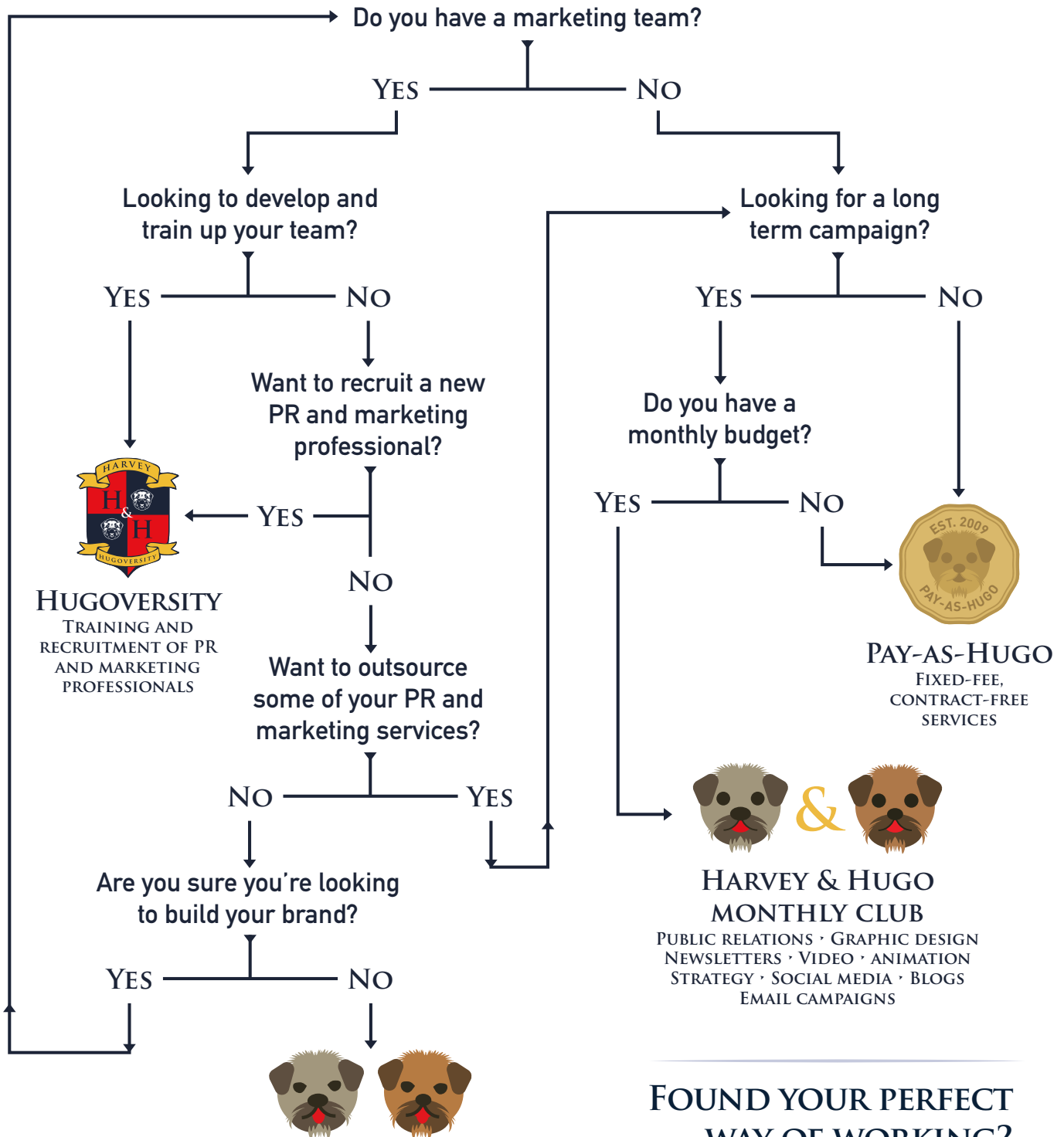
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# WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT SPORT?

By Veronica Swindale, managing director of nesma

Veronica interviews members of nesma's network to discuss issues they face in achieving their marketing objectives.

This month she managed to grab some time with John Oates, Head of Commercial at Newcastle Rugby Ltd. Just in time, as the rugby season is about to kick-off, and the Rugby World Cup in Tokyo will keep rugby fans enthralled through to November.

**Big picture question for you, what role do you think that sport has in society's wellbeing whether as a player or a spectator?**

Sport undoubtedly has a significant role to play in this area since it is a useful "engagement" vehicle which can be used to influence, inspire and motivate people. At Newcastle Rugby, for example, we have a Charity which employs 10 people who use the "power" of sport to improve the lives of thousands of individuals from across the region.

Rugby also provides positive role models for young people since it emphasises the importance of discipline, team building, positive attitudes towards authority, fun and friendship.

Nelson Mandela summed this up when he said "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way little else does."

**How effective do you believe sports sponsorship is for corporates?**

Sports Sponsorship can be extremely useful. It can be used to build corporate brand awareness, both locally and nationally. The club's networks and match days can be used for corporates to sell their services or products plus the Charity can be used as a partner for their CSR policies.

Finally, hospitality, which is usually part of sponsorship packages, is used by corporates to develop relationships with potential and existing customers.

**Do you have any concerns at all about the amount of influence the sponsors have?**

Sponsors invest in sport for the business development opportunities it provides them. Sponsorship is, therefore, a partnership in which the club receives an income to assist its growth, and the business gets business outcomes that support it to develop too.



We, therefore, need to recognise that we may need to adapt slightly to fulfil the needs of the sponsors, for example, changing the kick-off day/time.

Having said this, we are all conscious of how powerful sponsorship can be in influencing our audience. This means that we think very seriously about linking to products that may have a negative influence on their health and wellbeing.

**I was asked to become part of a football Business Club. My principal reason for not taking part was the prevalence of betting companies in a family participation sport. What is your stance on this?**

The number of gambling companies and firms that sponsor professional sports teams is on the rise. While a majority of them sponsor football teams, the number of operators that sponsor rugby is also beginning to grow.

My personal view is that the partnership between the sponsor and the club can be positive for both parties. For many people betting is a part of their weekly routine, with many of them betting sensibly. However, whilst I recognise that betting is legal, and that the majority of brands are promoting Gamble Aware programmes, we do need to consider where the branding is visible. This is especially important since it could influence young people who are too young to understand the potential dangers.

**What are you doing at the Falcons to connect with commercial partners?**

Newcastle Falcons has much to offer Commercial Partners and connecting with a new audience is vital for our development. We work via social media, on match days when we have a broad audience and through referrals/introductions to find partners.

The fact that 73% of the rugby audience is of socio-economic group ABC1 and that 38% of the audience are either directors or owners of businesses also attracts enquiries from many companies.

We recently held the launch of our business club, over 200 individuals came to hear Harry Bartlett MC (28 years in the UK Special Forces) talk about the critical aspects of leadership. The club is bi-monthly and provides informative presentations and brand building and networking opportunities.

**The World Cup starts in Tokyo in September – will I see you there?**

No, you won't! While I am excited about the World Cup, I am also enthused about the exciting things happening to the Newcastle Falcons Brand. With the development of women's and girls' rugby and wheelchair rugby as well as plans for a new stand, we have a lot to do! I need to remain in Newcastle to play my part in making all these things happen!



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The new term starts week commencing 23 September. Get in touch to find out more.

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# THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WORK - AMY FORSHAW OF EXECUTIVE COMPASS

Here we meet one of Highlights PR's clients and find out about their work and what motivates them.



Amy Forshaw

**This month, we hear from Amy Forshaw of Executive Compass based in Hoult's Yard, Newcastle.**

Executive Compass provides bid and tender writing support for organisations bidding for contracts across all industry sectors. They employ 17 people in their Newcastle and Glasgow offices.

**What is the best thing about your job?**

The variety – no two days are the same and it's very fast paced. I also get the opportunity to work alongside SMEs from across the UK and to make a real difference to their businesses.

**What is your proudest achievement?**

I am very proud that I have helped Executive Compass to double their turnover in the past five years and been a part of their expansion and growth. We typically undertake 40 bids+ at any one time, with quite short deadlines, so it's vital to be organised and proactive all of the time.

**What advice would you give to someone starting in your career?**

Be open minded to different career options

and learn as much as you can – I have ended up in a quite niche area that I didn't previously know existed!

**What was the biggest challenge you've faced in your career so far?**

Probably at the start of my career with Executive Compass, getting to grips with a lot of different industry sectors and a niche service – that was quite challenging at the start.

**How is your business going to change in the next 10 years?**

There are lots of exciting plans in place for expansion in the near future and we are looking forward to further growth which will help us go from strength to strength.

**What is the best part of your job?**

Seeing a client's success when they secure a new contract through our support!

**What do you like to do out of work?**

I like to travel and love trying new food and restaurants.

Contact Executive Compass at Studio 5, THE KILN, Hoult's Yard, Walker Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2HL  
 info@executivecompass.co.uk • 0191 338 6975/020 3507 0314



## Is your business on the media's RADAR?

Imagine being the go to person when the media needs an expert. Well, now you can with Highlights PR's new RADAR exclusive membership.

RADAR is a 12-month members subscription with a low monthly payment with many PR benefits.

So, what are these benefits? Well, apart from being on a list of experts sent to the media on a regular basis, we also include the following:

- \* A dedicated private RADAR Facebook page.
- \* Up to 2 hours per year crisis PR management advice.
- \* A guaranteed business interview on Radio Northumberland's Business and Lifestyle show.
- \* RADAR client feature in the Highlights PR newsletter (3500 circulation plus social media)
- \* Exclusive RADAR club special offers on PR, media training, social activities and more.

What could this mean for you? Well, let's look at some examples of how RADAR has worked for my clients.

We've had a lot of BBC radio interviews including sales guru Victoria Fleming giving tips on how to beat the salesmen at their own game, James Palmer from New Thinking giving advice on how to cope with the pressures of Christmas and the UK's best blacksmith Stephen Lunn appearing on BBC TV's Country File after a RADAR meeting with a BBC Newcastle interviewer. Imperial Claims also featured in the May edition of Northern Insight Magazine.

These are just a fraction of our successes and if you would like to be part of this exclusive group, please contact me for more details.

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## Combine the digital and the real world to create a successful acquisition campaign.

Our client Titan Travel are an award-winning worldwide holidays and short breaks provider. See how they have used direct mail to improve customer relationships, and increase sales.

### CLIENT REQUIREMENT:

Titan approached MetroMail with a challenge. They were finding a proportion of their customers were going on their website, viewing holidays – some even putting them in their baskets, but then not completing their purchase. They wanted to re-target these customers in a timely manner, but hoped to achieve better response rates than email generally generates.

They know that their audience are very receptive to mail, therefore, wanted to trial mail for 'cart abandonment'.

### OUR SOLUTION:

Our Data and IT team worked with Titan to devise a solution, whereby data captured on Titan's website is automatically sent to MetroMail through a secure file transfer process. This data is then used to create personalised mailers; each shows a product overview in a simple, but dynamic form. In addition, they have tested incorporating incentives to encourage customers to go back and complete their purchase. The turnaround time on this campaign is 48 hours, so the end customer receives their mailer 2 days after visiting Titan's website.



### RESULT:

As a result of this reactive campaign, Titan saw a **20.6% conversion rate!** They still use this method of reactive marketing and continue to see excellent results.

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## CURTIS GABRIEL CELEBRATE FACEBOOK MARKETING PARTNER STATUS



North East Social, Digital & Design agency Curtis Gabriel have been celebrating achieving Facebook Marketing Partner Status.

“

*We're delighted to announce that, due to our continued growth and success, Facebook have invited Curtis Gabriel to join their Facebook Marketing Partner programme for agencies.*

”

Curtis Gabriel are delighted to announce that we are now part of a global community of companies being recognised for excellent performance on the world's largest social networking platform.

As an official partner, our performance is vetted according to the results we achieve for current clients, which helps to improve Facebook's client referral scheme. Additionally, with direct marketing and development support from Facebook, we have a deeper bank of knowledge to achieve quality return on investment for our clients.

Facebook Marketing Partners are measured for excellence in exactly the things you need to get more from your marketing. Whether it's managing multiple campaigns at scale, improving results measurement or reaching new audiences - what your business requires is what we do best.

Martin Such, Curtis Gabriel CEO said: "We're delighted to announce that, due to our continued growth and success, Facebook have invited Curtis Gabriel to join their Facebook Marketing Partner programme for agencies.

Being a Facebook Marketing Partner allows Curtis Gabriel to broaden our expertise in the areas of organic and paid social media, with a new suite of resources, tools and educational literature available to our team.

On top of this, our new status will allow us to achieve our number one goal for our clients – delivering excellent results across a broad range of campaigns and sectors."

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## MEDIAWORKS ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF DAY

Mediaworks recently held their annual Charity Golf Day at Close House. This year their chosen charity was Prostate Cancer UK and the theme was Quiz Shows. Each hole had a mini game before players continued their round. Games included, Supermarket Sweep, Bullseye, and Catchphrase to name a few. A great day was had by all and over £2,500 was raised on the day.







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# YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

## GEETA RAL

Director of JAM Marketing Limited & JAM Prints

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

Born in Gateshead, lived in South Shields, my dad has an off-license, still works in it to this day, aged 73. He is where we all get our work-ethic from. He is a true inspiration.

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

Competitive and equally the Geordie's have a way of helping people out, like nowhere else in the country. There is a real camaraderie that seems to be only available in the North East.

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

Being close to the beach, being close to the countryside and close to all the amenities that other cities enjoy, without the vast size of the likes of London. Although I love visiting the capital, there really is everything on our doorstep, and I wouldn't choose to work and live anywhere else. As I have just joined JAM Marketing and JAM Prints as a director, I think my business partner, Jackie Marston would tie me to the office desk if I suggested moving to another part of the country too!

### **Do you have a favourite hotspot for a business meeting?**

One of our clients is STACK, Newcastle, the social hub container village. Full of privately-owned small retail outlets, quirky businesses and awesome food and drink offerings. The atmosphere is amazing at the weekend too for a day/night out, so best of both worlds. We can showcase the place and enjoy what it has to offer at the same time.

### **Where do you like to eat out in the region?**

I love The Muddler, owner by Danieli Holdings, straight opposite the Theatre Royal. Exceptional Asian tapas, great service, but you must book, as it is very popular, so walk-ins from the street are somewhat limited. On the same Thai theme, Orangegrass in South Shields is also on my favourite list.

### **Where do you like to unwind within the North East?**

My daughter, Priya is nine years old – so we often visit Canny Crafty in Gosforth to unwind together. They paint ceramics and it is extremely relaxing, back-to-basics, but it's great to keep creative minds occupied and interested.

### **Are the people really friendlier in the North East?**

I would say so. I have met some exceptionally lovely people in my career and I would say, on the whole, yes, the people in this region are very friendly indeed.

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

Beadnell Towers in Northumberland has a bedroom which has three windows. One looks out to sea, one looks into the heart of Beadnell village and the other into the church and its beautiful grounds. Truly captures what the North East is all about and one of my favourite places to stay.

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

If anything, I think it offers more. I know people think that moving to another part of the country will get the higher up the career ladder, but I find the North East a very cosmopolitan city now and it has a huge amount to offer anyone seeking to make their home here or find a suitable career.

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

I worked in Bradford for 10 years, for Santander as a Business Manager. Although I enjoyed it, being self-employed was always my goal in life. I set up Peace and Loaf in Jesmond with my sister, brother-in-law and MasterChef, the Professionals, David Coulson. I have since sold my shares and invested in JAM, the marketing company that, still to this day, represent them. A restaurant job, with a nine-year-old girl don't particularly mix well, so it was time to move into a more lifestyle-based career. Although it's impossible to compare working in banking to being self-employed, working for myself is where my heart is.

## HERE'S A FACT: IT'S NOT JUST FACEBOOK THAT NEEDS TO STOP MISINFORMATION

UK charity Full Fact's new report says that Facebook's Third Party Fact Checking programme doesn't go far enough.

In a world of half truths and full blown lies, Astute.Work owner and CIPR Vice-President Sarah Waddington says it's time for comms people to double down on the truth, underline our ethical credentials and lead the way.

The UK's independent factchecking charity Full Fact has published its first report on Facebook's Third Party Fact Checking programme.

Full Fact began working with Facebook in January 2019 to verify images, videos and articles in a bid to slow the spread of misinformation in people's feeds.

The social network has been working with independent factcheckers since 2016 but the initiative has only just been introduced in Britain.

Six months in and Full Fact reports that while there is clear social value to the work, further programme development is required.

Reporting openly to underline its "transparency, openness and impartiality", the charity calls on Facebook to share more data with fact checkers to better evaluate impact; to develop its tools to better identify potentially harmful false content; and for the programme to be expanded to other platforms.

### **Taking ownership of ethical communication**

In this time of fake news and propaganda the question of ethical communication has never been more important.

While the spread of misinformation requires a collective response from government, social media platforms, tech companies and the media - with further discussion needed around regulation - professional communicators and the brands we act for are nevertheless well placed to influence within our own spheres and contribute to the debate.



Sarah Waddington

It's time the public relations profession owned ethical communications.

As the International Association of Business Communicators puts it:

"As a professional communicator, you have the potential to influence economies and affect lives. This power carries with it significant responsibilities."

Its Code of Ethics serves as a guide to making consistent, responsible, ethical and legal choices and is worth a read.

### **Making our voices heard**

Ensuring the veracity of everything we write and share has never been more crucial, especially where we have access to and influence over large groups of people.

The definition of truth by Merriam-Webster is "being in accord with fact or reality." Public

relations professionals help shape public narratives so accuracy is a duty of care.

Equally important is the need for individuals and organisations to call out misinformation and rebut lies as soon as they see them.

In light of Boris Johnson's broken promises as Mayor of London, Channel Four's FactCheck project has committed to examining every statement by the new Prime Minister until the UK leaves the EU.

Society more widely would benefit from more of this critical thinking, as well as greater scrutiny and challenge. If the PR community was to provide it, it would give validity to our work within the business community, as well as potentially provide a mandate.

As an opportunity, ethical communication is ours for the taking. Whether anyone is doing anything about it is a different story.

Astute.Work will be publishing a guide to fake news and disinformation in September through our #FutureProof brand. For more information, please visit [www.futureproofingcomms.co.uk](http://www.futureproofingcomms.co.uk) and follow @weareproofed on Twitter. Or contact Sarah Waddington - [sarah@astute.work](mailto:sarah@astute.work) 07702162704 [www.astute.work](http://www.astute.work)



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BUSINESS



## SYNERGI APPOINTS SENIOR CONSULTANT IN GROWTH PUSH

Digital transformation and cloud specialist Synergi has appointed a new senior consultant to its 25-strong team, as it looks to push turnover through the £3m barrier.

Kashish Kumar brings with him 12 years' experience in a series of technical and consultancy roles, and is a senior certified Microsoft Professional.

His new role as senior Office 365 automation and collaboration consultant will see him involved in pre and post-sales, working alongside design, development and support colleagues to implement solutions that will help clients streamline operations and improve efficiency and productivity.

Gateshead-based Synergi is an award-winning Microsoft Partner with a UK-wide client-base and specialises in advanced cloud solutions using technologies such as Office 365, SharePoint, Nintex, Azure, Valo, and Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Kashish said: "Synergi's national client list and the opportunity to work with organisations such as the AA, Lloyds of London, Northumbrian Water and Port of Tyne were partly what attracted me to the role, as well as being able to work alongside Synergi's Chief Technology Officer Justin again.

"Being part of a company with a strong reputation for technical expertise and close partnerships with big names in the technical world is a great opportunity to further my career. I'm looking forward to working alongside a high calibre team creating cloud-based solutions that have a real impact on our clients' success."

## IT SPECIALIST ON TRACK WITH EXPANSION PLANS



Following its move earlier this year to larger offices, specialist IT services provider, Professional Network Technology Solutions (PNTS) is continuing to enjoy sustained growth announcing new contract wins and an increase in staff numbers.

Founded in 2015 by respected IT specialists, Paul Ashley and Mark Pearson, against all the duo's expectations, PNTS has had to relocate twice to accommodate its organic growth. Starting out in its registered office in Spennymoor, in 2017 the company moved to a small office in the North East Technology Park (NETPark) Incubator, Sedgfield which it quickly outgrew, prompting a move to an

office in the same building.

During this timeframe, PNTS increased annual turnover from £150K in its first year of trading, to a healthy £393K, once more outgrowing its accommodation and necessitating this latest move.

Securing its future growth plans by signing a 10-year lease, PNTS now operates from 1,000 sqft of self-contained office space on the ground floor of Palatine House, at Durham's Belmont Business Park and currently employs a team of seven.

Providing a full range of IT design, installation, maintenance and off-site support services to smaller organisations, PNTS recorded an annual turnover of £597K for 2018/19.

## NORTH EAST STARTUP SECURES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP WITH SAGE

A North East startup business established to revitalise and redefine the traditional corporate training market has secured a partnership with Sage, to design and deliver an innovative new programme to its 13,000 colleagues around the world.

SUB 10 has won the business competing against four of the UK's leading e-learning companies to secure a contract with Sage to create its new Code of Conduct programme.

This partnership will involve the creation of a programme which will be delivered in six languages. The programme will be completed by November this year, with the potential to extend the contract with a further six modules into 2020.

The Sage contract is a major coup for SUB 10, based at Proto in Gateshead, and will help propel the business to the next level, allowing it to push on with plans to develop its own learning engine, intelliLEARN.

The business - founded by Peter Stephenson and Angela Ross, both highly-experienced and well-known names in training and e-learning - has scored a series of successes already in its first six months of trading, including recently being chosen as one of a handful of UK businesses to be accepted onto the prestigious global Microsoft for Startups programme.



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# TOP TIPS FOR CHOOSING WORKSPACE RECOVERY SERVICES

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We have almost 20 years' experience of delivering managed IT solutions and services, including business continuity and disaster recovery strategies, and we often find there is one factor that clients overlook, and that is if your people can't work, neither can your organisation.

If your business suffered a disruption – be it a flood, a fire, a malicious attack or an accident – have you thought about where your staff would physically work from, and how would they access systems and data?

Workspace recovery services come in all shapes, sizes - and prices - so we have put together some tips on choosing the right service for your needs.

### Environment

Consider the physical environment and its security. Our workspace centre is located at a £4m enterprise-class data centre, with Tier 3 ISO27001-certified status, audited by the FCA, NHS, Ministry of Justice and other bodies. Secure 24/7 access, and remote working access give our clients reassurance that their business is safe in our environment. Extra features such as kitchen and meeting areas, local amenities and free on-site parking benefit a workforce that may already be feeling uncertain about the future.

### Connectivity

High speed, high bandwidth connections are vital if you are to keep your business up and running in an emergency situation. Our facilities are the largest and best equipped in the North East, with features that include a backbone of 10gbps peer to peer connectivity. A constant test and review cycle operated by our onsite network team is your guarantee of a secure, managed environment.

### Extra resources

Look at the wider picture. As well as workstations with VoIP telephony, printers, copiers and even faxes, we built in extra space and facilities that could be used as and when clients needed them, and not just in emergencies. So our space includes 20,000sq ft of project, build and repair areas all equipped with high speed secure connectivity and support facilities.

### Response times

How fast can your supplier get you up and running? Make sure your SLA includes a commitment, you should be able to expect to have business critical data and systems operational in around two hours.

### Pricing

The last thing you need following a business interruption is extra, unexpected costs so look for deals that give you the flexibility you need, but at a predictable cost. If a deal seems too cheap to be true, then it probably is.

### Flexibility

You don't need to wait for a disaster to get maximum value from workspace recovery contracts. Some of our clients use our facilities as an extension of their existing office space, running off-site training courses, workshops and events, or housing temporary project teams who need to communicate with colleagues as if they were on the same site.

In essence, you are looking for the reassurance of an 'always ready' base from which to house your workforce should your premises be unusable, and one which gives your people access to all the systems, data and communication tools they can expect from their usual desk.

The right workspace recovery centre should give you everything you need to make sure staff can work effectively. And that gives you the confidence that you can get on with running your business, under any circumstances.

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# WHEY AYE ROBOT

When many of us picture AI (Artificial Intelligence) we see scenes of intelligent robot armies, taken over by the 'bad guys' for world domination, much like a scene from the movie iRobot.



Justin Short

Whilst our human efforts to automate technology are both deeply impressive and developing extremely quickly, we are thankfully still some time away from robot armies.

AI is however becoming an increasingly powerful component within our wider technology landscape and solutions. Microsoft, Amazon, Google and the major industry players are investing huge amounts into its development and it's very easy to see why.

Whilst attending this summer's annual Microsoft Partner conference, I witnessed first hand how AI is being used to solve humanitarian issues (such as helping to predict famine areas and co-ordinate a pro-active response), accessibility issues (building apps which describe documents, scenes, faces or even bank notes for the low-vision community) and global climate issues (such as detecting and tracking pathogens to prevent outbreaks and protect biodiversity).

It was both inspiring and breath-taking how impactful these AI-driven solutions could be and how positively they are impacting on so many diverse global communities. But at the same time, I couldn't help but feel concerned that, like any breakthrough technological advances, AI could so easily be harnessed for all the wrong

reasons and used highly effectively by those with criminal or malicious intent.

At Synergi, AI is a strong focus within our cloud technology solutions. Today, platforms like Microsoft PowerApps have embedded AI capabilities that enable us to build business apps that can recognise product lines from a photo taken on a device, or optimise a delivery route based on a combination of load, drop-point, current and predicted traffic volumes. Automation and AI are enabling us to build intelligent apps for customers that will empower their organisations into tomorrow's world.

We are witnessing the impact of powerfully transformative technologies such as AI, Cloud Computing, Internet of Things (IoT) and Mixed Reality. As a business we remain highly optimistic about the role of these technologies and their benefits to society but at the same time we recognise and take very seriously our responsibility as a solutions provider which is why, alongside other leading Microsoft Partners, we have signed a pledge to help ensure that we help customers to develop and adopt these technologies in a deep and ethical way whilst ensuring that everyone possesses the right skills to and opportunity to make the most of what's ahead.

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Sponsors of Newcastle United Golf Club turned out in force for their annual summer golf day this July.

An afternoon of golf, sunshine and a spot of charity fundraising for The Percy Hedley Foundation was the order of the day.

The popular event saw the 10 teams compete for first place in a Texas Scramble competition.

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# RISING STAR

## BEN CURRY

Director, Aero Networks

### What were your career ambitions growing up?

I did not have a specific career path, I just understood that you only get out what you put in. Working within a family business means that the hard work you put in can then be rewarded and shared across the whole family and team. Knowing that my family and team are looked after is a sense of achievement for me.

### Tell us about your current role?

You wear many hats when running a business, primarily I'm focused on finding new business for Aero. However I still make sure our clients are invoiced, the staff are motivated, projects are managed efficiently and that the bins are emptied – no one likes the stale smell of McDonalds on a Monday morning!

### What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Trying to switch out of work mode when I get home, it's healthy to take a break and to recharge for the next day and the challenges ahead.

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

Giving people the benefit of the doubt, as I tend to steer away from confrontation. From now on I'm determined to stand up for myself and the business in the most professional way as possible.

### What are you currently working on?

Increasing our client base in the North East, we have appointed a Telesales Executive to open doors to the massive SME sector that is the North East. This will allow us to future proof the business and build upon our honest and reliable IT Service.

### Tell us about the Aero team?

Trustworthy, dependable and extremely hard working. The team do all they can for each of our clients never mind how big or small the request is. It's an honour to have such a dedicated team that our clients speak so highly of.



Ben Curry

### What's an important piece of business advice you have been given?

Something I've learnt since we last spoke is that not all business is 'good' business. Sometimes you have to let a client go, or turn down an opportunity and that's okay.

### Who are your heroes inside and outside of business?

My heroes all relate to family. Inside of business is my Dad, Paul. He started Aero to support our family and has now given us a fantastic opportunity to apply his hard work ethic and keep on moving the business forward. Outside of business is my fiancée, Abbey. She has emotionally supported me through some of the tricky business decisions that have been made. Not to mention she is the best mother to our amazing son, Nate.

### Where do you see yourself in five years time?

To have the business in a position of growth where all of my family and staff are supported. Whilst never losing the personal element of the Aero service that our clients are familiar with. Plenty of hard work is on the horizon in order to get there!

### How do you like to unwind outside of work?

Spending time with family, doesn't matter what it is as family is the most important thing to me.

### Favourite Book/CD/DVD?

Favourite album has to be Metallica's self-titled album - Metallica (commonly known as The Black Album.) Hard to believe it was released in 1991, still sounds like new music!



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# THE NORTH EAST'S LEADING TECHNOLOGY FIRM, ADVANTEX LAUNCH STATE-OF-THE-ART CYBERSECURITY SUITE: ACT



Cybercrime isn't a fad, it's not a hyped-up deadline like the millennium bug or last year's GDPR, you know, when everyone lost their heads only to come out the other side alive and well.

Well like them, cybercrime is also alive and well, and is most definitely here to stay.

With over 60% of British firms reporting some form of cybercrime in the past 12 months, up from 45% in 2018, the seriousness of this global pandemic is one we simply can't ignore.

What's more alarming, is the lack of investment into cybersecurity, whether it be poor understanding and awareness, or the sheer lack of education, worryingly, nearly three quarters of UK businesses have admitted they are still not prepared.

Here at Advantex, we see attacks big and small every day, and whilst you're only likely to see the headline stories, like the record £183m fine from the ICO on British Airways, you'll more than likely still be telling yourself, "it won't happen to me", but you, the low-hanging fruit are an easy pick for any hacker - and with the average cost of an attack hitting a business for over £25,000, it begs the question, can you really afford to take the risk?

Following years of research and development into cybercrime, and the plethora of technologies that are available, we decided now was the time to ACT.

By creating a state-of-the-art suite of technologies, that not only educates, protects and restores



your business from the forever-growing threat of cybercrime, it also gives you total peace of mind for when you do come under attack – as it's a case of when, not if.

Launched in July 2019, ACT (Advanced Cybersecurity Technologies) is at the forefront of cybercrime prevention, utilising the skills and services from some of the world's most talented and innovative people and organisations - putting your business at the pinnacle of security, making it safer than ever from the imminent threat of an attack.

The Advantex ACT suite focusses on three key areas which Educate, Protect and Restore.

#### Educate:

Whilst having a cybersecurity solution in place is the most effective and powerful way of staying safe

online, education is also key.

With Advantex's 'Educate' solution, we can empower you and your workforce into making better and safer day-to-day decisions online.

#### Protect:

Wouldn't it be great if you could protect yourself from past and present type of attacks, all whilst intelligently learning about the threat of tomorrow? Well, now you can.

With Advantex's 'Protect', we can give your business the ultimate protection. Using the industry's first Secure Internet Gateway in the cloud, Protect acts as the first line of defence against threats online, and the best bit is, we can start to protect you and your users up in a matter of minutes.

#### Restore:

Get peace of mind with Advantex 'Restore'.

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# THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF PRIVATE EDUCATION

By Kieran McLaughlin,  
Headmaster at Durham School.

It has been an eventful summer politically, with scarcely a day going by without a new 'constitutional crisis' or 'unprecedented move'.

However, one issue which has bubbled along quietly but steadily in tandem with Brexit has been the rights and wrongs of private education. The appointment of Eton's 20th Prime Minister has coincided with the emergence of a Labour Against Private Schools movement conveniently titled "Abolish Eton" (though I should point out that the person who appears to be the de facto Prime Minister, Dominic Cummings, was educated at a much humbler institution).

Whilst I don't agree with the conclusion, the movement does raise some relevant questions. Can it really be right that so many prime ministers, not to mention judges, diplomats and other holders of high office, should have been educated at such a small number of schools? The Sutton Trust, an organisation committed to increasing social mobility, is on hand to point out that 64% of Boris Johnson's new cabinet attended an independent school; furthermore, even in relatively less "establishment" roles such as CEOs of tech startups, the numbers educated privately way exceeds the 7% national average (a figure which in itself is misleading – the proportion of youngsters who have ever been privately educated is closer to 16%).

These figures are usually presented as a damning indictment of the UK as a supposedly meritocratic society. Indeed the Sutton Trust report highlighting the issue is called *Elitist Britain*. However, the conclusion often drawn – that private schools are part of the problem, entrenching privilege at every turn – is wide of the mark.

The first, and most obvious, point to make is that the figures above are a reflection of society as it was in the 70s and 80s, when many of those holding cabinet positions were at school. It is hard to refute that many private schools were more socially exclusive than they are now. Attending schools such as Eton or Harrow was a first step on



Kieran McLaughlin

the career ladder which encompassed Oxbridge colleges, exclusive city firms and ultimately those senior office positions. However, independent schools have changed hugely in their makeup since Boris's time at Eton. Many are more ethnically diverse than state school equivalents, with some schools having more than half their pupils coming from a BAME background. They are also much more socially diverse than previously; according to figures from the Independent Schools Council, one in four pupils at an independent school receive help with their fees, with more than half of those paying less than half of the fee. Bursaries and other remissions for pupils are an investment by schools of over one billion pounds. These programmes offer a life-changing opportunity for pupils from less-privileged backgrounds to access places at top universities and those careers mentioned above.

There is a more fundamental problem with the Abolish Eton campaign, though, and that is this. Schools are only a small part of the picture in a society which wants to conquer the challenge of social mobility. The Education Policy Institute recently reported that underprivileged pupils were as much as 1.5 years behind their peers when they reached their GCSE exams, and the reasons are not to do with private schools. Starting even at birth, underprivileged kids enjoy fewer of the societal benefits that more affluent children see: they have poorer health care in pregnancy and infancy, poorer housing and diet, a weaker or disrupted learning environment and, importantly, a lack of role model demonstrating the importance of a successful education. All of these factors are deeply rooted and will take years of hard work and, almost certainly, lots of money to resolve. Closing one school is unlikely to help.

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 731 9270, email [admissions@durhamschool.co.uk](mailto:admissions@durhamschool.co.uk) or visit [www.durhamschool.co.uk](http://www.durhamschool.co.uk)





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Simone Niblock

## 21ST CENTURY HISTORY LESSON

Durham High School for Girls first opened its doors 135 years ago, but arguably the last couple of decades has seen some of the biggest changes as the school moves into the 21st Century in the way it goes about providing girls with their education.

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Leading from the front is Simone Niblock who is approaching her first anniversary as Headmistress.

Simone, who hails from Heywood in Lancashire, studied at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. She has worked in Hertfordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Yorkshire and now Durham where she arrived in September 2018 in what is her first position as Head.

The first sign that things are changing is plainly obvious when you arrive at Durham High School. There's a lot of construction work going on. Builders are putting together a new reception area. The kitchen has also been refurbished. It's all part and parcel of Simone's drive to ensure that Durham High School is a forward-thinking, outward-looking school which not only provides girls with an outstanding education, but also provides them with excellent facilities in which to thrive. Good food is the icing on the cake...so to speak!

As well as being a strong Head who is bubbling with enthusiasm, Simone is someone who listens to what the parents are saying and takes on board their views, concerns and suggestions.

"Wherever possible, I want to respond to the recommendations of our parents," said Simone. "For example, many of them felt as though the menu of food we offer our pupils didn't really reflect the 21st Century fusion of culture and trends. We had a change of caterers in May 2019 and have now appointed the Thomas Franks company who specialise in nutrition for youngsters who want to be fit and healthy. I hope any boys reading this won't be offended but I do feel that girls are more interested in what they eat and how it affects them both bodily and mentally.

It also fits in with our school policy of sustainability and being aware of where our food comes from. Our new caterers are keen to promote healthy living and how to enjoy good food and how it can help with our holistic education. We are responding to food trends, not food fads. Wherever possible we will be sourcing our food locally. We even have a school eco team and we will be working this term on how to improve our recycling and avoiding food waste."

It's lovely to see everyone eating together at Durham High School. Everyone, from 3 years old to 18 years old all sit

together and mingle. It's a wonderful family atmosphere and, although this is a school, it feels like a big, caring, family community.

When it comes to sport, Durham High School excels. It's fair to say that it punches above its weight in sports such as netball, hockey and rounders. The girls regularly collect awards at local and national tournaments.

There is a thriving performing arts culture at the school and it's interesting that Simone is keen to promote education at Durham High School from a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) philosophy. She is a fervent advocate of the importance of the Arts in any curriculum, especially one as rounded and holistic as the education the girls receive at Durham High School.

"We're also developing computing and coding within the curriculum," added Simone. "It's all part of ensuring that our girls have a fully rounded education which allows them to make decisions as to what sort of direction they would like to go in terms of a career choice. We're developing links with local companies and Durham University. We are inviting representatives from firms to come along and speak to the girls and, importantly, answer any questions. The more opportunities the girls have to discover which careers are out there...as well as the option to go to university...the more likely they are to make the right choice.

I also see the development of degree apprenticeships which 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 across their years of study. It would also be wonderful to see a period of stability in education with fewer changes to GCSE and A level, and allow teachers to become expert in the delivery of their subjects without having to continually adopt new procedures."

Durham High School for Girls is plainly in good hands with Simone as its Head.

And, as an example of how the school is now very much focussed on the 21st Century, you can find them on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr.

Durham High School for Girls...bright past...dazzling future.

---

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# NEW BEGINNINGS

By Simone Niblock, Headteacher, Durham High School for Girls

In my last article, I was anticipating the advent of the summer holidays and also musing on how I would be anticipating the beginning of the new school year. Sure enough, as the school year now begins, I am excited to be back at work full-time and hopefully, I am mirroring the excitement the majority of students feel as they anticipate a new academic year.



Simone Niblock

The start of the new school year is so glorious because, to an extent, it is a *tabula rasa*, a fresh start for all, a chance, perhaps, to make new friends if you are student or, new colleagues as a teacher. It is an opportunity for the whole school community to acquire new skills, aspire to reach new targets and make resolutions to be the best version of themselves that they can be. In many ways, this time of the year can be the happiest; the sense of optimism cannot be replicated during the rest of the year, as examination pressures loom and teachers become increasingly pressing in their demands to students for homework and they, in turn, become more time-pressured.

Nevertheless, despite my roseate view, I know that, for those of you who are parents with children starting new schools, particularly going into Year 7, this can be a very stressful time for all, as your child may feel overwhelmed by a new academic environment and new routines. However, by and large, this will pass and your child's form teacher or Head of Year can be a great asset during this period; they will have the experience and the techniques to help your child navigate their way during this transition period.

So, at this time of year, as new shoes are broken in, pristine pencil cases are proudly displayed and fresh ideas are freely discussed and disseminated, positivity is key for all school attendees. As the polymath George Eliot once wrote: "It is never too late to be what you might have been." Or, as the bard of Frodsham so memorably sang: "Let's make a new start/The future is ours to find."

[www.dhsfg.org.uk](http://www.dhsfg.org.uk)



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16

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## SUNDAY FOR SAMMY PRESENTS A SKETCH FOR SAMMY 2019

For the fifth year running, the team behind Sunday for Sammy are holding a competition to find a talented new comedy sketch writer.

A Sketch for Sammy - The Clement and La Frenais Comedy Award 2019 was recently launched at the Bridge Hotel in Newcastle.

Budding new comedy writers from the region now have until 1 Oct to submit their sketches which should be no longer than five minutes. A short-list of six finalists will be created and comedian and comedy writer Jason Cook will help polish the scripts to performance level at a specially arranged mentoring session.

The final will take place on 27 Oct at The Irish Centre in Stowell Street, Newcastle. The six shortlisted sketches will be performed by a company of professional actors and the writer of the winning sketch will receive the Clement and La Frenais Comedy Award. There will also be stand-up comedy, music and a guest appearance from the highly-rated young comedy company Your Aunt Fanny.

Endorsers Ian La Frenais and Dick Clement are delighted to be able to encourage up and coming talent by being associated with the award.

## HAVE A BIT OF ROB BECKETT

Comedian Rob Beckett is bringing his brand-new 'Wallop' stand up tour to the o2 City Hall on 25th & 26th October 2019. The comedian has had much success on TV as a regular on panel shows such as 8 Out Of 10 Cats and as the voice of Celebs Go Dating but, this is the first time he is hitting the road since his very successful 2015 tour, Mouth Of The South.

As for the theme of the show, Rob commented: "Essentially, the show is all about the funniest things that have happened to me or that I've thought of since the last tour." So, if you saw him last time it does not matter as it is going to be all new material.

A lot has changed in Rob's life since the last tour as he is now the father of two toddlers. But, Rob says his tour is not going to be all about his kids. He continued: "Although I now have kids, it's not my 'I'm going to talk about my kids for 90 mins tour'. I love the kids and that's going to be the hardest thing about going on tour but it's more about family."



## NEW SEASON AT SUNDERLAND EMPIRE SET TO BE SIZZLING



Sunderland Empire has raised the curtain on the all new What's On Guide and it's looking hot, hot, hot!

Rhythm is in the air when Gloria and Emilio Estefan's smash hit musical *On Your Feet* hits the stage (30 Sep – 5 Oct) with the inspiring true love story of Emilio and Gloria, charting their journey to international superstardom.

Experience the sensational West End hit *Motown the Musical* (15 – 26 Oct) featuring over 50 classic hits including *My Girl*, *What's Going On* and *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*. Discover the story behind Motown, the personal relationships, the professional struggles and the music that made history.

Alexandra Burke is set to make a triumphant return in *The Bodyguard* (12-23 Nov). The breathtakingly romantic thriller features a host of irresistible classics including *One Moment in Time*, *Saving All My Love* and one of the greatest hit songs of all time, *I Will Always Love You*.

The gritty and gripping production of *Blood Brothers* will also return (3-7 Dec). Written by Willy Russell, the legendary show tells the captivating and moving tale of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with fateful consequences.

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# YEARNING FOR THE YUCATAN

By Caroline Preston

The Yucatan Peninsula is the coastal area of the Yucatan region found in the far south eastern tip of Mexico. Famed for tourist mecca Cancun, the 'hotel zone' and miles of long white sandy beaches it's the ultimate paradise playground and one of my all time favourite chill out destinations.

Mexico Tourism boasted over 10 million arrivals in the first quarter to March 2018. Beautiful beaches, lush green jungle, ancient history, abundant wildlife and great weather draw in tourists from far and wide.

Sunny and less humid, peak season here is December – March however, it is possible to visit all year round. The shoulder seasons of November and April/May offer some great deals and if you do visit in the summer/autumn it will be hot and humid with bursts of refreshing showers. Storms and hurricanes are also possible however these are infrequent and non-troublesome. One bonus of visiting in hotter months is the sea is bath temperature! Be mindful that March is 'Spring Break' season and Cancun goes wild with big drinking American college kids, think all day pool parties and loud whooping and hollering, not ideal for the peace seeker... but if you don't mind the noise it can also be very entertaining, not all hotels allow spring breakers so check before you book.

Cancun itself is split into two zones El Centro (Downtown) and Zona Hotelera (Hotel Zone). The latter is where most tourists spend their holidays. The Hotel Zone is an upmarket hotel city. It offers the white sand Caribbean beaches one side and the Nichupte Lagoon on the other. Although many large resorts occupy the beaches, all the beaches in Mexico are publicly accessible. Hotels here are American standard, think luxurious buildings, spacious bedrooms and vast all-inclusive facilities. Top rated is The Grand at Moon Palace; it offers top shelf drinks as standard, world class chefs and luxury accommodation [www.thegrand.moonpalace.com](http://www.thegrand.moonpalace.com)

Beyond the hotels, Cancun offers international shopping malls, eateries and nightlife. Perhaps familiar one to those from Newcastle is Harry's Bar. Harry's Cancun is different, superbly upmarket it offers gourmet menus specialising in steak and seafood so if you want the best venture here but expect to pay a high price tag, try Japanese Kobe Beef or the King Crab [www.harrys.com.mx](http://www.harrys.com.mx)

Night owls should visit the buzzing centre famous for nightclub and show Coco Bongo inspired by the film 'The Mask' starring Jim Carrey. It offers VIP all-inclusive packages and standard entry. The nightlife here is large

and loud but malls and restaurants offer an escape. It's easy to get around the hotel zone by public bus, it runs continuously day and night for \$1 each way.

40km from Cancun is Playa del Carmen and the resort Playacar, the start of the Riviera Maya area of the Yucatan. More laid back than Cancun, Playa del Carmen still offers a great centre for refreshments, eating and shopping. The resort area Playacar just 3km away offers fabulous beaches and mesmerising blue water. The great thing here is the proximity to the fast ferry to the island of Cozumel, the Palancar and Columbia Reef is a diver's paradise. A must see is a catamaran trip to 'el Cielo' known as 'Heaven' the shallow bright turquoise waters offer stunning sites including huge starfish, conch shells and sometimes rays it is literally 'heaven on earth'.

Going further up the Riviera Maya are the resorts of Akumal and Tulum, now you really are venturing into the Mayan Jungle. Hotels are further apart but the scenery is spectacular and the wildlife comes to you. A recent stay at Grand Sirenis Akumal saw wild monkeys visit trees near our pool daily. These cheeky creatures are really a fabulous sight to behold. [www.sirenishotels.com/en/riviera-maya-hotels/grand-sirenis-riviera-maya-resort-spa/](http://www.sirenishotels.com/en/riviera-maya-hotels/grand-sirenis-riviera-maya-resort-spa/).

Riviera Maya is the gateway to big jungle attractions. Xcaret Park is close by and offers a spectacular day discovering Ancient Mayan culture [www.xcaret.com/en/](http://www.xcaret.com/en/). The jungle is a haven for adventure seekers and Xel-Ha Park offers water based adventures, explore the the cenotes (caves) or take a river tour, it's a fun packed day. The ruins of ancient port city Tulum once housed advanced ancient civilisation, the Mayans. The view from El Castillo (the tower/castle) is spectacular, don't worry about the Iguanas, although fairly large they just go about their business of posing and sunbathing.

A myriad of other attractions exist, Xplor, Xlor Fuego, Xavage, Xoximilo, Xenses, Xnotes and Xichen all offering an experience of culture, history, nature, adrenalin activities or fun for the senses. One thing is for sure you'll never tire of the Yucatan and like me you'll go time after time.

**Caroline travelled with TUI Holidays, Virgin Holidays and independently with American Airlines, British Airways and KLM. Direct flights available from Newcastle seasonally and more frequently from Manchester and London Gatwick. Note: unless your fare includes a departure tax you will be required to pay in GBP, \$US or \$Peso approx £50 per person (variable) on departure at the Airport, this must be in cash. Check with your airline.**

# OUT & ABOUT - MANCHESTER



The original plan was to go to Jodrell Bank, the radio astronomical observatory in Cheshire, walking distance from a little country station called Goostrey, on Tuesday 23rd July.

Unfortunately, on 7th July, Jodrell Bank was designated a World Heritage Site and a big festival weekend was arranged which meant that the site was closed for clean-up on the day of my planned visit. This would have used an Advance Purchase ticket with TransPennine to Manchester, and a day return to from Manchester to Goostrey. Since Advance Purchase tickets are not refundable (although the date can be changed before time of travel), I decided to stick with the date and have a day in Manchester with Daniel whose presence reduces my fare by 1/3 using the Family and Friends railcard. Note the child you travel with does not have to be your own.

The journey was spent in part using the free wifi to determine things to do in Manchester, using the web address below. We arrived at Manchester Victoria in the middle of a signal failure at nearby Piccadilly, so baled out of the train there. Lucky we were not going to Goostrey after all. Victoria station was once one of the worst in the north of England so it is good to see it all restored and looking smart.

We had an early lunch at Yo! Sushi in the Arndale Centre using my Tastecard, and found that the National Football Museum, formerly free, now charges £10 for adults and £5 for children. (I have subsequently discovered they accept my National Art Pass for free admission.) So we headed instead to the Northern Quarter to the Greater Manchester Police Museum in Newton Street,



open free but only on Tuesdays, for a fascinating couple of hours on crime and punishment. Handcuffs were demonstrated, we were placed in the cells and sat before the bench in the court room.

We explored the area around Oldham Street and Tib Street and found a pleasant little pavement café amongst the vintage shops on Oldham Street in the Northern Quarter. I introduced

Daniel to Afflecks, the vintage emporium which is a Manchester institution. Piccadilly Gardens was full of children playing in the fountains on a hot day.

For the afternoon we took a tram to Media City to visit the Imperial War Museum North (IWMN) at Daniel's suggestion, and stayed there until closing watching videos and learning about conflicts from the First World War to the present day, including the Yemen and Syria. No dry as dust exhibitions here.

We would have visited The Lowry art gallery in Salford, but it closed at 1700, same time as the IWMN. So we took the opportunity of a meal at Café Rouge, once again using with my Tastecard before taking the tram direct into Piccadilly and our train home. Even better, owing to trouble affixing a second unit to our train at York and then a trespasser on the line in Durham, we arrived back at Chester-le-Street 45 minutes late which means we are entitled to a delay repay payment of half the ticket value. That can go towards a trip to Jodrell Bank later in the year.

You can only pack so much into a day and so we missed all the commemorations of the Peterloo Massacre of 16 August 1819, when peaceful protest about parliamentary reform led to Hussars charging the crowd and killing eleven and wounding over 500 people. There are no less than seven free exhibitions about the massacre running throughout September in the excellent Manchester libraries.

The image is a promotional graphic for National Rail. At the top, a map shows the East Coast Main Line route from Newcastle to London, with various stations and service logos including LNER, Northern, Grand Central, and Transpennine Express. A red circular badge on the left says "Split Ticketing Our Speciality". On the right, a cartoon caricature of Alex Nelson, a man in a suit and glasses, stands next to a speech bubble that reads: "I can speak at your conference on how to save money and help save the planet by choosing the train." Below the map, a photograph shows a blue and yellow Azuma train (number 185108) at a station platform.

Alex Nelson  
(Ticket Guru)

Let **nationalrail.com**, based at **Bishop Auckland station**, help you use the most energy efficient mode of transport, with new Azuma trains now running on the East Coast Main Line.

Plan and book your travel in the UK and Europe with **nationalrail.com**, and get advice on your corporate rail travel needs from **alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk**.

National Rail Bishop Auckland Ltd, DL14 7TL

# IT'S ALMOST THAT TIME AGAIN. CAN YOU HEAR THE JINGLE BELLS AND CHRISTMAS CAROLS?

Yes, 'tis the season to start thinking about Christmas parties, and because we know that not everyone is a lover of seeing the word Christmas in September, we're going to make this quick and easy for you.

Do you want to celebrate in style this Christmas? Join us at the fifth best restaurant in the UK, as named by OpenTable.

It's as simple as that, and if that's not enough for you, read on.

Situated in Jesmond, Peace and Loaf is the proud owner of two AA rosettes and multiple mentions in the Michelin Guide. Chef Patron David Coulson, finalist on Masterchef: The Professionals, has over 15 years' experience in some of the best kitchens in the UK, including Peace and Loaf.

After a busy, hard-working year in the office, there's no better way to treat your staff members than with Dave's much-loved Christmas treats. Classic British dishes with a modern twist, crafted with the freshest, seasonal and locally sourced produce, displayed with a creative flair.

Bookings will fill up fast, so please ensure to make your booking promptly to avoid disappointment.



Peace  
& Loaf

217 Jesmond Road, Jesmond, Newcastle NE2 1LA. 0191 281 5222 [www.peaceandloaf.co.uk](http://www.peaceandloaf.co.uk)

## A MERRY MALDRON CHRISTMAS

The most wonderful time of the year is not far away and Christmas in Newcastle has never looked better.

**Christmas markets, ice skating, shopping, all on the doorstep of the Maldron Hotel Newcastle.**

Situated on Newgate Street in the heart of the city, its central location is just a stones-throw from Newcastle's STACK, the container village that is a must-see when visiting Newcastle, as well as the Centre for Life's superb ice rink and the famous Monument festive market.

If you're the one to have to sort out the Christmas festivities, and you're looking for a venue that can entertain your entire party, then Maldron Hotel Newcastle can be your one-stop-shop.

Whether you're planning to visit a few of the Christmas attractions in the city, or just looking for a venue that can host from start to finish, the team at Maldron can help.

With festive afternoon tea, Wreath making, Party nights and even a lunch with Santa himself on offer, the whole family can celebrate Christmas from as little as £12.95 per person.

You can eat, drink and be merry at the Maldron Hotel Newcastle, and since it has accommodation for over 500 guests at any one time, you can



really make a night of it and book staying in one of their 4-star deluxe bedrooms from just £69.

Christmas is filling up extremely quickly this year at the hotel, so to avoid disappointment; it's best

to book early. After all, you've worked hard all year round, it's time to let your hair down and party, so why not party at Newcastle's premier hotel?

Maldron Hotel Newcastle [www.maldronhotelnewcastle.com](http://www.maldronhotelnewcastle.com) 0191 650 9500



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## INTERNATIONALLY-SUCCESSFUL BARBER LAUNCHES PRODUCT RANGE

An international award-winning barber has now become an entrepreneur with the successful launch of his own range of hair products.

Sam Wall, who regularly travels the world from his North East base for an array of global commissions, has created his own 'Let's 'Ave It' range under his own eponymous brand, Mr Sam Wall.

Having made significant investment in creating his own products, Sam is now reaping the rewards after his entire first batch sold out within the first two weeks of going on sale. He is now awaiting more stock which will be sold through his website and in a number of outlets in the North East, including the Hidden Heights Creative Studio in Gateshead where he is based.

Sam has won a multitude of awards during his eight-year hairdressing career, including the ONE-SHOT Behind The Chair Men's International Big Shot Winner 2018, for which he has again been shortlisted this year.

Sam is now focusing his energies on growing his own brand, with the second phase of products set to launch in early 2020. His first products, which are all paraffin-free, include creams, clays, spray and shampoo.

## NEW INN FOR SUNDERLAND'S SEAFRONT



Sunderland's seaside is set for another boost with plans revealed for a 40-bed inn.

Sunderland City Council's development company has agreed terms with multi-award winning hospitality and leisure specialist The Inn Collection Group, that will see plans introduced for a 'pub with rooms' in the latest step forward in Seaburn's transformation.

The three-storey venue will stand close to Martino's restaurant on the main coast road, next to the proposed STACK Seaburn development.

North East based The Inn Collection Group, which has an expanding portfolio of pubs with rooms, including The Bamburgh Castle Inn in Seahouses, believes the inn will be a major asset to Seaburn,

boosting the area's economic and tourism capacity as the number of people visiting Sunderland continues to grow.

Sean Donkin, Managing Director of The Inn Collection Group, said: "We are delighted to have secured this site in Seaburn which will be an exciting addition to our portfolio of pubs with rooms in the north's best loved destinations including the Northumberland coast, Durham and the Lake District."

The Inn Collection Group has a proven track record in delivering purpose-built inns, operating on a model that provides value-for-money accommodation, quality beverages and home-made pub fare.

## HISTORIC ABBEY TO BE TRANSFORMED FOR LANDMARK DINNER

Seventh Century Hexham Abbey, one of the earliest seats of Christianity in the region, is set to host a prestigious gala dinner attracting more than 200 guests.

Newcastle Building Society, whose Hexham branch is directly opposite the Abbey at the heart of the town, has been announced as the headline sponsor of the event, which will raise funds vital to the Abbey in maintaining its historic buildings and its work in the community.

The event, on Fri 15 Nov, will foster relationships between the Abbey and the regional business community, showcasing the Grade I-listed church in all of its historic grandeur.

Guests will enjoy an unforgettable evening of entertainment, food and drink in one of the North of England's most magnificent historic churches which has been a place of faith, welcome and charity at the heart of the Tyne Valley for 1,345 years.

Tickets are limited for the gala dinner, which is one of several fundraising initiatives for the Abbe that is seeking to raise £1m for its roof appeal.

Tickets for the event are available now at £900 for a table of 10 and £95 for individual places. Contact Kerry McCabe on [kerry@tarnevents.co.uk](mailto:kerry@tarnevents.co.uk) or call 07803 524 945 for more details.



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T: (01661) 860686 E: [events@hortongrange.co.uk](mailto:events@hortongrange.co.uk) W: [www.hortongrange.co.uk](http://www.hortongrange.co.uk)



## NORTH EAST TOP RESTAURANT CELEBRATES REGION'S GREATEST CHEFS

The North East's most celebrated chef is to share his kitchen with a number of the region's best-known cooks at a unique event.

On 22 September, the two Michelin starred The Raby Hunt, at Summerhouse near Darlington, will be hosting its own version of a mini food festival, bringing together a whole host of chefs from across the region and beyond.

Guests at the event will not only get the opportunity to chat with the chefs and watch them cook, but also to be able to try a signature dish from each of the participants.

James Close, chef at The Raby Hunt, believes the day will offer a rare opportunity to try dishes from a wide variety of restaurants.

Those already taking part include Shaun Hurrell, who ran the much-loved Mexican restaurant Barrio Comida at Newcastle Quayside, and Alex Nietosvuori of the highly acclaimed Hjem at Hexham.



## GLOBAL TYNESIDE MARINE FIRM SPLASHES OUT INTO LUXURY MARKET

A Newcastle family firm behind one of the world's leading maritime brands is making waves in the luxury yacht market.

Newcastle-based Solarglide, whose protective products are used in cruise, commercial and naval vessels globally, has launched a new division of the company and a brand of beautiful window blinds for yachts known as Pearl Pacific.

Founder and managing director Paul Pringle is the fourth generation of his family to work in the ship-building industry. He said: "The Pearl Pacific ranges have been 18 months in development, combining beautiful styles and finishes with an understanding of maritime design and construction and the quick turnaround required by builders and fitters. The new division of the company moves us forward into a new market place and reinforces our family tradition of being involved in the maritime sector."

Pearl Pacific offers a service specifically tailored to the unique challenges of yacht fitting with all the style choices you'd expect from truly high-end interior design.

The first range features Venetian blinds in aluminium, wood and faux leather and a choice of premium and textured finishes, plus pleated blinds providing solutions to unusually shaped windows and skylights.



## STACK SEABURN GETS THE GO AHEAD

Sunderland seafront will soon become home to an exciting new social hub as planning permission is granted to Danieli Holdings to build their second container village in the North East.

The STACK Seaburn development will create a unique space with focus on community wellbeing, socialising, events and a mix of independent street food and casual dining options, with plans to see it open to the public in spring 2020.

The company's focus is on developing a community space where people come together through music, sport, games, events and regular pop ups, whilst making the most of the seafront destination with a range of indoor and outdoor activities.

There are also plans to include a function room towards the back of the scheme, suitable for gatherings and events of all kinds but with a particular focus towards the alternative wedding market, complete with its very own secret bridal suite.

Neill Winch, CEO of Danieli Holdings said: "The intention, which is the same as STACK in Newcastle, is to offer something for everyone. This will be a great addition to Sunderland's sea front, and something we are incredibly proud to be bringing to the area."



*"To eat well in England, you should have breakfast three times a day."*  
Somerset Maugham

Breakfast served all day, every day!



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# The Caledonian Hotel

## Weddings

### Petite Package

£2700

Includes 30-day time guest & 60 evening

- An Experienced wedding planner to help you organise your special day
- A Free menu trial for the happy couple to be arranged prior to your final appointment
- We include use of the hotels cake knife and cake stand
- Free overnight accommodation for the happy couple in the Luxury Suite BB
- A special Discounted rate for wedding guests for 10 rooms
- Exclusive use of our Secret garden and function rooms
- Ceremony room
- All guests will be greeted with a glass of prosecco as they leave the ceremony room
- Followed by canapes
- 3 Course Wedding breakfast for 30 guests with a glass of wine during the meal
- Tea and coffee with mints
- A glass of prosecco for the toast
- We will provide you a personalised table plan and menu cards
- Hire of the Royal mail post box
- Chavira Chairs for 60 guests
- Top table Ivory swag
- Our resident DJ will start your evening from 7pm and take you through till 11pm
- Your evening guest will enjoy the hot baps buffet for 60 guests

Additional day time guests would be £27.00 per head  
Additional evening guests would be £33.00  
Additional evening guests would be £15.00 per head



### Elegant Package

£4850

Includes 60-day time guest & 100 evening

- An Experienced wedding planner to help you organise your special day
- A Free menu trial for the happy couple to be arranged prior to your final appointment
- We include use of the hotels cake knife and cake stand
- A special Discounted rate for wedding guests for 10 rooms
- Exclusive use of our Secret garden and function rooms
- Ceremony room with a fresh flower arrangement
- All guests will be greeted with a glass of prosecco as they leave the ceremony room
- 3 Course Wedding breakfast for 60 guests with a glass of wine during the meal
- Tea and coffee with mints
- A glass of prosecco for the toast
- We will provide you a personalised table plan and menu cards
- Hire of the Royal mail post box
- Chavira Chairs with sash for 100 guests
- Top Table Ivory swag
- Our resident DJ will start your evening from 7pm and take you through till 12am
- Your evening guests will enjoy either a 5-option finger buffet or the hot baps buffet for 100 guests
- 2 nights accommodation in the Luxury Suite BB this includes the night prior to your wedding for you and 3 bridesmaids, tapas and bubbly

Additional day time guests would be £67.50 per head children under 12 will be £30.00  
Additional evening guests would be £15.00 per head



### Grand Package

£5900

Includes 80 day time guest & 120 evening

- An Experienced wedding planner to help you organise your special day
- A Free menu trial for the happy couple to be arranged prior to your final appointment
- We include use of the hotels cake knife and cake stand
- A special Discounted rate for wedding guests for 10 rooms
- Exclusive use of our Secret garden and function rooms
- Ceremony room with a fresh flower arrangement
- All guests will be greeted with a glass of prosecco as they leave the ceremony room
- 4 Course Wedding breakfast for 80 guests with 2 glasses of wine during the meal
- Tea and coffee with mints
- A glass of prosecco for the toast
- We will provide you a personalised table plan and menu cards
- Hire of the Royal mail post box
- Chavira Chairs with sash for 100 guests
- Top Table Ivory swag
- Ceiling draping with fairy lights, star cloth back drop
- Our resident DJ will start your evening from 7pm and take you through till 1am
- Your evening guests will enjoy either a 6-option finger buffet or the hot baps buffet for 120 guests
- 2 nights accommodation in the Luxury Suite BB this includes the night prior to your wedding for you and 3 bridesmaids, tapas and bubbly
- Return stay for your 1st anniversary dinner, bed and breakfast in suite

Additional day time guests would be £67.50 per head children under 12 will be £30.00  
Additional evening guests would be £15.00 per head





## NOW YOU CAN ROAM EVERYWHERE

When Andrew Bartlett set up his ROAM app, he couldn't have imagined the sort of success it would have.

Now just over three years later he is expanding outside the North East and, as is the nature of an app, it will now apply to, well...anywhere and everywhere which explains why he's having terrific success nationally and internationally.

If you want to promote your business and get yourself noticed by people who're in your locality, then you need to get onto the ROAM app.

Go onto the App Store and just type ROAM into the search bar. You can't miss it; it's the one with the distinctive purple lion's head.

The really clever bit is that the ROAM app, which allows restaurants, cafes, nightclubs, bars, shops, gyms, events, car parks etc to promote their products and events, does not rely on the user searching for what's on offer; the ROAM app searches for them.

As for the user, put it this way; if you've ever been onto something like Trip Advisor to find out what to do or where to go in a particular place, you can rest assured that when you arrive in a particular location, the ROAM app will find you and point you in the right direction. You can also do a search yourself.

Anthony Hutton, Mr Huttons bar and barber Darlington said, "ROAM is perfect for my business. It's a social platform that has been created entirely for my business's needs, taking us away from all the nonsense that you come across on the other social platforms. We can send our customers messages with what we have available keeping them all in the loop, and rewarding those that stay loyal to us."

Or how about Kieran Thornsby, Event Manager at Revolution Durham. "It's great, it's like our very own app which we can use to communicate to our customers expressing when we are having any events, offers or loyalties going on."

So how does everything work? Simple. Your mobile phone is always hunting for a signal and, thanks to GPS, it's easy to find out where you are. Consequently, the ROAM app also knows where you are and can quickly fire suggestions in your direction. It will also help you keep in touch with friends and, a really important feature, it can let you know of any safety concerns.

"Businesses are often very wary of the internet and it often gets the blame for firms struggling," said Andrew Bartlett, "but why don't these businesses make use of the internet instead of being afraid of it? The ROAM app will help them promote themselves and draw the visitors back. I'm proud that ROAM has put businesses at the forefront of the development. The app not only recommends the best places to go but also gives you special partnership offers, keeps you safe using the friend finder and much more. It has a myriad of elements to it, that all join to make an incredibly forward-thinking app, both for businesses and individuals."

All any user of the ROAM app has to do is sign up with an email and password. After that, simply allow the app to know their location and away they go. The user can then add businesses, events venues etc to a 'plan' which is, in effect, their list of favourite places, and even request whether to receive special offers. There is everything from the major chains all the way down to one-man / woman operations.

Businesses now have the opportunity to tell potential customers who they are, where they are and what they have on offer. For very small businesses, this is a free service. So, if things look a bit quiet, log onto your own ROAM app page, put on a special offer, this will then go to everyone who has signed-up to follow you and get ready for the sound of rushing feet. You also get a 100% reach guarantee. If the user is in your area, they will receive information from your business.

Most businesses, depending on their size, will pay a monthly fee of between £15 - £25 which is highly competitive when you consider the raft of benefits.

Andrew has a team of people behind him and there is every reason to suspect that it won't be too long before the ROAM app is rivalling Facebook, Trip Advisor and Just Eat. It really is that good.

If you have a business and can see the advantage of promoting who you are and what you can provide via the ROAM app, then get in touch with Andrew at the following...

You should also go onto the App Store and download the ROAM App to try it for yourself and see what you're missing.

07545 777 669 or 0191 254 1018 or email him at [venues@roam-Everywhere.com](mailto:venues@roam-Everywhere.com)  
Check out his website at [www.Roam-Everywhere.com](http://www.Roam-Everywhere.com)



Andrew Bartlett



## 1910 AT SPANISH CITY

By Mike Grahmslaw

Perhaps one of the region’s most beloved projects in recent years has been the redevelopment of the Spanish City.



For Tynesiders of my generation and beyond, the former fairground and pleasure beach holds a special place in their hearts, immortalised by Dire Straits’ 1981 hit single, Tunnel of Love.

Today, the site – dome et al – has been comprehensively transformed into a destination complex for food and drink. The dodgems and waltzers of yesteryear have made way for seven different options, including a champagne bar, waffle and pancake house, premium tea room, function suite with floor to ceiling sea views and a well-known fish & chip restaurant and takeaway. The jewel in the crown however is 1910 Steak & Seafood, the site’s premium offering which derives its name from the year the Spanish City was originally opened.

A venue with that real “wow” factor, 1910 Steak & Seafood proved the perfect setting for my wife Lisa and I’s anniversary meal.

As its name may suggest, the restaurant specialises in a parade of seafood and “from the grill” options served with a backdrop of coastal views.

Inside, the restaurant’s décor is quite minimal, as it is the views which assume centre stage. We were lucky enough to visit on a glorious day in high Summer, though this is the type of place which will impress all year round – especially when the weather becomes more dramatic.

On arrival, we were welcomed warmly and treated to a bottle of fizz in light of our celebrations.

Its menu is exciting and varied in scope with a mix of dishes both classic and modern. Starters were primarily seafood-based and included Lindisfarne oysters with a range of dressings. I took due note and ordered a platter of three with a creamy thermidor sauce.

Lisa meanwhile chose the beetroot cured salmon – wispy and fresh – and paired with tartare, crispy oyster, yuzu and horseradish emulsion.

Following up, I went “steak” with the 200g fillet whilst Lisa went “seafood” with the roast sea cod fillet. My steak was cooked masterfully to my preferred medium and served with hand cut chips, slow roasted tomato, Portobello mushroom, onion and pancetta compote and watercress with the requisite peppercorn sauce.

Lisa’s cod meanwhile proved the real revelation. Milk-white and flaky, this was cooked to perfection and was served with pomme anna, baby gem and fish cream.

To round off with real aplomb, we even shared a milk chocolate & caramel truffle which we enjoyed over coffees and liqueurs.

From this experience, it’s clear that 1910 Steak & Seafood is every bit the flagship venue that it aspires to be. On leaving the building, we reflected on that famous old dome – now gorgeously floodlit – and its new lease of life.

To borrow another man’s words: Spanish city, you look so pretty to me, like you always did.

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# A NEW CHAPTER AT JESMOND DENE HOUSE



Photography by Dan McCourt

I have always admired venues who consistently tinker with their offering and one such place seemingly not content to rest on its laurels is Jesmond Dene House.

**The independently-owned luxury hotel continues to shake things up with refurbishments to its deluxe accommodation as well its much-revered conservatory restaurant.**

To lead the design process, Jesmond Dene House have drafted in the expertise of award-winning local designer, Karen Walker, who was actually responsible for the initial design of the hotel in 2005.

Nestled on the banks of the Dene, the hotel's location is quite unique in the respect that it has the feel of a traditional country house property yet is in such close proximity to Newcastle City Centre. The hotel boasts 40 bedrooms in total, each individually decorated in true boutique style.

Clearly with some great things afoot, I booked in with my wife Lisa to check out the hotel's all-new look.

We'd landed a lovely junior suite in the new house which has recently been refurbished alongside the hotel's apartment and noble suites. These junior suites are complete with their own private entrance, away from the main hotel and are a great spot to switch off and escape from the world.

Big beds and bigger seating areas make this a spacious environment which is also laden with mod cons. Our room included complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, flat screen TVs, a fully stocked mini -bar and swish rain shower.

With its own private entrance away from the main hotel, the New House appeals to both business and leisure dwellers seeking that extra bit of space and privacy. We revelled in being in our private bolthole which seemed the perfect spot to enjoy some quality time together. Some of the rooms have private patios, perfect for a balmy Summer's eve, whilst many afford some great views across the Dene and surrounding woodland.



We had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon soaking all of this in before having a quick blast in the shower and changing for dinner.

For when you get hungry, Jesmond Dene House's restaurant has a fine reputation and is often frequented by non-residents. Much like the new rooms, the restaurant has had a stunning new facelift with the objective of "bringing the garden into the restaurant". As a result, the dining area is bathed in floral shades and rich greens and punctuated by pops of colour such as golds. Fresh plants and flowers are

also placed throughout the room creating a luxurious and contemporary setting.

In addition to these aesthetic refinements, the restaurant's menu is changing too. The kitchen cooks to a 2AA rosette standard what Head Chef, Danny Parker, best describes as "ingredient-led, generous dishes that are cooked consistently."

This all sounded marvellous, so we had a quick toast to our new surroundings before ordering "the works!".

Lisa kicked off with the salmon & cod fish cake, roasted garlic and fresh lime whilst I polished off the scorched mackerel with gooseberry puree and elderflower pickled cucumber. Dishes at Jesmond Dene often feature many unique combinations and this different shone through here.

Following up, Lisa opted for the suitably-hearty, Slow Cooked Yorkshire Pork Belly with Roasted Hispi Cabbage, Candied Aubergine Puree & Confit Potato. I meanwhile tucked into the braised shoulder of beef with triple cooked chips and tender stem broccoli. All was cooked to perfection and further evidence of why Jesmond Dene House remains a haven for foodies throughout the region.

Following a round of coffees and liqueurs, we retired to our room for a full eight hours sleep. The following morning, we breakfasted regally on all of our cooked and continental favourites again in the salubriousness of the new hotel restaurant.

It would appear that - from this visit - some things never change. The décor may have changed but Jesmond remains committed to luxury accommodation, warm service and high-quality food and drink.

A sage choice for both the business and leisure traveller.

For more information, visit [jesmonddenehouse.co.uk](http://jesmonddenehouse.co.uk)





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## MAKE IT THE MALDRON

By Michael Grahamslaw

The Maldron Hotel is the latest “new kid on the block” in Newcastle’s burgeoning hotel & leisure industry.

Part of the £100m development of the former Newgate shopping mall, the hotel occupies a prime city centre location which makes it a top choice for a corporate stay, business meeting or weekend away.

The Maldron brand is a part of Dalata – Ireland’s largest hotel group – and is the first Maldron to open in mainland UK.

This is undoubtedly a great coup for the city, so I pitched up with my son Jack to get a greater feel for this flagship new venue.

On arrival, the hotel really exudes that classy, 4-star feel. The ground floor is a lovely, semi open-plan area comprising reception desk, bar, lounge and restaurant. Decked out in shades of chrome, white and grey, it’s supremely stylish and punctuated by splashes of the brand’s signature yellow stripe.

With 265 rooms in total, The Maldron offers a comprehensive mix of accommodation including everything from deluxe doubles to executive rooms to spacious family rooms. The hotel’s Conference suites (four in total with a capacity to hold 80 people) even provide a nod to the region’s heritage of innovation, with rooms named after Sir William Armstrong, George Stephenson et al.

Each room is fully air-conditioned and offer all the modern amenities needed to enhance your stay. These include flat screen TVs, high speed WiFi, large in-room safes, tea & coffee making facilities and 24 hour room service.

For those with a little more time on their hands, guests can unwind in the hotel’s very own in-house eatery. The “Grain & Grill” restaurant offers a scrumptious and varied selection of dishes with something surely to be found to everyone’s taste.

The dining area is nicely divided up into two main areas which affords plenty of space to relax with family and friends. After enjoying a swift livener at the bar, Jack and I adjourned to our window table with views out across the

hotel’s courtyard – a mini haven of al fresco calm within the hustle and bustle of the city.

In hearty hotel fashion, Jack kicked off with the leek & potato soup with crusty bread whilst I sampled the smoked salmon potato cake with horseradish crème fraiche and crisp fried capers. Two simple starters both executed very well here.

As its name might suggest, the restaurant makes use of a powerful flame grill with a number of steaks and burgers on offer alongside the Maldron’s signature hanging skewers. In addition to this, there’s also a good selection of main plates. Think traditional fish & chips and steak & ale pie or new favourites such as the Thai green chicken curry or Cajun spiced halloumi salad.

Jack elected for the 8oz rump steak with peppercorn sauce, homemade chips, grilled mushroom and confit tomatoes.

Cooked over the fierce heat of the grill, my chicken skewers had a deliciously smoky char and possessed a wondrous depth of flavour, delicately spiced in a BBQ marinade. Generous chunks of pepper and chorizo also provided much colour and interest.

The Maldron’s hugely accommodating team looked after us well throughout our meal and were even happy to recommend a bottle of Chianti to wash all of this down.

The following morning, breakfast was served over the hotel’s capacious ground floor with a freshly prepared mix of cooked and continental options. This is a perfect choice for those starting their working day or those heading out to explore the city.

Over the breakfast, we both agreed that this brand-new hotel was a great new asset to the city and a testament to Newcastle’s thriving status as a business and leisure destination.

I’m sure this classy hotel will accommodate plenty of both sets of travellers in the months and years ahead.

For more information, visit [www.maldronhotelnewcastle.com](http://www.maldronhotelnewcastle.com)



# WINTER WONDERLAND AT WYNYARD



For a truly special way to celebrate your perfect Christmas, visit Wynyard Hall.

Every year our stunning historic venue is transformed into a wondrous winter wonderland – and our unique festive experiences are guaranteed to create magical memories for you, your family, friends and colleagues.

Christmas comes early with our annual Festive Shopping Fayre from Thursday 21st November to Sunday, 24th November. Explore a treasure trove of more than 150 stalls filled with beautiful gifts, fashion and food. Warm up with a glass of mulled wine and listen to carol singers while browsing beautiful gifts – from locally made Christmas puddings and handcrafted cards to some of the best handmade confectionery in the North East.

Dine with us throughout December in the award-winning Wellington Restaurant, a cosy retreat to share with friends, family and colleagues. With a terrific festive ambience, traditional decorations, a seasonal menu and the warmest of welcomes, there is no better place to enjoy your annual Christmas dinner. Private dining experiences are also available in our magnificent State Rooms. Available from Monday 25th November until Sunday 5th January.

Celebrate with colleagues and enjoy a glass of bubbly at one of our renowned Christmas party nights held in the Grand Marquee! Created especially for groups of work colleagues and



friends, tickets include arrival drink, 3-course dinner, live band and resident DJ. Available throughout December, tickets are just £45 per person.

Taking place within the splendour of the main Hall on Friday, 13th December, the Yuletide Ball is set to be a truly magical Christmas experience. Our most exclusive and esteemed Christmas party night, the ball provides an elaborate setting for groups of work colleagues and friends to celebrate the festive season together. Tickets just £50 per person.

Or host your own? Hosting a company Christmas party is a great way to motivate your workforce and communicate key messages. Our State Rooms are perfect for 60-320 guests, while the Grand Marquee can accommodate up to 650 guests.

Available throughout November, December and January, from £30 per person.

Why not enjoy an escape to Wynyard Hall this Christmas. Surrounded by 150 acres of historical landscape, you'll find it hard to miss the sense of tranquillity that encompasses Wynyard Hall. Our bespoke luxury bedrooms are a warm, inviting home away from home. With carols in the chapel on Christmas Eve to traditional Christmas lunch, we've got everything covered to ensure your Christmas is perfect. Prices start from £750 per couple.

Dress to impress this New Year's Eve and join us as we 'Roar Into the 20's'. You will be greeted with a fabulous Champagne reception and canapés on arrival. Then enjoy a delicious 3-Course meal prepared by our renowned in-house chefs and be entertained by a live band and DJ. The perfect evening will be complete with a fireworks display and a bag piper on The Terrace. Just £89 per person.

Or for a quieter evening, enjoy a truly delicious tasting menu with our New Year's Eve Fine Dining Experience. Served in The Wellington Restaurant, enjoy a 5-course tasting menu, before moving through to The Conservatory to enjoy music from our band and DJ, followed by entertainment on the Terrace for £110 per person.

For more information about Christmas at Wynyard Hall, visit [www.wynyardhall.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.wynyardhall.co.uk/whats-on)



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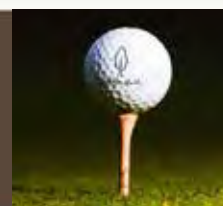
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## THE LORD'S TAVERNERS ANNUAL RACE DAY

The Northumberland and Durham region of the Lord's Taverners, the youth cricket and disability sports charity, recently held its annual race day. The day was hosted in the Gosforth park suite at Newcastle racecourse and welcomes a record 250 people.

On the day around £13,000 was raised, this money will enable the charity to give disadvantaged and disabled young people in the region the opportunity to participate more widely in the sport.

Regional Chairman Jamie Graham commented: "This year's Race day was a regional record not only in attendees but also money raised, hopefully this will now be the yearly benchmark for all race days in the future, thank you to all of the staff at the race course for the superb service we are accustomed to receiving"

**For more information on the Lords Taverners and any future events please contact Jamie Graham at [jamiagraham@urgo.co.uk](mailto:jamiagraham@urgo.co.uk)**







## WHO TO INVITE AND NOT TO INVITE? THE GUEST LIST!

It sends a shudder down many a spine just thinking about it, it is one of the biggest contributors to wedding stress and the cause of many disagreements with families.

As a planner I could be blunt and state that it is the couple's choice, only their choice and everyone should respect their choice and that's the end of it. However, that's not how families operate, and I appreciate and understand everyone's emotional investment to the marriage.

The key is communication, it's all too easy to run head on into all the glitz and put the important decisions to one side but at the end of the day, it is the people you chose to surround yourself with that really make the wedding. The beauty of fully understanding who you are sharing your day with helps significantly with the planning process, the guest list feeds into all major decisions, it will help you manage your budget more effectively and help you be more decisive. Do not book anything before understanding your guest list; often problems arise as couples try to fit who they want to invite into a situation they have committed to. This not only damages your wedding planning journey and will have a negative effect on your day but more importantly can ruin relationships.

The first stage of communication is between the couple, discuss the style of wedding you wish to achieve and how this will impact guest numbers. Make a list of everyone who you would love to witness your ceremony, and both agree on all aspects. Once you understand your needs, open discussions with your family for their thoughts. Remember it is your day, but it is also a highly significant day for parents too, they really want to share their joy with family and friends that have provided love and support throughout your life. Listening is key, being open and honest is the only way to avoid conflict.



Michelle Jones

Compromise is essential; we currently live in a world of 'Influencers' that are telling us to have it 'your way or the high way', well, unfortunately this isn't reality, life is about give and take, the ability to compromise creates a contentment for all parties. The style of your day is significant, if you wish to host an intimate affair with only a few guests, you need to be open to the fact that you may be presented with disappointment. I've worked with so many families over the years, on many occasions my 'counselling' skills have been required, I have learnt that when a family discusses the guest list openly, listens honestly and are willing to compromise, the outcome is so much more enjoyable. I've seen

the guest situation create huge divides in families, full blown family fallouts that last beyond the honeymoon, relationships ruined for a lifetime and devastating memories you'll never forget. Of course, as a wedding planner I often act as the mediator in family discussions, it's a major benefit to having a planner, someone to hold everyone's hand through important decisions.

There are three persistent questions that often lead to family arguments; do we invite children; do we invite the Great-Aunty Edna you haven't seen in 10 years, and do we add a 'plus one' for singletons? Everyone has an opinion on these subjects, even if you have or haven't been married. Truth is, only you and your family can decide. A wedding is a celebration, my personal opinion is that every single generation has a positive impact on a day; as a planner I notice a significant difference between weddings that include all four generations to the ones that only include two. It comes back to that initial conversation on style. The most important aspect to understand, is, by not inviting certain individuals it will mean other individuals can't or won't attend so you need to make the decision based on what is more important; that person being there or the other person not being there.

I have several conversations with couples and their families which help them work through these difficult decisions. I pride myself on ensuring a positive joyful outcome is achieved in a safe environment and of course, making it fun along the way. Remember the people you share your life with including those on your wedding day add the sparkle.



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For more information visit [www.acbonnexions.org](http://www.acbonnexions.org)





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# SUNDERLAND MAN ASKS THE WORLD TO STICK YOUR NECK OUT

John Baharie, descendant of Alexander Baharie who opened the first school of Navigation in Sunderland in the early 1800's, has released a fast paced novel based in Sunderland, South Tyneside and London that is receiving a lot of attention.



John Baharie

**The novel, *Stick Your Neck Out*, is full of political satire that focuses on when and how you know to do the right thing.**

Set in the near future, with a Prime Minister that governs the Muslim section of the population rather differently, the story focuses on the actions of one ordinary man from Sunderland, Paul Robinson.

The exploits he gets up to across the South and North East, in an effort to stick his neck out for what he is driven to believe is right, are at times brutal, at times funny – it is a full on chase and an examination of what bravery really is, in a world where security against terrorism has blurred the lines of true justice.

The author, John Baharie, has taken his knowledge of the area and his work split between IT project management and education to create colourful characters that readers can relate to. He said: "Working in project management for local authorities and then in education teaching, assisting and lecturing in the North East, I have

picked up an innate belief that life is just about people, not beliefs, cultures or politics, and that good can prevail where you least expect it.

"Stick Your Neck Out was exploratory writing for me, to see if I could follow in the footsteps of my ancestor who also wrote a book, copies of which are preserved in Sunderland city library. I am delighted to say that my book is being really well received, with positive feedback and that even though it is based in the near-future with new technology and political systems, that people seem to fully immerse themselves in it."

Available for purchase on Amazon as an ebook now, and in paperback soon, the story is appealing to all age groups, male and female.

John concluded: "Throughout the book there is a hat, and this hat is a symbol of life. How we can lose focus, make mistakes and get things wrong, but that at the end of the day, the right thing still can prevail. I am very humbled by the compliments of those that have read it so far, and look forward to it reaching a much wider audience."

John also has a website with ways to purchase the book and more information. This can be found at [www.stickyourneckout.co.uk](http://www.stickyourneckout.co.uk)

## REVIEW OF THE STALKER'S SONG

By Michael Grahamslaw

The Stalker's Song By Georgia E Brown is advertised as a fast paced crime thriller set between the North East of England and Barbados.

**"The Stalker's Song is written by a local lady, Georgia E Brown and the fact it is heavily based in the North East was appealing to me.**

"On picking up the book, I noticed what good quality it is and what a treat it was going to be to hold such a solid paperback.

"The cover is dark and stormy – it sets the scene perfectly for what is about to come. It feels like a great holiday read and the Barbados beach on the cover looks inviting but as though the storm will break any second.

"Featuring the main character, widow Carol Barrington, I was promised that the pages twist and turn between grief, loss, murder, violence, fear and horror. And indeed they do.

"It is certainly gripping, very believable and I found myself turning the pages with anticipation of what was to come. Just when I thought I had it cracked, there would be another twist.

"The Barbados part of the tale make me yearn for a holiday, and to visit the island. Without giving too much away, as the crux of the story approaches, I noticed I had tensed like you would with a good film, in anticipation of what was to come.

"The song the bad guy sings to his prey got stuck in

my head when I was reading too, and I found myself singing it for hours after I had put the book down, which made me keen to get back to it!

"Once the story and the characters are back in the UK, I found myself flying through the pages, identifying landmark after landmark. The story doesn't slow for one second, and to be totally honest, I just couldn't put it down.

"It left me in mind of a TV programme, Murder In Paradise, mixed with the more local flavour of perhaps "Vera" but meatier and across two locations.

"I can completely see this as a TV mini series or a film, and in my mind's eye I have visions of what the characters look like already – I am sure I'd be a great addition to the casting crew in picking out the right actors! And I believe that when a novel makes you picture the characters in your head, that it makes it a great topic for book clubs, as it creates lively debate.

"In summary, a great read. Fast paced – yes. Thriller – yes. Full of Suspense – yes.

"The book is just as good as the cover. It delivers and I wholly recommend it! Well done Georgia, you have totally nailed it with your first novel and I defy anyone not to enjoy The Stalker's Song."



Georgia E Brown

You can get your copy of *The Stalker's Song* on Amazon, in paperback or as an ebook, via Georgia's website here: [www.georgiaebrown.com](http://www.georgiaebrown.com)

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# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

## STEPHANIE ROUNDSMITH

Head of Communications and  
Fundraising, The Charlie Gard Foundation

### What were your career ambitions growing up?

Originally, I wanted to be a professional showjumper having appeared as a 15-year-old at Horse of the Year Show at the old Wembley in 1999. I went on to be trained by the late Olympian Tim Stockdale, and also worked for Alan Fazakerley, the European Pony Team trainer at the time. However, I sadly contracted ME and had to change tack, moving from the world of horses to the world of children's literature, and then into the charity sector in 2018.

### Describe your current role?

I look after the everyday running of the charity at a local level as well as organising charity events throughout the country. These have recently included abseils in London and Brighton as well as a walk across the O2 Arena, and a firewalk in Newcastle. We were also co-hosts at the Change Fundraising sports dinner in July where Sir Geoff Hurst was our star guest. Currently, my main focus is on our first annual charity ball at The Roundhouse in London on October 11th. However, we also have our inaugural Monkey Mascot appearance at the Great North Run this year, which should be fun!

### What has been your proudest achievement so far?

Reaching the first-year anniversary has to be the main highlight so far. Raising £100,000 in donations in the first year proved that we could be successful and allowed us to commit to our very first research project, which makes me so proud. The monies raised enable us to help and support more families affected by mito, which is very satisfying.

### What are the biggest challenges you have encountered?

Setting up the charity was incredibly challenging, as well as understanding what we needed to do to deliver the objectives we had set out to achieve.



Stephanie Roundsmith

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

I owe a lot to my previous trainer, Tim Stockdale, whose motto was, "There's no such word as can't." He pushed me to challenge myself, and that everything we do is achievable if we work hard enough.

### Who are your heroes and mentors?

Charlie's parents, Connie and Chris, have to be my inspiration. To lose their child under incredibly challenging circumstances, and then set up the Charlie Gard Foundation required strength, determination and an immense amount of bravery, and they did everything with such dignity. I'm proud to now be working alongside them continuing Charlie's legacy.

### What does the future hold?

In the first couple of years we want to ensure more mito patients have access to better support networks, and memory making experiences, once they've received a diagnosis. Over 3-5 years we want to be able to deliver better treatments for patients, and long term our ultimate goal is to hopefully find a cure.

### How do you like to unwind?

I'm quite unorthodox, and do love a challenge, so I'd have to say that I do enjoy horse stunt training! Currently, I'm part of the Cavalry team at Kynren in Bishop Auckland, which is a medieval re-enactment show, and I'd highly recommend a visit!

### How do you get involved?

For anyone wanting to support the Charlie Gard Foundation, become a volunteer, or to simply find out more about the foundation, please visit the website at [www.thecharliegardfoundation.org](http://www.thecharliegardfoundation.org) or drop an email to [hello@thecharliegardfoundation.org](mailto:hello@thecharliegardfoundation.org)



[www.thecharliegardfoundation.org](http://www.thecharliegardfoundation.org)

## SPICE UP YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY



We know, it's only September, and we're already using the C word, but let's face it, if you leave it any later to book your venue for your Christmas party, you're going to have to choose from the leftovers.

Treat your employees this Christmas to a meal at one of the finest restaurants in South Shields, Zeera. Zeera brings luxury to Ocean Road and offers a

dining experience like no other. The award-winning restaurant oozes razzle and dazzle with handmade Indian fabrics, jewels dripping from the ceiling and their glamorous glitter backdrop. There really is no other place to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year.

At Zeera, there are delicious dining options for everyone. Including spice lovers, mild lovers, gluten free eaters and vegan and vegetarian diners, so we

can assure you that the whole office will be happy. Not to forget there's a huge selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks to choose from too.

Zeera's delicious, traditional dishes are the perfect party savour, which are party-budget friendly too. Tables are expected to fill up fast for the Christmas period, so please book your table promptly to avoid disappointment.

206-210 Ocean Road, South Shields NE33 2JQ [www.zeeracuisine.com](http://www.zeeracuisine.com) 0191 456 1811

### ★ CELEBRATE THE FESTIVE SEASON AT ESLINGTON VILLA

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The Christmas menus start from the 2nd December, lunch is £24.00 and dinner is £30.00 for three courses. ★

# ESLINGTON VILLA

Reservations essential - to book a table call 0191 487 6017 or visit [www.eslingtonvilla.co.uk](http://www.eslingtonvilla.co.uk) for more information.



# STUFF THE TURKEY THIS CHRISTMAS AND HAVE YOURSELF A FIERY FESTIVE MEAL

For many people, Christmas parties mean turkey with pigs in blankets, Brussels sprouts and lashings of gravy – but that doesn't suit everybody, nor does it cut the mustard the fourth time you've dined out in December with another few gatherings to attend.

Enter Sachins, Newcastle's finest Punjabi restaurant offering the ideal alternative to your Christmas feast this December, should you want it. For those of you staunch turkey and sprout brigades though, Sachins is serving a traditional Christmas dinner, alongside their authentic Punjabi menu. Two birds, one stone, pardon the 'turkey' pun!

With a delicious range of dishes well removed from standard offerings, Sachins makes your event a one to remember. Whether it's the office Christmas bash, a date night for two, a large family gathering or a 'just cos' meal, there'll certainly be something for even the tamest of tongues.

During December, Sachins don't believe in hiking prices and only offering one limited menu, which is why they'll still be serving up the same delicious dishes you're used to the other 11 months of the year, as well as a carefully crafted Christmas cracker menu for an extra special treat.

If you're looking for something more private for you and your colleagues, why not book out their private dining area? Nestled upstairs is the perfect intimate room to host a bash that'll have the office talking for months to come, especially when Bob's been cooking up a storm in the kitchen.



For an exclusive look at the menu, drop them a message via the website [www.sachins.co.uk](http://www.sachins.co.uk) or on facebook @Sachinsnewcastle and remember to book early.

## AFTER A VERY BUSY YEAR HERE AT NOVELLUS, WE'RE MOVING ONTO THE NEXT CHAPTER

We're extending our home, Novellus Clinic, on Benton Terrace in Jesmond, and it's all thanks to your support.

Since launching Novellus Beauty, the beauty therapy side of business, just over a year ago, our clientele has been growing faster than ever, so it's only right to take the next step and make more room for our lovely new clients.

The expansion will involve the creation of a brand new therapy room, offering all of the current beauty treatments including the Hydradermie Eye Lift, microblading, microdermabrasion, dermaplaning and a huge selection of other skin saviours. The new room will create more availability for appointments and will allow for brand new treatments to launch in the clinic.

Of course though, the spotlight is on Novellus Beauty, as we couldn't leave our initial offering, Novellus Aesthetics, out of the expansion plans. With that in mind, we'll also be welcoming a brand new, and very talented, nurse injector on to the Novellus team, to create more appointments for our aesthetics clients.

So, if you'd like to know more about Novellus, or make an appointment, contact Doctor Land of Novellus Aesthetics via the contact details below.



Dr Steven Land

[www.novellusaesthetics.co.uk](http://www.novellusaesthetics.co.uk) 07973204276 1 Benton Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 1QU

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## RETURN FOR PRO-AM AT TYNESIDE GOLF CLUB

It has been eight years, but Tyneside Golf Club welcomed back its Pro Am to this seasons fixture list, and what a return it was. 42 teams joined the club on Friday 19th July, the largest such event of not only the NE/NW PGA season but for many years, which drew praise from all concerned.

The event turned out to be every bit the successful day the Club had hoped for, one that I think they and all the players/professionals who took part can look back on with a great deal of pride and satisfaction.

*'Cherish our history, embrace change'*









## FAIRWAYS TO HEAVEN

By Michael Grahamslaw

Despite watching on with interest at the redevelopment of the City of Newcastle clubhouse, I must admit that it has taken me a while to witness the transformation first-hand.

In a Summer-long project, the team have succeeded in creating a new look: a stylish space complete with oak panelled furnishings, exposed brickwork and Chesterfield sofas.

Whilst the clubhouse has always offered golfers a spot for relaxation and refreshment, it now also has a burgeoning standalone following with a bar, lounge, patio and bistro area.

The course itself offers a hugely enjoyable test for golfers of all abilities. After my round, I repaired indoors and rendezvoused with my old friend and mentor, Chris – himself a social member – for a bite to eat and a look at what's new.

After a warm welcome, we took our seats in the conservatory dining area overlooking the 18th green.

For a Tuesday lunchtime – following a period of indifferent weather – the place was absolutely

bustling and clearly something of a new social hub with a very convivial atmosphere.

In addition to the new fixtures and fittings, there's also Flat Screen TVs dotted around the bar which offers a portal into the world of golf and how the game should be played!

The City's all-new menu offers everything from all day breakfasts and hot sandwiches to burgers, jacket potatoes and substantial main plates. For those more health-conscious folk, there's also a great selection of salads and healthy alternatives.

I was definitely eyeing up the "post-round stodge" section of the menu and decided on the homemade chicken tikka masala. This was deep and aromatic and a lovely version of Britain's most favourite dish – especially when served with steamed rice, poppadum's & mango chutney.

Chris chose that old favourite mince & dumplings.

Plump, fluffy dumplings swam in a moat of mince and gravy all atop a bed of creamy mash potato and garden peas. A lovely, warming dish I'm sure will be ever popular in the months ahead.

To wash all of this down, The City have a cracking selection of the "good stuff" on keg and cask, not to mention an inviting selection of wines and spirits. On this occasion though, we both settled for soft drinks of our choosing.

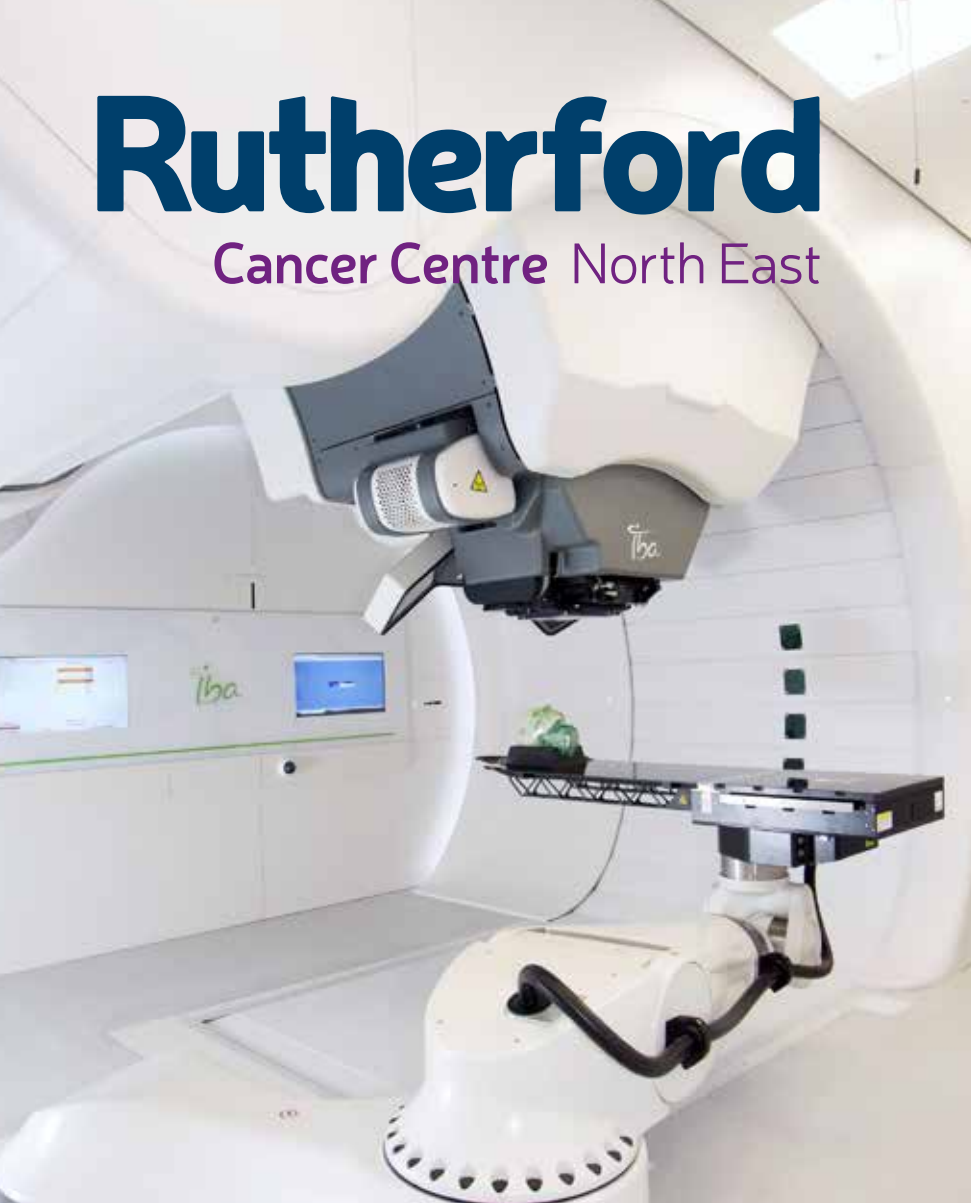
It's clear from this visit that the City of Newcastle GC has a new lease of life. Whether you're golfers gathering to discuss the putts that were (and the putts that might have been) or non-golfers looking for a change of scene, The City offers much choice and quality with its adjoining bistro also serving an extensive a la carte menu.

Undoubtedly, a "Fore"-midable addition to the region's golfing circuit.

For more information, visit [www.cityofnewcastlegolfclub.com](http://www.cityofnewcastlegolfclub.com)

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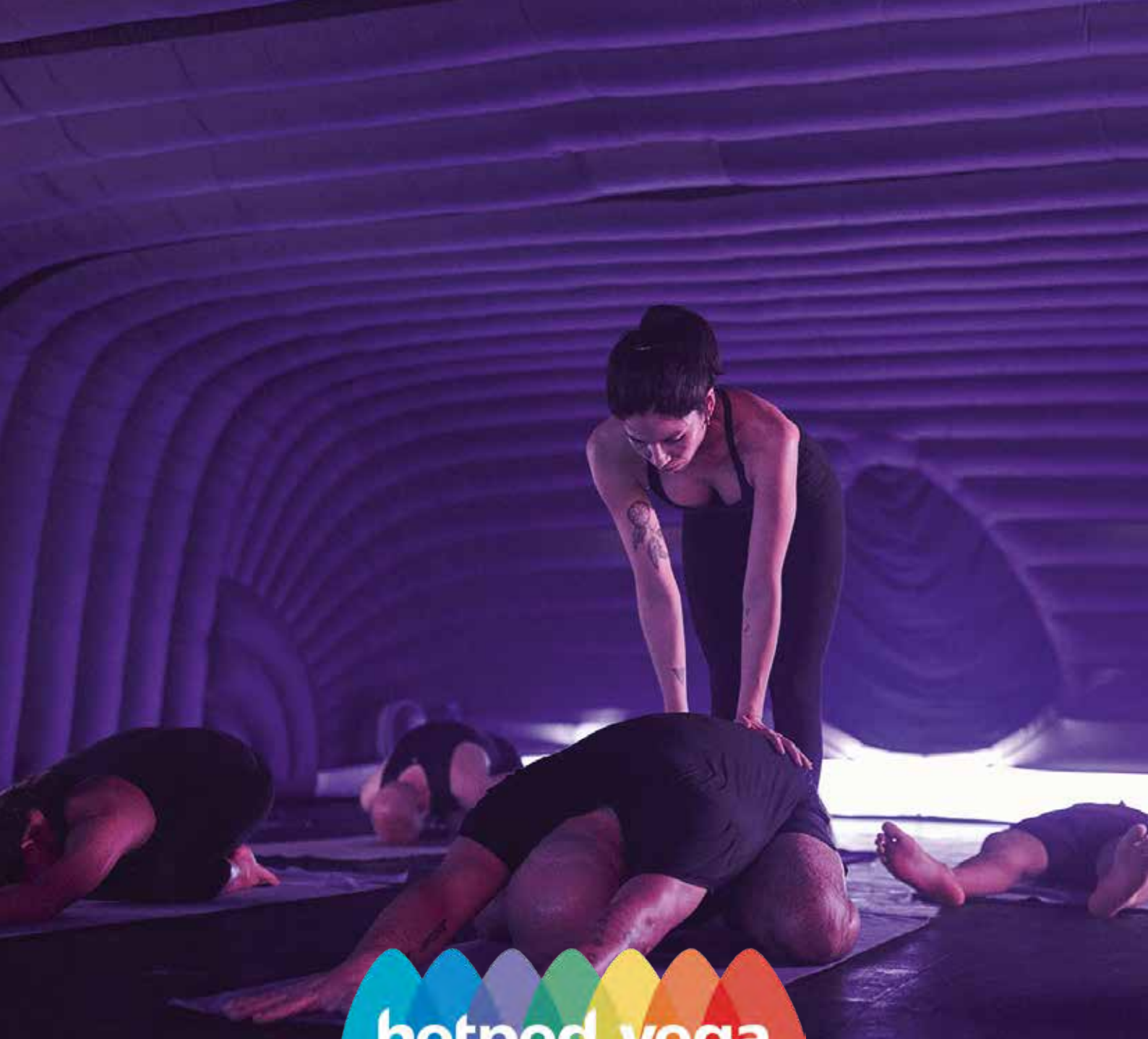
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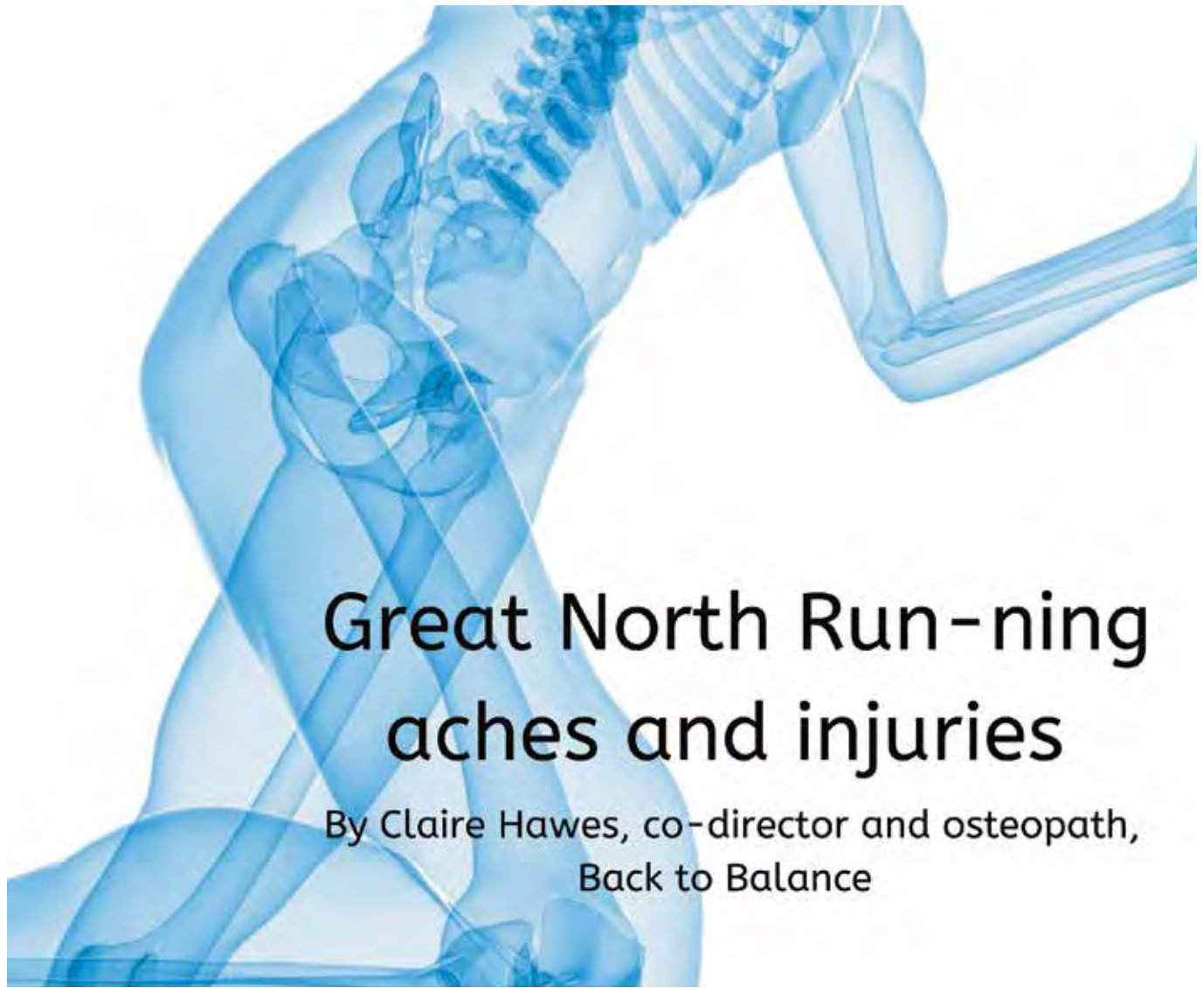
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# Great North Run-ning aches and injuries

By Claire Hawes, co-director and osteopath,  
Back to Balance

As we normally get a spate of clients coming into the clinic for various injuries from calf strains to lower back pain on the lead up to the Great North Run, I thought this would be a great thread for our article this month, given it is one of our greatest sports events.

**With an event such as the Great North Run, there are such a variety of participants from those who have never run before and have decided this would be a good goal to set and achieve, to those from running clubs, and professional runners such as Mo Farrah as well. So, who is most likely to get injured and end up needing help and treatment?**

Your professional runners have all the nutrition and training support you could imagine and as such have finely tuned bodies more than capable of doing a half marathon twice in the time it would take me to get across the Tyne Bridge, so although they are using their bodies in a very repetitive and demanding way, they are of course conditioned optimally for the job in hand.

That leaves me with the other two types of runners seen most often in clinic. Firstly, the club runner. These people are really fit, healthy and run regularly and can do the Great North Run in admirable times, but they may end up with a calf strain, or lower back problem as they increase their training

for a big event such as a half marathon. The main reason for this is that they are also working in jobs which require being sedentary during the day. It is the contrast of this lack of movement, then the demands of running several miles three or four times a week which can lead to problems. You would need to see a professional who could accurately assess why this would be the case for you, but common reasons being sedentary during the day can cause these problems include: tight hip flexors and weak glutes, poor mobility through ankle, knee and hip joints – accumulating impact stress into the lower back; poor spinal curves – bad standing posture causing poor thoracic and rib cage movement affecting cardio-vascular fitness; hypermobility – causing problems with flat feet and lack of support in joints. And when you add in previous injuries and genetic variations on the make up of our muscles, joints and cartilage, - you must wonder how anyone makes it though the race in one piece (only joking – we are all very resilient in fact!).

The other type of runner mentioned earlier was the person who sets an event such as the Great North Run as a one-off goal and goes couch to half marathon in six months. To be honest, these people are also very determined to complete the event. But, not perhaps at the cost of their bodies – I often find a much more relaxed approach to their run, and for them just completing it regardless of their time means they have achieved their goal. This means that although they are behest to the injuries described above, they are not as anxious about returning too quickly to training or pushing through an injury.

For the majority of runners, the event will be a fantastic day and many goals and personal bests will be achieved. If you have a niggle or a bigger injury however, you will do so much better to invest in getting it looked at by a professional so that not only recovery can be achieved but also an assessment of the underlying cause.

**Back to Balance offers Sports Therapy, Osteopathy and Massage to help you through your Great North Run journey. Contact us on 01914661441 for an appointment. Quote this article for £10 off your initial consultation or £5 off your massage. [www.back-to-balance.co.uk](http://www.back-to-balance.co.uk)**

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## LOSING THE SUMMER POUNDS

Now that the summer months are over many of you will be looking to get back into a fitness routine and maybe lose a few pounds gained over the summer months.

Mental toughness is probably not the first thing that you would think about when starting a weight loss or fitness programme – yet learning to stay mentally strong and therefore disciplined, is vital to achieving and sustaining your targets.

With twenty years experience as a personal trainer there are not many excuses I haven't heard.

Do these sound familiar??

- It was someone's birthday at work, so I had to have some cake.
- I had a desert last night but I only had one bite.
- I'm tired plus I've had a busy day, think I will give the gym a miss tonight.
- One biscuit a day wont make any difference.
- I've been good all week so I will just eat what I want at the weekend.
- I can't drink my tea or coffee without sugar.
- I always have a take out at the weekend.
- I train four times a week so I can eat what I want.

If you are constantly trying to lose weight, which I know many people who read my column are, some people have been trying for months/years and see little or no change – you need to have a reality check and understand that what you are doing, is simply not working.

You need to make small changes to your everyday lifestyle, write your food down and analyse where you are going wrong. In many cases cutting a few unhealthy, everyday foods from your diet and replacing them with a healthy alternative, will make all the difference. Another area to cut back on is alcohol, two glasses of wine per day adds up to 110,000 calories a year. Stay mentally strong, keep your healthy food and exercise consistent and changes will happen.



David Fairlamb

Of course there will be times when you may struggle and other people will try to push you to eat or drink the wrong things. Take pride in saying no, you are doing this for yourself, therefore stay mentally focused. Each time you say no, you become stronger and more positive.

Remember anyone can eat and drink that's easy, the ones who stay strong, will see changes and inspire themselves to push on to quicker and better results.

Mental toughness is something you can learn, as you train. Pushing out of your comfort zone is hard but everyone can do it at their own level. Next time you are training and you feel you have reached your maximum, remember its mind over matter, believe in yourself. Your body can do way more than you think.

As you repeat this over time you will learn to train your mind and push your body further – its a great way to stay focused, get in the zone and you will leave with a sense of achievement.

### DAVID'S SUMMING UP

*You and you alone are in charge of what you eat and drink. Making the right choices and staying mentally strong will drive you to the results you want.*





Xander Howell

## BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT ROOT CANAL TREATMENT

Xander Howell is an associate dentist at Honour Health, an award-winning aesthetic dental and skin clinic based in Jesmond. He is a member of the Faculty of Dental Surgeons (MFDS), a member of the British Endodontics Society, and is currently completing a Masters Degree in Endodontics.

As dentists, we appreciate that patients can be anxious about coming to visit us, and in my experience once of the phrases that people dread to hear most is 'root canal treatment'. However, I have found that this is also one of the most poorly understood procedures carried out in my clinical practice, and I want to dispel some myths surrounding this painless alternative to removing a tooth, and to shine some light on the treatment process.

### Why do I need root canal treatment?

Root canal treatment, also known as endodontic treatment, is carried out to repair and save a badly damaged tooth. It is usually required when the nerve within the tooth becomes damaged or dies, usually as the result of a crack, trauma, infection, deep decay or large filling.

Some of the symptoms you may experience if you have a tooth requiring root canal treatment include:

- Pain on biting
- Waking during the night with toothache
- Lingering sensitivity to hot or cold

- A pimple on the gum
- A large hole or crack in the tooth

### But root canal treatment is painful, isn't it...?

This is the question I hear the most when I tell people that root canal treatment is an option, and is the biggest myth surrounding it. Root canal treatment is carried out with dental anaesthetic, and therefore is a completely painless procedure. People require root canal treatment because they are in pain already. It does not cause pain itself.

### Wasn't there a documentary that said root canal treatment was detrimental to your health?

Last year Netflix published, and then removed a documentary, which claimed that root canal caused a host of systemic diseases. Due to the poor quality science, factual inaccuracies and political agendas within the documentary an unprecedented, unified response was released from the British, American and European Endodontic Societies, ultimately resulting in the documentary being pulled. In short, there was absolutely no truth to its claims, and if root canal treatment was indeed bad for your

health, we simply wouldn't offer it.

### What is involved in the procedure?

Once the tooth is completely numb, a rubber sheet is placed around it. This allows us to keep the tooth completely clean as we carry out the treatment. A small window is made in the top of the tooth, allowing access to the space where the damaged or dead nerve sits. Fine instruments, and a disinfectant solution are used to clean out the nerve and any infection. The space is then filled with a rubber material to prevent any re-infection. Following root canal treatment a crown is usually required to prevent the tooth fracturing in future.

### Will it work?

When carried out to a gold standard protocol, using the latest materials and techniques, root canal treatment gives a high and predictable success rate of 90-97%. A success with this procedure is the tooth being symptom-free in five years.

At Honour Health, we are very experienced at working with nervous patients, and our top priority is helping patients to feel relaxed and comfortable when they visit us.

To make an appointment with Xander at Honour Health, book online at [www.honourhealth.co.uk](http://www.honourhealth.co.uk) call 0191 281 3913, email [jesmond@honourhealth.co.uk](mailto:jesmond@honourhealth.co.uk) or visit Honour Health at 90 Osborne Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE2 2AP  
Honour Health also has clinics in Ponteland (call 01661 821 412) and Stanley (call 01207 232 725).

# COMMENT WITH... Barry Speker

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**...How to be  
Right...in a World  
gone Wrong...**

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As British politics and the Brexit impasse plumb new depths, there emerged the specious Labour suggestion that there be cross party support for Jeremy Corbyn to be appointed as interim Prime Minister (for how long?) as a way to stop a No Deal Brexit. Such a ludicrous proposal was no doubt cynically suggested by Corbyn's inner cabal, desperate to get the keys of No.10 by any ruse. It involves McDonnell sending the Labour leader in an Uber to Buckingham Palace to demand that the Queen asks Corbyn to form a government.

You could not make it up. This is the Jeremy Corbyn who between 1997 and 2010 was the Labour MP who voted against his party whip (even three-line whips) the most times; the most rebellious Labour MP of all time; who has voted numerous times for Brexit and against the EU; voted against the Good Friday Agreement; has presided over his party in such a way that seven high profile MPs left Labour in protest over his failure to tackle anti-semitism and his lack of a policy on Brexit.

The idea that he could be entrusted as PM for even a day is a truly appalling prospect. The term 'not fit for purpose' applies, if not yet outlawed.

The 40th anniversary of the North East Chinese Association was celebrated by a memorable night at the Civic Centre. Chairman Jimmy Tsang and his Committee put on a great evening including renowned entertainers from Hong Kong and the stunning local dance troupe choreographed by Sisi.

Inevitably I was able to give a fulsome speech in my best Cantonese as Hon. Chair of NECA and DL. A particular honour was to participate in the spotting ceremony of a new ceremonial lion.

Should we be concerned about the increasing and unregulated usage of face recognition technology? There has been outcry at its use by the Chinese government for surveillance in Xinjiang. Last year Chinese police used it to locate and arrest a man wanted for 'economic crimes' among a crowd of 60,000 concert-goers.

There are concerns being voiced in the freedom-loving West where a high value is placed on civil liberties. It has emerged that the owner of London's King's Cross development has been operating face recognition technology to scan the faces of visitors. Canary Wharf are in talks to introduce facial recognition. It has been used at Meadowhall shopping centre in Sheffield and by

South Wales Police more than 50 times at sporting events.

Big Brother Watch expresses concern at face recognition in shopping centres, museums, conference centres and casinos. London is ripe for this having the second highest number of CCTV cameras of any city in the world after Beijing.

Should we accept this on the basis of providing protection to the public enabling the Police to quickly identify individuals at risk or those linked with criminal activity? Or should there be legal safeguards to control how Police set up and use watchlists to avoid the serious privacy issues such arose from the use of data by social media giants? If not look out for dramatic increase in the sales of masks and balaclavas.

I recently purchased (as a present) James O'Brien's book 'How to be Right...in a World Gone Wrong'. This is high in the best sellers list and promoted as a great summer read - Waterstones' book of the month.

Having listened to O'Brien on his daily hit LBC radio programme, his brand of haranguing and opinionated self-righteousness might entertain or irritate. He tends to categorise those who disagree with him as being morally and intellectually defective. He describes those who protest about state intervention on personal choices as 'borderline sociopaths and self-obsessed weirdos'. Some may prefer to have reasoned argument with intellectual response.

O'Brien's style might be described as a poor man's Clarkson. As he says of the nanny state, 'I hope I'm wrong, but it doesn't happen that often'. Some pleasure may be derived from totally disagreeing with him or rather more from watching on YouTube interviews where he is taken down by the likes of Jacob Rees-Mogg.

2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the film noir 'The Third Man'. This atmospheric thriller made in post-War Vienna, directed by Carol Reed and starring Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten, was named by the BFI as the greatest British film ever made. Martin Scorsese wrote his thesis on it at film school (but he only got a B+).

The theme music, all played on a zither, featured the Harry Lime theme, one of the first pieces I mastered on my guitar. For a real treat listen to the rendition by TUOUK, The Ukelele Orchestra of the UK. The film remains an absolute classic.



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