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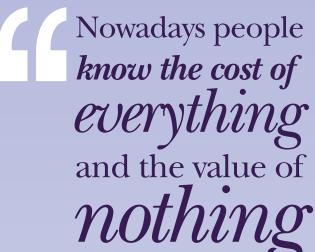






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# **FOREWORD**

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

Our cover star is Kate Cooper-Fay, founder of CXY, who help give the ultimate customer experience to drive bottom line growth for your business.

Look out for our fantastic feature on the 5th Northern Law Awards, celebrating the terrific wealth of legal talent in the region.

In our Meet the Entrepreneur interview we talk to Ralph Thompson of Silvermoor Haylage, a family business dedicated to providing high quality equestrian haylage and treats.

Social highlights include the annual North East Hoteliers Association Awards and the launch of the five star glamping facility, The Private Hill.

On our travels we enjoy an overnight stay at the beautiful Langley Castle, sample Sunday lunch at the Ship Inn Wylam and tapas at El Paso in Jesmond.

All in all another fantastic issue. Next stop, our 50th edition!

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



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# NORTH EAST BUSINESSMAN ANNOUNCES FIRST ELECTRIC BOX VAN IN THE UK



South Shields based Vic Young Ltd has recently announced the production of the first fleet of electric commercial vehicles in the UK and Europe. Founded 40 years ago by Managing Director Vic Young, the company specialises in the development of electric vehicles, both commercial and private. Vic is a leading expert in electric vehicle development and is proud to be leading the way in the UK and Europe from the North East site.

Vic said: "The clock is ticking for everybody on emissions. Whether you like it or not the way forward is electric and we have developed a unique and affordable alternative. We are very proud to have developed the first electric vehicles of this kind in the North East, UK and Europe, but more important this is incredibly important for our planet."

Vic became a Certified Automotive Engineer in April 1971 and has been manufacturing specialised vehicles for business and organisations ever since. He continued: "I really value my team, many of whom have been working with me for over 20 years. We have an open door management style which encourages staff to share their views and I believe this has allowed us to lead the wav."

An advocate of training and development, Vic has created a three year apprenticeship scheme, creating opportunities for people from the local community whilst benefiting the business. Vic will oversee production of the new fleet of vehicles as well as launching the first affordable family SUV electric MG this September.

# CALL FOR WOMEN ACROSS THE REGION TO SHOUT ABOUT THEIR SUCCESSES

For 20 years, the WIN awards have been celebrating the vision, enterprise and inspirational spirit of women across the region.

As the 2019 event is launched, the awards will again turn the spotlight on the entrepreneurial women who work across every aspect of life in the region and make a huge contribution to its success.

The WIN awards, which are sponsored by Sage UK, was launched at a lunchtime event in Newcastle. Businesswomen across the region are eligible to enter whether they own their own business or work in an organisation, company or social enterprise.

The wide range of 11 categories include Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Role Model of the Year, Business Executive of the Year, the Innovation Award and the Rising Star.

Nickie Gott, Chair of the North East England Chamber of Commerce Women's Advisory Board, said: "When we set up these awards, we wanted to turn the spotlight on the amazing women we have in the region who work across a whole range of businesses and organisations. Throughout the 20 years of the event, there have been so many inspiring stories and I know this year will be no different."

The Awards, which are organised by The Event Hero, will be held on 22 Nov at the Grand Hotel at Gosforth Park, Newcastle.





IF YOUR BRAND IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE ROOM, WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOUR COMPANY?

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# NEWCASTLE AIRPORT FINALISES ITS MASTERPLAN 2035

Following a 16-week consultation, Newcastle International Airport has published its adopted Masterplan 2035, setting out its ambitious plans for the future.

The public consultation, which began in May 2018, welcomed feedback from members of the public, as well as local businesses and stakeholders.

During the consultation period, the Airport team undertook a variety of promotional events, public meetings and drop-in sessions. Draft copies of the Masterplan were also available for the public to read in many local libraries.

The final plan, which sets out the award-winning Airport's goals for its centenary year of 2035, will enable the Airport to compete in the global aviation marketplace whilst delivering significant economic benefits to the North East, surrounding regions and the rest of the UK.

The Masterplan will create even more jobs and further enhance the customer experience, including through the introduction of new technology to provide a seamless passenger journey.

It is hoped that future improvements in aircraft performance will mean that future destinations can be served from the existing Newcastle International Airport runway.

# RETURNING ENTREPRENEUR WORKS WITH DURHAM LAW FIRM TO LAUNCH NEW BUSINESS



Andrew Gibson, a northeast entrepreneur who moved to America in 2009, has recently returned to launch a brand-new business venture in Lanchester, Co Durham, with assistance from Durham city's leading law firm Swinburne Maddison LLP.

Called Shred Base, the new business provides confidential destruction of sensitive documents, either on or off site, and Andrew anticipates that the firm will employ 20 people by the end of its second year.

The confidential destruction sector is a market

place which is well known to Andrew, who has 30 years of experience which began in 1991 with the launch of Securi Shred, the first mobile shredding service in the UK. He built up this business to become one of the largest independent security destruction companies in the UK before selling the company to workplace service provider PHS in 2004.

Now, after a stint of 10 years in America, Andrew has returned to the UK to purchase a five-acre site known as Malton Works, a former industrial site which more recently had been trading as a sawdust processing plant.

# OLD DUNELMIANS ROW BACK THE YEARS AT DURHAM REGATTA

A special Durham School reunion recently took place during the 186th Durham Regatta.

All but one of the living members of the 1965 First VIII returned from all over the UK and beyond to soak up the atmosphere at the historic event and cheer on the current crop of Durham School rowers.

Director of Development at Durham School, Andrew Beales, said: "The Durham Regatta is always an event which Old Dunelmians like to come back for, but it's certainly unusual for a full crew to return to the riverbank together."

Chris Owen, John Sparrow, Peter Fletcher, John White, John Hall, Nick Hall, John Appleby and Cox, Simon Street, were looking forward to a reunion which had been 54 years in the making. Sadly, they were without crew member Geoff Potts, who passed away a couple of years ago.

On the water, students, who recently enjoyed success at the National Schools Regatta at Dorney Lake, replicated their performances at the Durham Regatta, with races taking place every two to three minutes from 8am to 7pm.





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# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TO DRIVE BOTTOM LINE GROWTH FOR YOUR BUSINESS

When you speak to Kate Cooper-Fay at CXY, the first impression you get is that she's got the sort of experience from a whole raft of businesses that can be of massive benefit to anyone who works in the world of retail, finance, manufacturing, service sector....she should wear a T-shirt with 'Been there...Done it' on the front.

Let's start with some name dropping. Kate's worked, and is still working, with national big hitters like Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Travel Lodge, Halfords, Telent, Elexon, and locally with some of the largest corporate businesses in the North East.

She doesn't miss a thing. For example, during her time with a national hotel chain, she saw the

company's Trip Advisor ratings rise from a rather pathetic two, to an impressive four. If she'd stayed longer, there's little doubt that number five would have been reached.

Kate has a straightforward mantra; identify the difference between customer service and customer experience (CX). You could probably throw in customer excellence for good measure

In other words, don't just do what you should be doing in any case....do something which makes anything and everything just a little bit special and certainly more memorable.

"I once worked with a prestigious hotel and, to the surprise of a lot of senior people within their company, the first thing it did was remove the reception desk," said Kate. "Instead of guests arriving and having to stand at a desk while the receptionist took down their details, we invited them to take a seat in a lounge area, offered them a glass of bubbly and did the check-in registration on an iPad. The whole check-in process was exactly the same as if they'd been stood at the desk, but it make it much more relaxing, special and memorable for the guests. Simple."

Kate's company, CXY (www.getcxy.com) is growing fast. They're based in an imposing old house on the outskirts of Durham City and plans are already underway to add extra office space. Her team of four...Rachel Jones, Ian Trotter, Mike Matthews and Jasmine Graham have all got vast experience in making companies...small and large...a better place for their customers.



So, how can the sort of success that Kate created help you?

If you like one-to-one attention, the first thing you need to do, obviously, is get in touch with CXY. Kate and her team will them swing into action and carefully analyse your business. No stone will be left unturned.

"The Devil is in the detail," adds Kate "I originally started off as a lawyer but moved into retail and consequently into other industries and have worked in just about every single business function within them. It was only when I studied how the customer operates that I realised I could make a difference. I've seen that companies and individuals are willing to pay more IF they are made to feel a bit special or realise they really are getting an outstanding experience. It often doesn't take a lot to identify where changes can be made, but it's how you implement those changes that can make or break everything."

Kate's team of experts will identify where you can make the most impact on a customer. They will

then help you put everything into practice.

The key feature of the way CXY operates is that they show you how to do it and become a truly integrated part of your team.

"The problem many firms have is that they are so wrapped-up in their own work that they often miss the simple...and often most obvious... details. We stand back and observe. Over the course of the subsequent few months, we will then lead them through the various areas we have targeted that can help the business flourish...areas like identifying opportunities for growth; how you can transform into a customer focused business; understanding how people look for what you offer and enable you to put yourself at the front of the queue; how to increase loyalty and grow your business through a proactive referral strategy which enables you to maximise customer lifetime value."

Another way to improve your business is to attend one of the regular events staged by CXY. You'll get a flavour of what they're up to.

Their 1-Day Diagnostic sessions are aimed at 'helping you to identify huge business growth opportunities...to build a complete picture of your end-to-end customer journey and identify every touch-point along the way... comparing your current performance at each point with your customers' expectations and your business goals.'

It's fascinating stuff and if you have a glance around the room you can invariably see a load of folk nodding at each other mouthing "We should be doing that."

As Kate said, the Devil is in the detail. Once those details have been explained, you can start to make changes and use them to improve your customer experience and see positive impacts on your bottom line.

The best idea is to get in touch with Kate and her team at CXY

Go on. See what all the fuss is about and discover how you can make your customer experience memorable and not mundane.

Visit their website www.getcxy.com to find out more details about CXY and how to get in touch with them.







# TWO NEW PARTNERS **BOOST MUCKLE LLP'S EDUCATION TEAM**

Two experienced lawyers working across the education sector have been promoted to partner at leading North East independent law firm Muckle LLP.

Jill Donabie has over 16 years' experience and specialises in complex employment and HR issues with an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by schools, colleges and universities.

Robin Adams has 20 years' experience as a commercial lawyer. In addition to the extensive work he does within Muckle LLP's commercial team, Robin acts for schools, colleges and universities on commercial transactions.

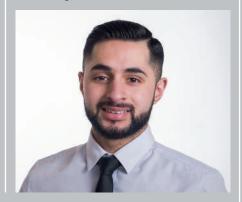
Following their promotions, Robin will lead the firm's advice to its higher education clients whilst Jill will lead on school client services.

# STUDENT INSPIRED BY **CEO PODCAST JOINS** SAMUEL KNIGHT

Graduate Adal Khaliq recently stumbled across Group CEO of Samuel Knight International's podcast. Inspired and enthralled by Steve Rawlingson's business journey, Adal decided to reach out to Steve and the team to find out more about recruitment careers in the firm, having had a keen desire to pursue a career in consultancy.

Steve was impressed by Adal's bold, yet entrepreneurial approach. Invited in for an interview, Adal's big ambitions, drive and ambition to carve a career in recruitment were the key things that stood out to Steve.

Joining the renewables division, Adal is beginning to build a career global manpower. Adal joins the team at a significant time in the business, with senior key appointments driving growth at Samuel Knight.



# **CRAMLINGTON'S** MANDATA DRIVES **GROWTH WITH KEY APPOINTMENTS**

Cramlington road transport management software specialist Mandata Ltd has appointed two senior managers as it continues to expand its workforce to meet strong demand for its technology.

James Stafford joins as regional sales manager for the North East and West of England while Marie McDermott joins as customer relationship manager for the South West.

Providing dedicated support to haulage and logistics companies, James will be responsible for new business development across the North of England, working with operators investing in transport management systems to deliver improvements and operational savings.

Marie will be drawing on her experience of working within the road transport industry to build and maintain customer relationships. Providing them with on-going support and advice, Marie will ensure they make the most of their investment in Mandata solutions.



**OPERATIONS** 

# NORTH P&I CLUB STRENGTHENS ITS IT DEPARTMENT TO SUPPORT GROWTH



Newcastle-based North P&I Club has further strengthened its IT Team with the appointment of three new staff to support the company's information technology strategy going forward. Logan Cox and Jack Gallacher have joined the 33-strong in-house IT team as infrastructure technicians and Caroline Lunn has joined as project manager.

Caroline has over 20 years' experience in IT roles across manufacturing, technology and service sectors. She is responsible for managing North's business change projects.

Logan has joined North's Infrastructure team following the completion of his technical apprenticeship. He is responsible for supporting the team in the design and due diligence for new and changing technology.

Jack has also joined North's Infrastructure team and his role is varied, with responsibilities including the maintenance of the core IT infrastructure.





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# EXCLUSIVE BUSINESS & NORTHERN INSIGHT LUNCH CLUB



We are taking a break for the summer and return to Newcastle on the 16th September and Tees Valley on the 7th October. Now is the time to book ahead as we have a great line up of speakers for the last quarter of 2019.

## **Future Diary Dates:**

#### **JESMOND DENE HOUSE**

Monday 16th September – David Fairlamb, David Fairlamb Fitness Monday 21st October – Chris Milnes, BMC Recruitment Monday 18th November - Duncan Young, Sanderson Young

#### **WYNYARD HALL**

Monday October 7th - Gary Lumby MBE, Focus on Success Monday November 4th - Bill Scott OBE, Wilton Engineering Monday December 2nd - Barry Speker OBE DL, Sintons LLP

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Photographs from our recent Tees Valley lunch event with Paul Drake at Wynyard Hall











# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

# LAURA WEAVING

Managing Director of behavioural consultancy, Duo Global Consulting

# What were your career ambitions growing up?

I don't think I really ever thought that far ahead! I am really just one of those people that takes the opportunities that present themselves and does something with them.

#### Tell us about your career path so far?

I started out in traditional recruitment and although it works in some situations, I always knew I wanted to explore other, more proactive, ways to attract talent.

I moved to the US in 2013 and while I was over there, I started Duo, which began as a creative recruitment strategy company designed to help businesses implement their own proactive and predictive way of recruiting. When I moved back to the UK we opened our Newcastle office and evolved the business into a full end to end people consultancy.

# What are the biggest challenges you have encountered along the way?

Probably the fact that for a while, we were ahead of the curve, so we had to a lot of education to do around the impact of things like employer branding, and the benefits of a great culture. Now that people are talking more about culture and employer brand, that's become a lot easier, but the behavioural piece of what we do is still a challenge to communicate as people are so used to working with personality types, vs behaviour.

#### How has the industry changed?

We are seeing a lot more businesses embrace work around their people. There has been a lot of information around the impact of culture on performance and productivity so I think businesses are realising now that to impact the bottom line, an investment has to be made with the people in the business, and in recruiting the right people for the right roles.

#### Tell us about your current role?

It varies every day! It can be anything from consultancy work with clients, to working internally with the team on new product and



service development, or working on our vision and growth strategy. There's also a fair amount of coffee involved!

# What is the most enjoyable part of your job?

I love the variety of it, and getting to work with new and interesting businesses and people all of the time really fuels me creatively. A real driver for myself and the rest of the team is the impact we make on people, we really focus on how everything we do creates impact for our clients, and for ourselves, so that makes it really rewarding.

## What does the future hold?

Lots of exciting new things! Both myself and our commercial director Sarah are big embracers of evolution so are constantly looking at ways to improve. We are currently working on a really exciting product aimed at changing the way people drive performance, so watch this space!

# Who are your heroes in and out of business?

So many people - too many to list! In my personal life my parents have always encouraged me to remove any perceived boundaries - mainly through carting me onto planes to anywhere and everywhere from before I could walk! Growing up seeing different parts of the world and being pushed out of my comfort zone really shaped me.

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

A little phrase we have within Duo and with our team is "Drive the Bus" — it extends into everything from how we work with each other to how we work with our clients.

For us it means - you always have a choice – even when unexpected obstacles come up, you always have a choice around the direction you take and how you react, and it's that reaction to the situation that really impacts the outcome.

# Which fictional character do you most relate to?

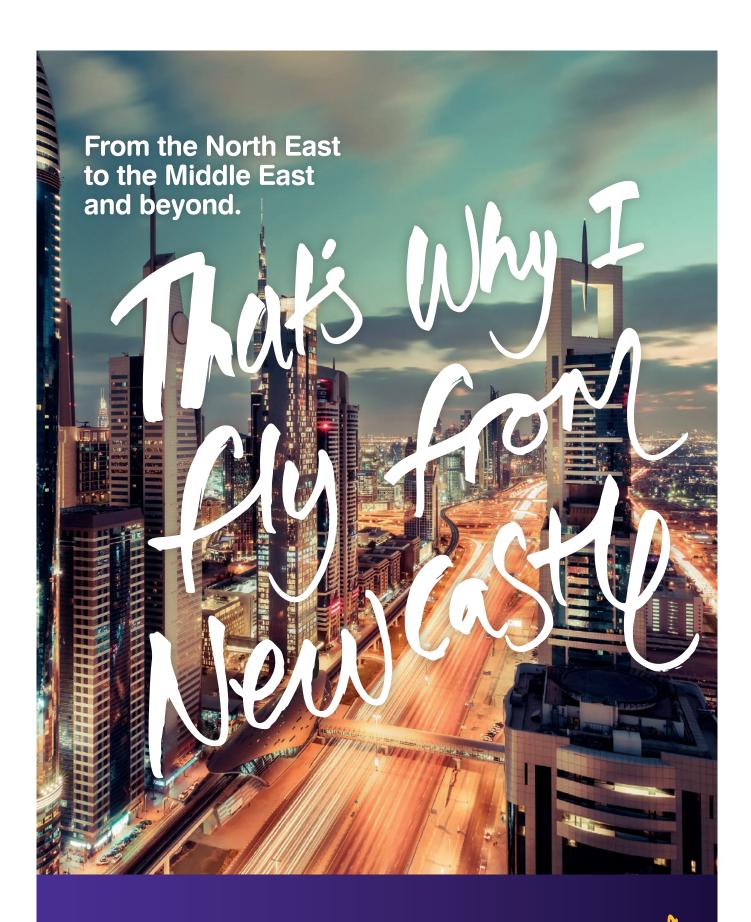
Wendy Rhoades from Billions! In the performance coaching we do, Sarah and I get told all the time by our clients that we are to them like she is to Axe Capital.

Outside of that, probably Roadrunner, I live my life on a pretty high speed, which is great for getting things done, but maybe not as great for the team when I throw out a million ideas and they feel like a tornado went through - I'm working on it!

#### How do you like to unwind?

Travelling, day dreaming about travelling, or planning travelling somewhere! Travel is definitely my stress release - from short spontaneous trips in the UK, to weekends away, to long haul trips - I just love getting outside of the day to day. Borneo was my most recent trip and there's nothing like watching orangutans play in the wild to de-stress!

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# SARAH O'MAHONEY

Director within her family business, Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations

Formed nearly 30 years ago, she talks frankly about lessons she is learning about business life in the region and the cliques and egos she is looking to avoid.

Sarah has been with the business since leaving university with a degree in public relations ten years ago. While she has a decade of experience working with a vast range of clients, she did not make a conscious decision to actively build a profile amongst the business community of the North East until about a year ago. Instead, preferring to concentrate wholly on building the profile of her firm's clients.

While she had been developing new contacts during the year, it was in December that she made her boldest move by joining a strong delegation from the North East Chamber of Commerce and the Department of International Trade on a trade mission to Boston, US.

"That was a fascinating trip which not only introduced me to a much bigger stage but also allowed us to win direct contracts. It gave me tremendous confidence and I decided 2019 was going to be the year I made my mark."

"My father, Daniel, has been in the industry for 30 years and in assisting me to develop my career, the most important trait he wanted me to develop was resilience. You can have all the outward confidence in the world but without having been consistently tested at a high level for a long period of time, you are not truly ready to take your personal brand to the market.

"However, If you have spent years listening and learning, making mistakes (and I have made my fair share...and still do) overcoming hurdles, building strong relationships with clients and, all the time, sharpening your skills, then you are more likely to be in a good position to 'mix it' with the wider business community.

"This approach is not one of being over cautious or holding yourself back, it is just that if you want to make an impact you need depth - people see a lack of it a mile off - and that is where resilience comes in."

So, armed with ten years' experience, Sarah decided that 2018 was the year when the shackles would be taken off and she would become far more outward facing for the business. If you want to build and grow a business in the marketing services

sector then being out and about networking is clearly high on the agenda. Not many PR accounts are won by 'cold calling'.

"Naturally, I had attended many events in the past but this was now the right time for me to make a conscious effort to meet with people and be part of networks that would be good for the business. Some of what I found was extremely helpful, other elements, not so.

"On the plus side, I have met and become friends with a huge number of positive and inspiring people. They have given so much to me in terms of guidance and generosity of spirit that I can't thank them enough. By and large my contacts are predominantly female, we are very supportive of each other and we have the confidence to speak about business and life issues."

So, while networking has allowed Sarah to build great relationships, she has deliberately kept away from the cliques and egos she says can be found on the networking circuit.

"My father has spent 30 years avoiding cliques, egos and those who distribute jobs-for-the-boys. It can't have been easy! He has talked to me about this and made me wise-up quickly. Interestingly, it is very often the older generation of businesspeople that have offered me the cautionary words, 'be careful!'"

"I guess cliques and egos exist in all areas of life but they are certainly alive and well in the North East of England business community. You don't have to scratch far below the surface to find those that are purely self-interested and mad for a bit of power, sad though it is. Thankfully, the majority of people I meet are wise to this and stay well clear as, by and large, such groups and individuals are comprised of negative, uninspiring people.

'Yes, the last 12 months has demonstrated to me that mixing it with the North East business community is, indeed, an interesting game, a bit like snakes and ladders!



# MUCKLE LLP ANNOUNCE SENIOR ROLES FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION LAWYERS

Two experienced dispute resolution lawyers have been promoted to senior roles at leading independent law firm for businesses Muckle LLP.

Leah Heatley has been promoted to partner and Alex Blenkinsop has been promoted to associate level.

Muckle LLP's expert dispute resolution team advise on some of the highest value and most complex cases in the UK, using some of the most advanced technology and techniques such as Al and Technology Assisted Review (TAR).

The team handles a wide range of disputes including commercial, construction, real estate, intellectual property, technology and professional indemnity claims and provides alternative dispute resolution, emergency applications and advice on regulatory authorities.

With one of the largest dedicated commercial litigation teams in the region, Muckle prides itself on providing a City-quality dispute resolution service with specialist lawyers also recruited from London.



# BUSINESS FINANCE EXPERT APPOINTED TO TIER ONE CAPITAL'S CREDIT COMMITTEE

Newcastle-based wealth management company Tier One Capital has appointed experienced business lawyer Andrew Cawkwell as an independent member of its credit committee.

Andrew, who is a dual qualified Restructuring Solicitor and Certified Turnaround Professional, brings his vast business and legal experience to Tier One Capital, which will further strengthen the company's growing team.

He was previously named Turnaround Practitioner of the Year at the industry-leading Turnaround, Restructuring and Insolvency Awards and will combine the position, where he will be part of the team responsible for assessing new lending opportunities and monitoring existing investments, with a new role with London-based Manolete Partners PLC.

This follows a successful period leading the Durham office for Newtons Solicitors, and previously as a partner at highly respected law firm Muckle LLP in Newcastle.



# MINCOFFS SOLICITORS APPOINTS NEW COMMERCIAL PROPERTY SOLICITOR

Award winning Newcastle based law firm, Mincoffs Solicitors, has welcomed Jordan Down into its Commercial Property team as a solicitor, following a successful two-year training contract at the firm.

Jordan, who was recently shortlisted in the Trainee of the Year category at the Northern Law Awards, joined Mincoffs in 2017. He has since completed seats in Corporate, Employment and Dispute Resolution before finishing his training contract in Commercial Property and subsequently qualifying into the team. Whilst training, Jordan was recently involved in the £55m refinancing of a commercial property portfolio which completed at the same time as his qualification.

Jordan studied Law at Newcastle University and the Legal Practice Course at Northumbria University, where he attained a Distinction. Upon completion of his studies, Jordan worked for another prominent commercial firm in Newcastle before joining Mincoffs.

# NORTH EAST LAW FIRM RAISES THE BAR AS IT UNVEILS NEW PARTNER

Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF) has raised the bar high in its growing senior team by promoting associate solicitor Guy Barr to partner.

Guy, who joined the firm in October 2017, will step up to partner within the dispute resolution team. His promotion marks a significant milestone in his career to date and brings the total number of partners at GBLF to six.

Qualifying as a solicitor in 2006, Guy has considerable litigation experience, particularly in the field of professional negligence, and has spent his time at GBLF providing advice around disputes, risks and wider commercial issues to a client base of businesses and individuals.

The promotion to partner will see Guy take on a greater degree of management responsibility and will provide an opportunity to generate work in a way that will allow the dispute team to continue to take the firm forward.



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# Northern Law Awards 2019

**Thursday 6th June** 

at the

**Hilton Newcastle Gateshead** 







# NORTHERN LAW AWARDS 2019

The 5th Northern Law Awards took place on 6th June at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead. Hosted by BBC Newcastle's Alfie Joey and organised by Echo Events, the awards once more celebrated the fantastic wealth and breadth of legal talent in the region. This year's Corporate Partner for the event was Parklane Plowden Chambers.

The Outstanding Achievement Award was given posthumously to Roger Kelly OBE in recognition of the fantastic work he did while at Gateshead Council to regenerate the Gateshead Quays.

The event raised £2152 for the North of England Children's Cancer Research.

















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# SHIRLEY HALL

Newcastle Senior Office Partner. Eversheds Sutherland

In an exclusive interview with Michael Grahamslaw, Shirley talks about her career to date and winning the coveted Lawyer of the Year award at the Northern Law Awards.

#### What were your career ambitions growing up?

From the age of 13 I wanted to be a lawyer and if I couldn't be that then a fashion designer!

#### Tell us about your career path so far?

After studying for my degree part-time, and more than 20 years of local authority employment later, I left to join Eversheds (as it was then) as an assistant in 2001 and partner in 2006. In 2013 I took up the role as Head of the Employment team in Newcastle and in March 2017 took up the Newcastle Senior

#### What are the biggest challenges you have encountered along the way?

One of the biggest challenges has been juggling work and family life. As a mother of two daughters, who has always worked full-time, it has often been difficult getting the balance right. I was lucky that Eversheds Sutherland has always had a very flexible and supportive approach which has enabled me to overcome these challenges.

#### How has the industry changed?

big change which I've seen. We are now using all sorts of AI to assist clients with their legal issues.

#### Tell us about your current role?

My current role is multi-faceted. I am a fee-earning partner within Eversheds Sutherland providing employment law advice to clients. I am also Head of the Newcastle Employment team with the associated management responsibilities. Last but definitely not least the final part of my role is Newcastle Office Senior Partner, which requires me to be responsible for the office itself - staffing, corporate social responsibility, financial performance, marketing and client development within the region.

#### What is the most enjoyable part of your job?

As a lawyer I enjoy working closely alongside clients



to work through their issues, really getting into the detail with them and completely understanding their business.

#### How does it feel to be named Lawyer of the Year?

Amazing! As I said when I collected the award, I'm a northern lass born and bred so the Northern Law awards mean a lot to me.

#### What does the future hold?

For the business the future is bright and with further development of our international offerings go from strength to strength.

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

Out of business, my parents and Emily Wilding Davison, in business I respect people who have

started from humble beginnings and achieved so much, for example the author JK Rowling.

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

consider things from their perspective.

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

Petrocelli, who was a fictional lawyer on TV when

#### How do you like to unwind?

I enjoy the thinking time that swimming and time at the gym gives me. I also like to spend time with family and friends, particularly at the cinema and the theatre, and love to travel with my husband, which is my ultimate wind down pastime.

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# SINTONS NAMED LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR AT NORTHERN LAW AWARDS 2019



Law firm Sintons has won five awards, including the overall Law Firm of the Year accolade, at the prestigious Northern Law Awards 2019.

In recognition of its unrivalled legal advice and outstanding client service, Sintons won the main award, the highly coveted law firm of the year (six partners and over), which also acknowledged the firm's ambitious growth strategy and the strong progress it is making across the business.

The Newcastle-based firm is seeing continuous development across all practice areas and is also recruiting heavily at all levels, in a strategy which is attracting lawyers to join Sintons from as far afield as London.

In a highly successful night for Sintons, the firm also won team of the year awards in:

- Corporate and commercial
- Family
- Litigation and dispute resolution
- Private client.

Sintons was also a finalist in the personal injury team of the year category.

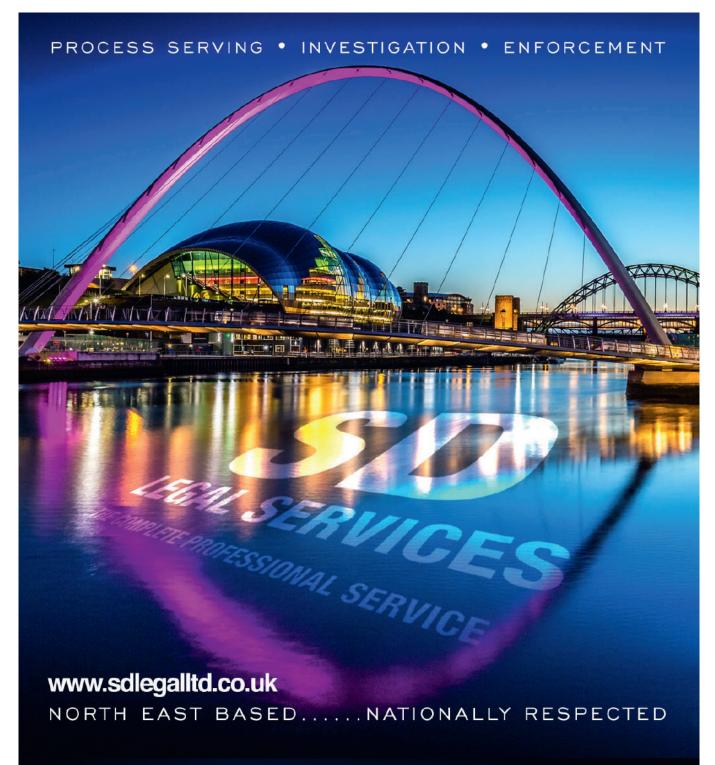
The Northern Law Awards, now in their fifth year, celebrate and acknowledge the highest standards of legal excellence, talent and success across the whole North of England. The winners were revealed at a dinner at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead last night, and were decided by an independent judging panel following an interview process with each of the shortlisted teams and individuals.

Mark Quigley, managing partner of Sintons, said: "We are absolutely delighted to be the winner of five awards at the Northern Law Awards 2019, including being named as the law firm of the year (six partners and over), which is a huge honour for the firm and worthy recognition of the work of our talented and committed people.

"The hard work of our corporate and commercial, family, litigation and dispute resolution and private client teams has also been acknowledged through their well-deserved award wins. To be recognised in so many fields of expertise, as well as being a finalist in personal injury, is indicative of the quality we have running throughout Sintons.

"We are utterly committed to setting the standard for legal excellence and providing the very best in terms of legal advice and personal service to our clients, and these awards are an endorsement of the achievements we are making in this field. This ethos runs throughout the firm and is a central aspect of our Strategy for Growth. We have recruited significantly in the recent past, bringing in talented lawyers from across the country who share our vision and ambitions, and this will continue as we push on with our plans."

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# TRIPLE SUCCESS FOR MINCOFFS SOLICITORS AT THE NORTHERN LAW AWARDS 2019

Jesmond based commercial law firm Mincoffs Solicitors scooped a triple win at this year's Northern Law Awards at Hilton Newcastle Gateshead, following on from the firm winning the 'Corporate Team of the Year' award last year.

The firm, which provides services to business owners and their families and celebrated its 70th anniversary last year, took home three awards at the ceremony in the 'Residential Property Team of the Year', 'Trainee of the Year' and 'Rising Star of the Year' categories.

Mincoffs were also finalists in the 'Corporate Team of the Year', 'Family Law Team of the Year', 'Private Client Team of the Year' and 'Commercial Property Team of the Year' categories at the awards.

Mincoffs' Residential Property team has recently enjoyed a period of notable growth, expanding in size to 25 staff. Head of team Una Coulson, who has been with the firm since 1980 and is due for retirement in March, was commended by judges for her hard work over the past three decades as well as the success, growth and reputation of her team. The panel were particularly impressed by the

impressive client feedback and profitability figures achieved by the team.

Robyn Aisbitt, Associate Solicitor in Mincoffs' Employment and Dispute Resolution departments, was awarded the 'Rising Star of the Year' award at the ceremony. This title is awarded to a legal professional at the beginning of their career (less than 7 years qualified) who has had a significant impact in their short time in practice. Robyn joined Mincoffs in 2014 and judges praised her multidisciplinary approach to practice and her excellent legal skills, particularly with regards to successfully taking on a major public sector organisation.

Another individual accolade went to recently qualified Solicitor Jordan Down, who was recognised as 'Trainee of the Year'. This follows Jordan's successful training contract with Mincoffs during which he was involved in the £55m refinancing of a

commercial property portfolio. The panel felt that Jordan showed strong development so far in his career and that he would bring his personality to his chosen field. He was praised for his ability to go above and beyond what is expected of a trainee with both clients and the business.

Paul Hughes, Senior Equity Partner said "It's great for the team and for the individuals involved to win these awards. It truly demonstrates the talent we have in the firm and how the entire team strives to help our clients to the best of their ability on a daily basis."

Now in its 5th year, the Northern Law Awards is designed to showcase and celebrate legal talent across the region. The awards reflect the breadth of specialisms and roles across the profession, and enable talent to be recognised across the career span from Trainee of the Year, Rising Star to Outstanding Achievement.

For more information about Mincoffs Solicitors visit www.mincoffs.co.uk

# **RECOVERING MONEY OWED?**

Why High Court enforcement is a viable option?

Any business needs fast and effective recovery of money that is owed to them. Cash flow is now more than ever of paramount importance therefore debts must be collected as quickly as possible.

"Solicitors and businesses have invested time and money in applying for a money order judgment (County Court - CCJ), only to be frustrated that the debt is still outstanding". says Wayne Whitford, Director at Elliott Davies. (Elliott Davies is part of a highly successful High Court enforcement company, Court Enforcement Services, that collected £40 million on behalf of clients last year).

Whitford explains, "It's at this stage where transferring a CCJ above £600 to the High Court for enforcement, is a real effective option to creditors — especially as there is

proven evidence of greater success. A small court fee of £66 is payable but this and all other enforcement costs, are added to the debt owed and are recoverable from the debtor, on successful collection."

Elliott Davies provides a fast-free administration service to transfer up unresolved CCJs to the High Court for enforcement. The company is based in Newcastle and serves the North East of England as well as nationwide.

Exceptional recovery rates, tailored solutions and individual client attention has established the group as the UK's fastest growing company and market leader in High Court enforcement.

For commercial landlords and property management agents, Elliott Davies has a one-stop solution to recover commercial rent and service charge arrears.



Elliott Davies has an innovative and multi-award winning approach. They can be instructed online for all their services including, CCJ transfer up and Commercial Rent and Service Charge Arrears, via their website; www.elliottdavies.com

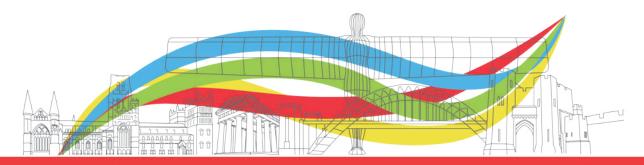
# Is Money Owed To You?

#### Who we are:

- Part of UK's fastest growing enforcement company
- Our company collected £40 million in 2018
- · Regional & full nationwide recovery
- Experienced team for innovation & compliance
- Award-winning Enforcement Agent App

## How we can help:

- CCJ Transfer up fast & free service
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- · Unique client access of your cases in real time
- Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery (CRAR)
- Eviction of Trespassers and Process Serving



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# SPECIALIST EMPLOYMENT LAW FIRM COLLINGWOOD LEGAL WINS LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR (1-5 PARTNERS) AT NORTHERN LAW AWARDS 2019



Paul McGowan, founder and Principal Solicitor at Collingwood Legal, reflects on a successful year for the firm.

The whole team at Collingwood Legal is thrilled to have won the Law Firm of the Year award for the second time in three years. As the founder of the firm I feel particularly proud of the fantastic team that we have assembled and to receive such an accolade.

For this year's award we were against very strong competition. All the short-listed firms are grilled by a judging panel against set criteria. It's been a useful exercise for us to go through this judgment process and it really helped to focus our minds on our work and the attempts that we make to stand out from the crowd.

Whilst it's really satisfying to receive external recognition, such as having six lawyers in the firm recognized as Leading Individuals and the firm itself being recognized as a "Top Tier" specialist

employment practice, the things that really motivate us all are simply providing an excellent service to our clients who are often experiencing challenging and difficult circumstances.

When we set up in 2010, it was to deliberately capitalise on a gap in the market for a focused and dedicated specialist employment law firm providing strong client service.

It's been fantastic to have the whole team recognized as the Law Firm of the Year. In marking the award on the night, the judges specifically commented that we stood apart from our competition because of our strong team ethos. They also commented that our culture is built around providing a quality "niche" service and carrying out to the highest standard high profile instructions for clients in the region.

In addition, the judges noted that in the last year the firm's training division has also gone from strength to strength.

We have a number of exciting developments in the pipeline for the next 12 months but we don't have any immediate plans to change how we work other than keeping focused on what we do and responding to our clients' needs.

It's been a huge honour to win this award this year and as a final point on behalf of all of the team at Collingwood Legal I'd like to say a huge thank you to all our contacts and clients in the region for the trust and loyalty that they continue to place in us. We are extremely proud to have played a small part in the success of a number of businesses in the region.

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# HAY & KILNER PICKS UP COVETED CRIME TEAM TROPHY AT NORTHERN I AW AWARDS

North East law firm Hay & Kilner's specialist Crime Team has been officially named as the best in the business.



The Newcastle-headquartered firm was chosen as the winner of the Crime category in the 2019 Northern Law Awards, the fourth time the team has received this high recognition in the last five years.

The award was presented at a gala dinner at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton Hotel, where individuals and teams from Hay & Kilner were recognised in 11 separate awards categories this year.

Designed to celebrate the success of all those practising and working in the legal industry in the North of England, The Northern Law Awards are decided by a hugely experienced panel of judges.

Hay & Kilner's Crime Team was chosen by The Northern Law Awards because: "Their expanding team of dedicated advocates demonstrated exceptional client retention and growth, placing client care at the forefront of the service they provide. The Team excels in all aspects of Criminal Litigation, uniquely providing expertise and representation from Police Station to the Court of Appeal and beyond. The Team also specialises in many forms of Regulatory work and, where appropriate, provides services to litigants on a probono basis."

Mark Harrison, Partner & Head of the Crime Team at Hay & Kilner, says: "As a team, we're extremely

www.hay-kilner.co.uk

honoured to have once again received this recognition.

"We strive to improve our high standards every year and we're proud to see that effort for our clients recognised with this award."

Hay & Kilner's Crime Team is a top tier team in independently researched guide to the legal profession, The Legal 500. The team advise clients on all areas of criminal law including white collar crime, fraud and dishonesty, road traffic, murder, homicide, sexual offences and proceeds of crime.

Jonathan Waters, managing partner at Hay & Kilner Law Firm, adds: "We're very proud that our Crime Team has won this coveted award for a fourth time.

"To be short-listed in so many different categories on the night is hugely positive and everyone at Hay & Kilner feels honoured by this recognition of our consistency and strength-in-depth across all disciplines."

Established in 1946, Hay & Kilner is one of North East England's leading independent law firms and provides a full range of legal services to businesses and individuals from both within and outside the region.

It is named as a 'regional heavyweight' by the Legal 500, with its services recommended in 19 different practice areas.





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# CAN YOU TRUST YOUR PROPERTY SOLICITOR?

Instructing a solicitor to act for you on the sale or purchase of a property is a scary moment for most people. You do not know how it is going to work out, how long it will take or how much you will end up paying.

In order to try and address one of these concerns, all legal regulators brought in rules in early December last year called the transparency rules. These are new rules to help the public understand law firms' prices and services so that you can understand what it will cost but also to help you compare competing firms.

A recent survey of solicitors' firms shows that 17% of all firms do not comply at all with the new rules. A further 58% only partially comply with the rules. In addition, over half of the firms surveyed did not publish their complaints policy.

There was a particular problem with disbursements. Disbursements are typically costs to be paid to third parties to help progress legal work, such as searches or Land Registry fees. There should not be any profit made on a disbursement – it is simply the cost to the firm that is passed on. Many solicitor firms however were not being clear on this. 37% of firms hid the mark up that they made on disbursements and 34% did not disclose the likely disbursements that the customer would need, such as searches.



A further area of problems was with the difference between freeholds and leaseholds. 23% of solicitors did not properly explain in a leasehold purchase the difference between freehold and leasehold property and instead relied on their clients finding this information out elsewhere.

Clearly all lawyers are not the same. At Toomey Legal we have prided ourselves on our transparency long before the new rules came in. We work to fixed fees and our quotes show all the fees and disbursements that you will need to pay. We do not charge extra for things that you may not know to tell us at the start, such

as the fact that you have a help to buy ISA or a life-time ISA.

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Fixed Fee Conveyancing. Free Online Quotation



# DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE - TAKING EARLY ACTION IN ALLEGATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

Within a number of professions - teaching, law, accountancy, health and social care - employees must adhere to professional codes of conduct. Failure to do so can result in an employee becoming subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Professionals working in these sectors need to be made aware of the potentially damaging consequences that an allegation of professional misconduct or wrongdoing can have on their career. Allegations of this kind, which may arise in the course of an employee's everyday work, can quickly become serious and can be highly detrimental to a person's career prospects.

The nature of some professional discipline cases means they are highly sensitive. It is therefore the role of specialists to limit the damage and disruption to the reputation of the individual or the business concerned, regardless of the circumstances. Throughout the process, a specialist will always be best placed to represent you and can procure the most favourable outcome possible.

Specialist, professional discipline lawyers in the North East are few and far between, which means that cases of this type are frequently referred to law firms outside of the region. Durham City's pre-eminent law firm, Swinburne Maddison LLP, hopes to change this and, in 2018, professional discipline lawyer, Sharney Randhawa, was appointed Associate Solicitor to join their experienced employment team.

Sharney's career began at a major London law firm where she was exposed to a variety of professional discipline and regulatory cases, assisting on several financial regulatory matters before the Financial Conduct Authority - including the LIBOR investigations.

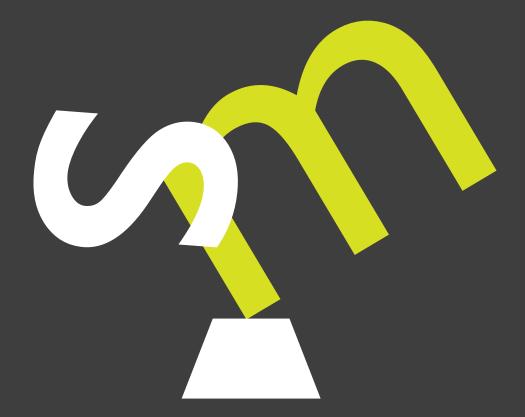
Witnessing first-hand the pressure that professionals face when dealing with regulatory and disciplinary investigations, Sharney developed her knowledge within this field and was ranked in The Legal 500 United Kingdom 2017 edition as a recommended lawyer in professional discipline.

She advises clients on a multitude of professional issues before a wide range of regulatory bodies including the General Medical Council, Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, General Teaching Council and the Financial Conduct Authority.

In an ongoing case, Sharney continues to represent a former teacher in a complex matter involving an initial whistleblowing claim which ultimately resulted in the client's dismissal and a subsequent referral to the regulator: General Teaching Council Scotland. As well as operating in a completely different legal jurisdiction, Sharney faces the additional challenge of having to carefully manage the different claims taking place concurrently (in relation to the whistleblowing element, this is heard in the Employment Tribunal, and the professional discipline fitness to practice investigation is heard by the Regulator).

Commenting on the case, Sharney said: "Whistleblowing in the professional sector and the potential for repercussions with both the employer and the regulator, makes for a daunting and often hostile proposition for many employees. It is important that we are able to defend our clients robustly, if and when they are treated unfairly as a result of making protected disclosures."

If you are, or believe that you may become, the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings, or if you require advice on any other aspects of employment law, please contact Sharney Randhawa on shr@swinburnemaddison.co.uk or by phone on 0191 3842441.



# Though we've grown rapidly in size, we're still extremely agile.

We've assisted and collaborated with many businesses, organisations and individuals across all sectors to ensure their continued success, which has in turn, led to our continued success. Though being a heavyweight law firm has its undoubted benefits for our diverse range of clients, we're very proud of the fact that we're still nimble, still responsive, still agile, meaning our team can react and move more quickly and efficiently. We give clients 'Legal solutions that fit', which means that we give them what they really need. We don't give them flannel, over complication and quite frankly, stuff they don't need.







# LIVING DANGEROUSLY - COHABITEES AND MATTERS OF LIFE AND DFATH

Cohabiting couples account for the fastest growing and second largest family type according to recent figures published by the Office for National Statistics. At present there is an estimated 3.3 million cohabiting couples in the UK and many are currently unaware of their legal rights.

Unfortunately, the legal rights of cohabitees are limited, especially when compared to married couples and civil partners, and many people still believe in the myth that is "common law marriage". As a result, many cohabitees fail to make arrangements for events such as death, separation and loss of capacity or ill health and many cohabiting couples will often find that the division of finances, debt and property can be rather complicated on separation or if one of the partners dies.

# The Rules of Intestacy

The Rules of Intestacy set out a strict guide as to who inherits if an individual dies without leaving a valid Will and determine how your property is to be distributed upon your death. This includes property (depending on how this is held), bank accounts, securities and any other assets that you own at the time of your death.

Cohabitees would not be entitled to anything under the estate of their deceased partner unless assets were owned jointly and passed automatically by survivorship; in this case, such assets would fall outside the scope of the Rules of Intestacy.

Furthermore, if the deceased left surviving children they would likely inherit under the Rules of Intestacy. Unfairly, you may think, the surviving



cohabitee would find that all of, or the majority of, the assets held by their deceased partner are now owned by their children.

# The Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975

If the surviving partner is left in a vulnerable position, it may be necessary to bring a claim against their deceased partner's estate under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 ("the Act"). Under the Act, a surviving partner can make a claim against their deceased partner's estate. However, the surviving partner is required to satisfy the following rules:

- 1. They must have lived in the same household as the deceased;
- 2. Lived as husband or wife of the deceased;
- 3. Had continuously cohabited for at least 2 years immediately preceding the death of the deceased.

The purpose of the Act allows the surviving partner to make a claim for reasonable financial provision from their deceased partner's estate. However, the Act is not solely limited to surviving

partner's making a claim. Those categories of people who can make a claim against an estate are as follows:

- Spouses;
- Ex-spouses (who have not remarried);
- Cohabitees;
- Children;
- Individuals treated as children; and
- Dependants.

It is important to note that a claim under the Act can be made even if there is a Will in place. An individual would have to make an application and satisfy the Court that they have not been provided with sufficient provision from the deceased's estate. In such circumstances, a Court could ensure that reasonable maintenance and reasonable provision is made to the claimant.

For those who currently cohabit, or are considering to, it is important to ensure that your partner is well looked after should the unthinkable happen. Given that the cost and benefits of having a valid Will certainly outweigh the costs and stress of dying Intestate, we would recommend preparing a Will.

For more information on any of the above, or how Hay & Kilner can help you, please contact Emma Etherington, or call 0191 232 8345.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LEADERS AT NORTH EAST LAW FIRM



One of the region's only legal practices to be run by a female managing partner, Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP (GBLF), is shining a spotlight on opportunities for all its staff, after promoting two of its employees into associate roles within the business's senior leadership team.

GBLF has recognised future talent in the shape of solicitor Laura Brydon and head of employment and HR, Deb Tweedy, both of whom have been promoted to associate level and will play key roles in the future growth of the company.

The law firm's senior leadership is currently headed up by managing partner Kathryn Taylor, who marks six years in the role this June. The recent promotions will take the leadership team up to 10, which includes managing director, Kathryn Taylor, partners Simon Dakers, Rebecca Harbron Gray, John Morgan, Anna McGill and Guy Barr alongside associates Geoff Hall, Louise Ottaway, Laura Brydon and Deb Tweedy.

Laura Brydon, who is part of the firm's Wills, Trusts and Probate team, started her career in law after graduating in 2007 and has been with the business since 2015.

With a caseload incorporating a broad range of private client matters including the administration of estates, will writing, trusts, mental capacity issues and conveyancing matters associated with those, Laura is also an associate member of The

Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners and is working towards attaining full Trust and Estate Practitioner status.

Speaking about her promotion, Laura said: "It's been my aspiration to progress in a firm in the North East and I'm delighted to continue my journey here at GBLF as it is where I see my long-term career.

"I'm really looking forward to getting settled into this new role and taking on the new responsibilities that being an associate brings, as well as supporting our head of department, Rebecca Harbron Gray."

Deb Tweedy, who joined GBLF in 2012, was inspired to pursue her career in law since joining the team and completed her masters degree last summer. Originally joining the firm to head up GBLF's sister company Hadrian HR, which celebrated its biggest turnover last year, Deb has played a critical role in managing HR within GBLF and working with staff to identify support and training requirements.

At present, Deb Tweedy supports the North East's SMEs with their HR responsibilities and works alongside GBLF's managing partner Kathryn Taylor on the strategic development of the

firm. Deb's promotion will see her take on new responsibilities as she continues to head up the HR and employment team at GBLF and grow the employment work introduced into the firm.

Deb said: "Since joining GBLF, I've been supported every step of the way and gaining my masters degree was a huge milestone in my career to date".

"This new position will give me the opportunity to continue supporting the team in a management position and ensuring our clients receive the best possible service from the HR and employment team."

Passionate about championing leadership within the team, managing partner Kathryn Taylor added: "It's important for us to recognise our employees' hard work and we are delighted to have appointed Deb and Laura to associate.

"We are always keen to develop the practice of people within the team and I'm looking forward to working more closely with both Deb and Laura in our future plans."

For more information on Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP visit www.gblf.co.uk or call 0191 338 1778.



# GLOBAL AMBITIONS?

Make your intellectual property work for you.

### **Global Strategy**

Launching and protecting innovation in a new territory requires a global strategy that deals with the many, varied and often specific local business and intellectual property (IP) issues which arise. Having a good understanding of the product, the local market and the relevant product legislation, and a plan in place to manage the expansion of the business into each new territory, and to monitor competitor activity so as to be in a position to take action at the appropriate time, is crucial to the successful international launch of an innovative product.

For example, some products are specifically designed for use in a select number of countries. Some companies may only have competitors located in select countries and so they should consider carefully the geographic protection needed for each project. This can result in a company needing to maintain a number of different IP strategies depending upon the geographic area of use, location of competitors and also the local IP framework in force in those countries

### **Patents**

When seeking to protect an innovative product or process, a company will typically file a patent application in the UK. This provides a 12-month window within which to file corresponding patent applications in other countries into which they may, in time, wish to expand. It is possible to file an international patent application which effectively increases this 12-month window by a further 10 months, but it is important that

companies begin strategic planning as early as possible in the product lifetime to ensure that they cover the most important markets.

# **Registered Designs**

If the product only has a short shelf-life or embodies incremental modifications over time, particularly in relation to the appearance of the product, then the protection afforded by design rights and more specifically registered designs may be a more cost-effective alternative to patents particularly, in countries that involve a lengthy and costly patent process.

# Trade Marks

Choosing the right trade mark can mean the difference between the success and failure of a global product launch strategy, particularly

in countries where the trade mark needs to be translated into the local language. For example, a trade mark may be absolutely fine in English, but when translated into Spanish, for sale in Mexico, it may be either offensive, unpronounceable or unsuitable for the product in question.

### **Take Action Early**

For companies building an international IP portfolio, considering these issues at an early stage of each project is crucial, as each project may require a different IP strategy and any delay in taking action could lead to limitations in the remedies available. An intellectual property attorney will be able to discuss the issues relevant to you and devise a tailored strategy for your business.

Murgitroyd (murgitroyd.com) is a pan-European firm of patent and trade mark attorneys with a Newcastle office based in Collingwood St.

Contact Keith Jones, Director – Patents, to help define a global IP strategy for your business:

T: 0191 211 3550 E: keith.jones@murgitroyd.com

# 8 TIPS FOR GETTING COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS RIGHT



Robin Adams, partner in Muckle LLP's Commercial team, has some practical advice for getting the most from your business contracts.

A clear contract can help you get paid on time, guarantee performance or, if things go wrong, save you from a costly dispute. So here are my top tips for safe, sound and profitable contractual relationships.

### 1. Choose your words wisely

A contract doesn't have to be in writing or be signed. For a binding contract, one party must accept another's offer, which can happen in an email exchange, phone call or meeting, so be careful what you say.

### 2. Be clear on consideration

For a valid contract, you need consideration or in other words each party needs to give something to the other. That's usually in the form of money, goods or services, but it may be in the form of promises to act in a particular way or allow certain things to happen. Where there isn't consideration, say where only one party is accepting obligations, a deed can be used. A deed is binding without consideration, and a lawyer can check the right formalities have been met.

### 3. Check terms are clear

A written contract will help reduce uncertainty over the applicable terms. You need to make sure the terms are accurately described and understood by each party. You also need to look out for statements made in negotiations — they can be contractual so might allow termination or a claim against you if they are untrue. If you're dealing with consumers, additional requirements apply for making contracts transparent and easy to follow.



# 4. Cover your back

Think about what could go wrong for each party and what the consequences would be. Are there limitations on liability and are they appropriate? Is there a financial cap on liability? Are certain losses excluded? Do you have insurance and have you checked your policy terms to make sure you are covered? A dispute over a contract with no caps, exclusions and insurance could be far more expensive than it might otherwise be.

### 5. Make sure you get paid

Can the other party meet the payment obligations? Complete credit checks and review company accounts before you contract. Also consider whether you need a guarantee from a parent company or shareholder. If you're supplying goods or services, asking for money up-front may be a good idea too.

### 6. Know where your exits are

If you need to 'get out' of a contract, you need to know how and when you can terminate. Be careful you're not tied in for longer than expected. Beware of onerous fees or liabilities for terminating and look out for contracts which only allow termination on a particular day. Are termination rights and fixed terms clearly set out? Should any obligations continue to apply after termination or expiry?

### 7. Establish your terms

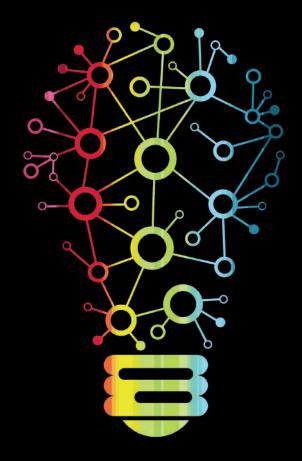
Contracting on the other party's terms can cause problems if you have lots of suppliers or customers, each with their own terms. It's often difficult to manage and the risk of breach is higher. Even if the other party offers no terms, are you sure your own terms apply? That's easier to determine in a signed written contract, but if you're contracting based on an order form, or by email or phone using your standard terms, you need to make sure your standard terms are incorporated into the contract. For example, terms on the back of an invoice won't be valid – you need to incorporate them when the contract is made.

### 8. Have the last word

If your client or supplier insists on accepting the offer subject to their own terms, and you don't reject this, you may find their terms apply instead of yours. Whoever "fires the last shot" wins and if you get it wrong even the most carefully drafted terms may be irrelevant.

If you would like to discuss the way you contract with customers, clients, suppliers or others please email Robin Adams at robin.adams@muckle-llp.com or call him on 0191 211 7949.

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# THE EQUALITY CHALLENGE

Jackie Turner, Partner and Head of Employment & HR at St James' Square Law Firm, explains why it is important that companies have equality of opportunity in the workplace on the agenda all year round and not just for awareness days.

With Pride Month having been recently celebrated in June and Newcastle's own Northern Pride Festival returning from the 19th – 21st July, the summer months see a wave in awareness and support for the LGBT+ community.

However, as an employer, it takes more than just including the pride flag in your company's logo or tweeting your support for International Women's Day to show your commitment as an equal opportunities' employer, advocating inclusion and diversity.

Equality of opportunity is vital in the workplace – not just from a moral perspective or to protect your brand, but to ensure that you are abiding by the law. Employees should not be treated differently on the basis of a characteristic like their sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace and other fields such as education and the provision of goods and services. The law prevents anyone from being treated unfavourably in relation to any of the nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity.

Employers also have an obligation to ensure that none of their practices or policies in the workplace indirectly disadvantage workers by reason of these nine protected characteristics. For example, a policy regarding dress code may impact on articles of clothing that employees may wear to manifest their religious faith. Employers should consider whether any of their policies or practices may involve indirect discrimination and, where this is the case, consider how they would justify that policy or practice. In light of this, employers should regularly review their practices and policies to ensure no employees are being treated unlawfully. Training on equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination is also recommended, if not for all staff then at the very least those with recruitment and line management responsibilities.

Employers also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Steps must be taken to address disadvantages connected to somebody's disability, where it is reasonable to do so. Employers should remember that disabilities are not always visible or obvious. Depression can, for example, be a disability under the Equality Act. Problems or issues will often be highlighted by an employee but, even if your employee has not



specifically alerted you to a medical condition, an employment tribunal can determine that you ought reasonably to have been aware of it. For example, if an employee is uncharacteristically emotional, upset and making mistakes at work, this may be enough to put an employer on notice of depression. Where the employer has knowledge of a disability and a disadvantage to an employee, the duty is firmly on them to make whatever adjustments are reasonable, whether or not the employee has requested them.

If you are an employee who believes you have been subject to discrimination by your employer, usually you should pursue your complaint through your employer's internal procedures first. You may be penalised in the employment tribunal for not doing so. If internal procedures do not resolve matters satisfactorily, you will need to raise the issue via the ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) Early Conciliation Procedure before bringing a claim to the employment tribunal.

If you are an employer faced with a complaint from a member of staff claiming that they have been subject to discrimination, you must first of all treat the complaint seriously. You should investigate the issues raised and consider all of the evidence before reaching a decision. If you do not, then you are putting your company, and potentially yourself, at risk. Discrimination complaints can

be time consuming and expensive, particularly if they end up in the employment tribunal. They can also involve personal liability for those involved. Employers should seriously consider taking legal advice when any complaint of discrimination is made. Your lawyer can help you manage internal procedures to your best advantage and, where matters escalate, help you prepare your evidence in defence of a claim.

Ensuring that employers abide by the law is the absolute minimum that should be done in the challenge for equality. Forward thinking companies have realised that fostering and promoting an inclusive and diverse workplace is good for business. Customers expect this from brands. Those companies that do not have this on their agenda will get left behind. And besides, what company would not benefit from having a broad range of employee viewpoints.



Jackie Turner is Partner and Head of Employment & HR at St James' Square Law Firm. If you would like to chat to Jackie or for further advice, please contact her on 0191 466 1000 or email jackie.turner@sjs-law.co.uk.

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# NORTH EAST HOTELS ASSOCIATION HONOURS WINNERS AT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Hosted by award-winning journalist and BBC Breakfast business presenter Steph McGovern, more than 400 guests and industry professionals gathered for the North East Hotels Association annual Excellence Awards to celebrate the brightest and best of the hospitality sector in the region.

Congratulating the winners, Lisa Crocker, joint chair of the North East Hotels Association, said: "The Excellence Awards provide a unique opportunity to celebrate the diverse range of talent in our industry."

The glittering event was held at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton which also saw guests treated to a prize-winning menu devised by two talented chefs; Chris Donaldson, from Hilton Newcastle Gateshead and Michael Parkinson from Ramside Hall in County Durham.



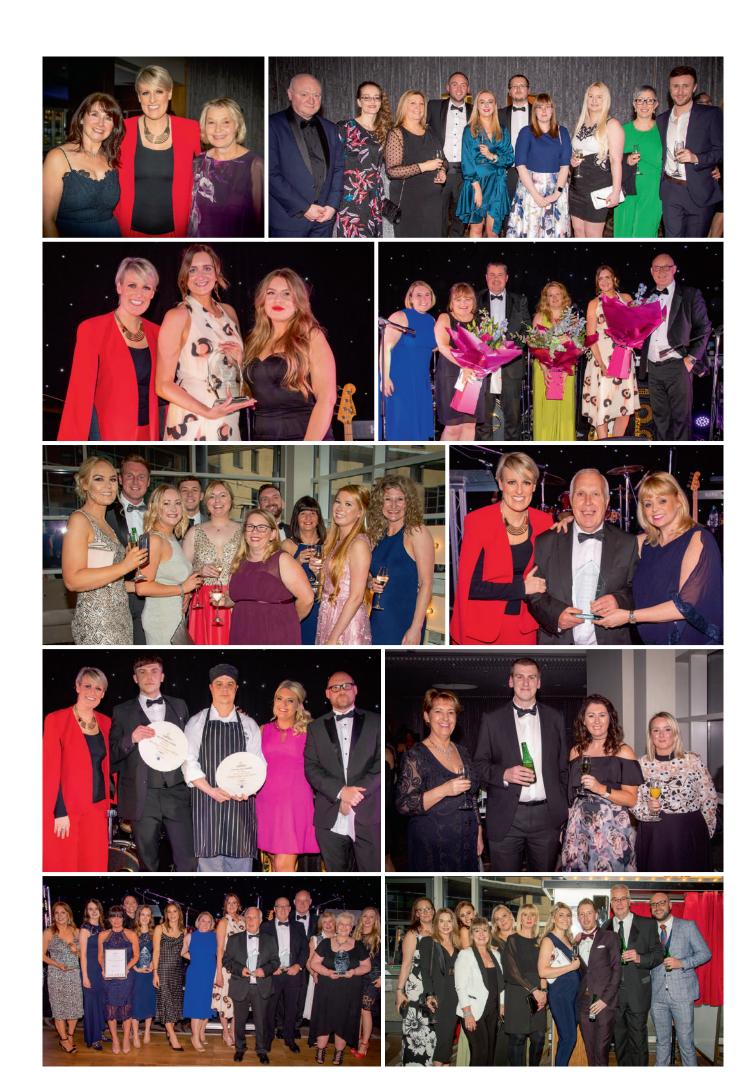












# WHAT IS A CLEAN BREAK CONSENT ORDER AND WHY MIGHT YOU NEED ONE WHEN YOU ARE GETTING DIVORCED?

Most people don't realise that although their decree absolute ends their marriage, it does not automatically end their financial ties to their spouse. Financial settlement upon divorce is a separate procedure from the divorce process itself. There is no automatic 'clean break' without an order of the court to this effect.

### What is a clean break consent order?

If you are able to reach a financial settlement with your spouse as to how the assets and liabilities of the marriage will be divided, you can ask a judge to make this legally binding. This is known as consent order and it summarises your financial settlement. A clean break order is something that can be included in the consent order and this will end yours and your spouse's rights to make any future financial claims against each other.

A clean break consent order is generally preferred by the court, where possible, as it allows both parties to move on without any ongoing financial obligations to one another. However, it is not always possible, or advisable, to have a clean break from your spouse.

# What happens if you do not obtain a clean break consent order when you get divorced?

If you don't have a clean break consent order, your spouse could go back to court at a later date and ask for more money from you. This usually becomes more probable if you come into money at a later date. For example, your business takes off, you win the lottery or receive inheritance.

This came to pass in the notorious cases of EuroMillions winner Nigel Page and the successful businessman, Dale Vince.

In both cases, their ex-wives made applications to the court seeking a financial divorce settlement years after their divorce because of a change in their financial circumstances and were successful.

Mr Page won £56 million on the lottery. He had not obtained a clean break order when he divorced. As a result it was reported that Mr Page made an



out-of-court settlement to pay his ex-wife of £2 million

The same issue arose in the case of Wyatt v Wince 2015. After his divorce, Mr Vince set up a successful company, which was reported in 2016 to be worth circa £57 million. Ms Wyatt made an application to the courts for a financial orders more than 20 years after they had divorced. Ms Wyatt was reportedly awarded a £300,000 lump sum payment.

These cases highlight the importance of obtaining a clean break consent orders upon divorce. Informal agreements are often not enough and leave the door open to potential future claims.

### What if we don't have any assets?

Sweeney Miller's Lindsey Christie says "As a divorce solicitor, I am often asked whether it is really necessary to apply to the courts for a clean break consent order. My answer is that if you want to be certain that you have a clean break, then yes".

Divorcing couples often believe that if there are little or no assets of the marriage when they get divorced, there is no point in getting a clean break consent order.

As highlighted in the cases discussed above, if you walk away from your divorce without a legally binding financial court order, you are leaving

yourself open to your ex-spouse making future financial claims against you, if you come into money in the future.

With more and more people are opting to deal with their divorces themselves, without seeking any legal advice and if they have managed to reach an agreement between themselves, it is all too easy to think that it is a waste of money to get the financial settlement they have agreed made into a legally binding order when they get divorced.

However, it can be an expensive decision in the long run if your circumstances were to change in the future as without a clean break order, you may find that your divorce is not as final as you thought it was.

### Looking for advice?

If you wish to begin divorce proceedings, or know someone who does, feel free to contact Sweeney Miller Law's expert team of specialists.



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# BANKING LICENCE CHANGES FOR VIRGIN MONEY EXPECTED BY THE END OF 2019



The recent acquisition of Virgin Money by CYBG has been hailed by Chief Executive, David Duffy, as an exciting challenge to the Big Five in the UK banking market.

CYBG, owner of Yorkshire Bank and Clydesdale Bank, completed its £1.7bn purchase of Virgin Money in October 2018 in an all-share transaction creating the sixth largest lender in the UK market. The merger brings together complementary strengths through the combination of CYBG's personal and business banking prowess with Virgin Money's mortgage and credit card operations. But what does it mean for North East savers? Here Cascade's MD, Dr Emma Black, rounds up the impact this may have:

"Virgin Money began its journey into mortgage lending through the acquisition of Northern Rock in January 2012. Having started with £14bn of mortgages at that time, the new bank grew mortgage lending by 43% in just over two years. The bank listed via an IPO in November 2014 and became a public company committed to improving competition in the retail banking market, a key objective of the regulator in the aftermath of the financial credit crisis.

"The decision to join with CYBG could prove a historic milestone in years to come for both banks through the national footprint and enhanced scale it delivers — indeed, the combined entity is double the size of any other challenger bank in the UK market.

"When banks combine, they can decide to continue to operate from separate banking

licences or can merge to share one licence. CYBG have indicated that the group plans to share a single licence by the end of 2019. As many North East savers have savings accounts with Virgin Money, it's important to take note of what this change may mean for you.

"Savers in the UK are afforded £85,000 of deposit protection under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) per banking licence per entity/person. That means that if a bank were to enter difficulty and cease trading, savers with said entity would have the first £85,000 of cash held with that bank compensated back to them once submitting a claim to the FSCS.

"As it stands, CYBG and Virgin Money operate from two separate banking licences. This means that a saver presently has £85,000 of their cash protected with CYBG and £85,000 of their cash protected with Virgin Money. The plan to combine the banking licences to a single licence by the end of 2019 will however mean that this will change and at the point either licence is cancelled with the other joining the remaining licence, savers will no longer be protected separately for cash held with Clydesdale Bank, Yorkshire Bank or Virgin Money and so will need to ensure that they do not exceed the £85,000 limit across all three banks should they wish to have their cash savings protected.

"Many banks share a licence and it's important

to be aware of changes taking place. Recently Holmesdale Building Society was acquired by Skipton Building Society with both now sharing the Skipton Building Society licence. Sufficient notice is typically given to ensure savers have ample time to decide what they would like to do. For those that have fixed term accounts or notice accounts, we recommend you keep a close eye on any news announcements to ensure you're aware of your options before the banks join onto the same single licence.

"Our Cascade portal is designed to offer maximum depositor protection, but do please check with our team if you have any questions on licenses, mergers, depositor protection or general savings queries."

Cascade Cash Management (Cascade) is an independent and transparent service created to generate enhanced cash returns and increase protection on deposits through professional cash management.

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

More information on the company is available at www.cascade.co.uk

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# MHOMES MOVES INTO NEW SPACE TO LAUNCH VENTURE



Middlesbrough Council has set up a new limited company, MHOMES, to operate in the development of new housing in the Town, to complement the excellent work currently being carried out by other organisations.

And Business Lead Tony Dodds has just moved the Company in to their new offices to start trading.

MHOMES is the proud new tenant of Commerce House, a recently renovated Grade II listed building in heart of the TS1 postcode, which is exactly where Tony and the Board of Directors wanted to be. Having looked at a number of other office buildings in the town, they decided the central location, quality of the finish and being located in the heart of the business community was right for MHOMES.

As most of the real estate construction and development related services will be procured from companies in Middlesbrough, such as architects, solicitors, building contractors, surveyors and engineers, the team have taken an office adjacent to the Business Lounge within Commerce House. The premises will also allow for the growth in the management team over the next year.

MHOMES is an established concept for local authorities wanting to trade and it's a new foray for Middlesbrough Council into the housing market

There is a lot of interest from third parties to invest in Middlesbrough as it under goes massive regeneration, but the Council also wants to be able to directly intervene in its own area. It has therefore initially proposed to build up 100 new homes on three sites over the first two years. The sites will be a combination of types and tenures, from starter homes to four bedroom quality family homes. These will be for rent and sale and include a proportion of affordable homes.

Tony, who has over 25 year's experience in the property industry and has been appointed by the Council to establish MHOMES, said: "We want MHOMES to be complementary to the existing work happening in the area, to invest in Middlesbrough and satisfy areas of undersupply.

"The aim is for this business to create work for

consultants and contractors from in and around Middlesbrough, and to support local residents, companies and the economy. That is why, when we visited Commerce House, we felt a huge synergy with the building - it is a fantastic environment and showcases what investment into our area can generate!"

Commerce House is now a thriving business community, with a mix of tenants from all industries, differing in size. The building, which also offers virtual tenancy, co-working, hot-desking and hosts events and meetings, is 95% full with a huge amount of interest in the remaining space. Facilities manager, Christine Huntington, said: "A huge welcome from all at Commerce House to Tony and MHOMES. Our TS1 postcode, and the quality of our fit out has been a big draw to many. We are delighted that a company associated with the council has chosen us as its home, and that from the office based here MHOMES will be working on further regeneration in the area."

More information on Commerce House is available at www.commerce-house.co.uk and on MHomes by calling 07715 122926.



# THE START OF MAKING TAX DIGITAL

As most (I hope all), business owners will now be aware, HMRC have rolled out MTD (Making Tax Digital) and as of April 2019, we officially entered the first stage. Thankfully, HMRC is offering a range of support ahead of the changes due from 1 April 2019 affecting VAT-registered businesses with a taxable turnover above £85,000.

Making Tax Digital is a key part of the government's plans to make it easier for individuals and businesses to get their tax right and keep on top of their affairs; hopefully over time this will work seamlessly and make life easier for business owners. Making Tax Digital is the government's £1.3bn investment programme for HMRC to become the most digitally advanced tax administration in the world by 2020.

Making Tax Digital is making fundamental changes to the way the tax system works – transforming tax administration so that it is more effective, efficient and easier for taxpayers to get things right.

The exception to this is a small minority of VAT-registered businesses with more complex requirements. HMRC have made the decision to delay mandation for these customers until 1 October 2019 to ensure there is enough time to test the service with them before they are mandated to join.

The improved accuracy that digital records provide, along with the help built into many software products and the fact that information is sent directly to HMRC from the digital records will reduce the amount of tax lost to avoid errors.

If you still find yourself struggling, then don't worry.

Contact us today and we can help you make a smooth transition and provide sound advice. Please visit our website at www.kpsimpson.co.uk or call 0191 420 0550.

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# FRICTIONLESS PAYMENTS -

Millennial money and the rise of a buy now, pay later culture

This year has seen the rise of frictionless payment platforms offering 'buy now pay later' customer credit. Names such as Klarna, Afterpay and Quadpay are appearing as payment options offered by popular online retailers such as ASOS, Urban Outfitters, Topshop and H&M.

So, what are frictionless payment systems? Frictionless commerce is a method of using data from digital devices, apps and websites to integrate buying opportunities and make them as simple and seamless as possible. Not only do these platforms add simplicity, they go one step further with their frictionless offering by delaying payment, effectively giving the customer up to 30 days credit, enticing customers to maybe spend more or be happy to order more than one size to ensure best fit.

Although Klarna is relatively new tech, it has gained over 4.4m users in the UK since its launch in January 2019. It allows customers to pay for purchases up to 30 days later using a variety of payment options including: pay later – 14 or 30 days after delivery; payment over three monthly instalments; or, for larger purchases, payment over up to 36 monthly instalments.

Customers simply select the Klarna payment option at checkout and complete what the company terms a 'soft' credit check. The customer is then presented with several delayed payment options. With a user-friendly set up and no fees or interest, the customer perceives this as a safer alternative to a credit card. Whilst there is no interest, late fees or charges for the customer, non-payment for several months can result in the involvement of debt collection agencies.

Klarna generates revenue by charging fees to its retail partners on transactions, but they also take on the risk so that retailers receive payment regardless.

Recent retail trends continue to see an increase in over-ordering and intentional returns with up to one in three items being returned. This looks set to continue to increase in the future. Klarna assists by allowing customers to 'try before you buy' where in theory the customers can return a purchase before the money leaves their account.

Retailers are striving to adapt their returns process to make this easier for customers – and to maintain control over their own handling costs. A delay between delivery and payment removes one of the barriers to purchase and could see more frequent



purchases. With access to the product being that much easier, this should indicate an overall increase in sales.

### From online to in store

Klarna have announced that they will be rolling out their payment options across physical retail stores. Retailers simply provide a QR code for the customer to scan using their Klarna app and then complete the payment using their phone. This adds flexibility to the checkout process and is also as quick as paying with a contactless or debit card.

The app allows customers to track their outstanding payments from different retailers in one place and see exactly when payments are due. Although in reality this isn't that different to using a credit card and paying it off every month, the sleekness of the app makes it very easy to use. We have seen how ease of use and the quality of an app can make a huge difference, Monzo being a great example.

### Could the future be a cashless society?

The rapid growth of alternative payment options such as Klarna shows that flexibility is really what the younger generation is looking for. More and more retailers are signing up and offering Klarna as a payment option and as a result are seeing their consumer base grow and expand.

Consumers now expect a range of purchase options that are more convenient for them. The growing reliance on smart phones for payment suggests

that along with cash, actual card payments may become a thing of the past sooner rather than later.

### A cautionary tale

With recent media reports indicating that a quarter of British adults have no savings, the flexibility in payment that these apps offer feeds into the current collective 'want it now' consumer psyche — encouraging consumers to spend, rather than save. According to these media reports one in ten adults typically spend more than they earn. Splitting a payment into three can make products appear more affordable than they are or encourage consumers to add another item or two to their basket. Will frictionless payments exacerbate this and result in people overestimating what they can actually afford? Whilst Klarna and the like offer the potential for sales boosts for retailers, they also shift us closer to a credit-based society.

With easy access to debt, it begs the question whether these platforms are too readily available, especially to a younger generation?



For more information on how frictionless commerce can affect your retail business, please contact the co-authors Richard Urron (richard.urron@rsmuk.com) and Ceri Plowman (ceri.plowman@rsmuk.com) or your usual RSM contact.

# THE VALUE OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Businesses are beginning to appreciate that the right benefits package can help them to attract, motivate and retain employees and stand out from their competitors.

In a climate of minimal pay rises, employee benefits can add significant value to your offering – typically this can be viewed as 'adding' a value of 20-40% of a salary but needn't cost this much to provide.

Juan Marin, Corporate Director, Prismatic Wealth explains, "This is the beauty of the right employee benefit. A decent pension to look forward to, reassuring life cover for employees unable to organise or afford their own, childcare vouchers supporting expensive nursery fees as well as prompt healthcare for employees and their family, is worth far more than the nominal cost".

"But the real value is to the business in terms of helping you to attract the best talent, keeping your staff motivated, minimising absenteeism and helping you retain your best employees".

Whereas employee benefits were once only provided by large employers, Prismatic Wealth are increasingly helping smaller and medium size employers understand and roll out the right



benefit package for their business and staff demographic.

But if you're new to employee benefits, or simply have not reviewed them for many years, where do you start? To help cut through the confusion, Prismatic Wealth have organised a series of free bi-monthly breakfast networking events throughout the year covering the main benefits to look out for including both traditional benefits such as 'Private Medical Insurance' and 'Death in Service' to newer benefits such as 'Salary Sacrifice

Cars', 'Cash Health Plans' and 'Flex Benefits'. Prismatic Wealth have invited leading industry providers to present an insight into the different benefits available, such as Bupa, Unum, Tusker, You at Work and Westfield Health.

As independent pension and employee benefit consultants, Prismatic Wealth access the whole of the market and advise on the full spectrum of benefits, getting to know the right benefits for your business and employees.

You can register to attend 'Employee Benefit Breakfasts' via Eventbrite or contact 01642 661600, enquiries@prismaticwealth.co.uk for a no obligation conversation about the different benefits available and how they can help develop your business.



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# ADVANTEX NETWORK SOLUTIONS LENDS A HELPING HAND TO VETERANS IN CRISIS

Founded in January 2018, Sunderland based Veterans in Crisis responds to the needs of troubled ex-service men and women from the British forces.

Many veterans leave the forces experiencing some form of mental health issues, including PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), anxiety and depression, with Veterans in Crisis Founder and Project Lead, Gerard Fowler being one of them.

As a result of his time in Northern Ireland serving for the British Army in the late 1980s, Ger experienced PTSD, but after years of counselling and support from his family and friends - he was able to recover.

Realising there wasn't a service for veterans with multiple and complex needs in the North East, combined with a genuine passion and desire to help those in need, Ger set up Veterans in Crisis, and in just over a year - has become Sunderland's prime service helping over 130 veterans.

The service aims to provide a lifeline for every stage of recovery, from support and education, right down to emergency accommodation. And in partnership with Advantex Network Solutions and North East training provider Springboard, which owns the building in Roker, Veterans in Crisis has developed the four storey facility, providing veterans with a state-of-the-art 24-hour facility.

Springboard aims to support the development of

sustainable communities where people have the skills they need for work and life.

Steve Reay, Head of Business Development at Springboard said: "As a community development and training organisation it is a great honour to support such a worthy initiative, and we look forward to a long partnership."

Installing the building with the latest IP Surveillance and IT equipment, including infrastructure and wireless Internet access throughout the building – Advantex Network Solutions will allow Veterans In Crisis to provide a safe and secure place for the veterans to get some much-needed respite from their troubles.

Steve O'Connell, Sales and Marketing Director at Advantex Network Solutions added: "As a former Royal Marine myself, this is a service which is very close to my heart having suffered from mental illness myself which Ger helped me with back in 2016 when I lived in Sunderland.

Seeing the work and services that Ger and the rest of the folks at Veterans in Crisis provide is simply amazing — and to be able to give something back as a business like this is something I'm particularly proud of.

We see so many of our former colleagues who gave so much for their country needing support, with too many of them taking their own life as a result of mental health issues.

I'm excited for the future, and I look forward to helping Ger and his team grow as a partner over the years to come in helping more and more veterans"

With the doors set to open in June this year, the Roker buildings facilities will include a state-of-theart podcast studio, a classroom kitted out with the latest technology and software, as well as a therapy room and emergency accommodation for those in need of immediate help.

Director at Veterans in Crisis, John Sargent said: "Establishing a 24-hour emergency facility for Veterans in Crisis is a high priority for us. The support that Advantex has given us has been crucial in achieving that ambition, and we are now proud to call them a partner"

During its first year, Veterans in Crisis has been supported by the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group and Sunderland Council as well as numerous local people who respond to the cause. They also raise funds, all of which are injected back in to helping veterans, via the sale of merchandise including hoodies and t-shirts.

Advantex.uk.com



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Now, for tomorrow



# THE FINANCE DURHAM FUND CELEBRATES TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY INVESTING £3.4 MILLION SINCE INCEPTION

Crowned one of the UK's most innovative cities in 2018, Durham is home to a growing hub of dynamic, high-growth businesses.

The Finance Durham Fund, managed by Maven Capital Partners, has, since its launch, invested £3.4 million in 10 dynamic growth businesses across County Durham, driving economic prosperity and supporting the creation and safeguarding of over 250 jobs.

The £20 million Fund was established in May 2017 by Durham County Council and is overseen by Business Durham, the economic development arm of Durham County Council. Working with the local business support infrastructure, Maven provides investment capital to support the growth of innovative and ambitious businesses across a wide range of sectors and in a variety of funding scenarios. Maven has completed investments ranging from £40,000 to £2.7 million and has successfully leveraged an additional £5.2 million in private sector debt finance for local businesses.

Notable transactions include the £1 million investment in NETPark-based water technology business, G2O, the £1.95 million investment in leading independent engineering business, Dyer Engineering, the £850,000 investment in reverse auction marketplace, honcho and the £400,000 investment in 2019 North East Business Innovation awards winners, Intelligence Fusion.

In line with Durham County Council's economic growth strategy to encourage entrepreneurship in County Durham and help businesses grow and

compete more effectively, Maven has established a comprehensive 'Access to Finance' programme. Through a series of business clinics and workshops, the programme assists entrepreneurs in developing an appropriate business structure and strategy to enable them to secure growth funding. Maven has supported over 150 of the County's best and brightest businesses in just two years.

Many viable, dynamic companies with innovative products and services, strong business plans and highly capable management teams are struggling to access the funding that will allow them to develop their businesses and market offering. The Fund is already producing greater levels of investment in smaller businesses and increasing flexibility in the type of funding available to those businesses.

Michael Vassallo, Investment Director at Maven, said, "We are delighted that the Fund has reached such a significant milestone and that we have been able to support so many jobs across the County. Many of our transactions are fantastic examples of investors in the North East working together to provide local businesses with substantial funding packages to enable them to grow globally.

"At Maven, we understand the importance of proactively providing local support, our investment team has considerable in-depth knowledge of the local SME market, allied to our national resource, we are well-equipped to deliver comprehensive

investor readiness training tailored to the individual growth needs of businesses based in County Durham."

Sarah Slaven, Business Development Director, said: "'It is great to look back on the range of companies and projects that have benefited from the Finance Durham fund over the last two years and are already creating jobs and investing further in the County.

"The Fund is a key part of the wider package that Business Durham has available to make County Durham an attractive place to do business. We look forward to continuing to work with these companies and those who receive funding from the fund in the future."

Cllr Carl Marshall, Cabinet member for economic regeneration at Durham County Council, said: "We are committed to supporting businesses across the county to grow and achieve their ambitions. The Finance Durham Fund is a major part of this and we are delighted to be able to share such positive news as we mark two years since its inception.

"Durham has an international reputation as a home for dynamic businesses. By encouraging entrepreneurship, investing in infrastructure and helping companies to access the growth funding they need, we can build on this reputation and create even more jobs and opportunities."

Contact Maven's local team today to access the finance or support your business needs to unlock its growth potential or visit mavencp.com to find out more.



# CREATING VALUE

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



If your business is in need of finance to help unlock its growth potential, we may be able to help.

For more information please contact:

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



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# KNOW WHAT YOU OWN

I was recently advising a new client to our business on the subject of investment and expected returns. They had been disappointed by investment returns from a portfolio provided by their previous advisory firm.

They felt that their portfolio had not really made any money over a number of years and they were unsettled with the advice they had received in recent times.

Reviewing their portfolio and how it was constructed, it was easy to see why it had failed to live up to expectations.

In very simple terms, and somewhat obviously, the assets you have in your investment portfolio determines your likely returns.

If we make reasonable assumptions on the long returns from different assets and combine the percentage holdings, you will have a fair idea of what your overall return from your investments might be.

Of the three main assets in a portfolio, equities, fixed income and cash, we might expect the long-term returns from a diverse selection of each to be around 7%, 4% and 1% respectively.

Our new clients' portfolio had 20% equity, 50% fixed income and 30% cash as cautious investors. Using our ready reckoner, we can see a long-term portfolio return of 3.5% per annum.

On the face of it, you might think that is not too bad for a cautious portfolio. However, we need to consider the effects of tax and charges.

Our new clients were paying 1% per annum to the old adviser, 0.24% to a discretionary fund manager and 0.29% to the platform upon

which the investments were administered. It also had management fees paid to the fund managers investing the funds which were around 0.2%. Consequently, that is a total of 1.73% to be deducted leaving 1.77% pa profit for the investments.

Here comes the sting in the tail. Long term average for inflation is around 2.7%, as quoted by the Office of National Statistics, so, in real terms, the clients would expect to lose around 1% pa in buying power.

Our clients had more than three year's personal expenditure and a significant emergency fund set aside from their investments in cash.

With all foreseeable short-term events covered, the purpose of the investment portfolio must be a target of inflation plus. This leads on to our clients' understanding now that they can have more equity in their portfolio and still remain cautious investors.

It is our view that portfolios like the one described, reward the adviser to the detriment of the naturally cautious investor. There is no way that such a portfolio can provide value for the client. History, which does repeat itself, tells us so.

The moral of the story is that you need to understand what you have in your portfolio and what you should reasonably expect it to do for you. Your adviser should be able to explain the context and purpose of your investments and if they can't you should consider whether you are talking to the right person.

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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# FUTUREPROOF YOUR LIFESTYLE

With Chartered Financial Planner and Director of Robson Laidler Wealth Neil Cowie

It feels like there's a lot of uncertainty about at the moment – whether it's Brexit or our next PM or the state of the economy. It may be concern about climate change or job security. Although these things seem big and out of our control there are steps, we can all take to make the future a little more predictable.

Most of the people we work with want to maintain their current lifestyle. But what is lifestyle and how much does it cost? What does your life look like at the moment? Are you happy with your life or are there things you want to do to change your lifestyle?

Lifestyle can be broken down into different categories e.g.

**Basics** – these are the essential items we all need to pay for e.g. utilities, mortgage or rent, food, clothing, insurances, property maintenance, vehicle costs, petrol, debt repayments etc.

**Discretionary** – these are the extras that make life more enjoyable e.g. holidays, entertainment, eating out, sports & hobbies, school fees, wine (considered essential for some!) etc.

**Milestones** – these are the one off events or purchases that often create fabulous memories e.g. new sports car, world cruise on retirement, family wedding, helping a child buy a property.

Hopefully our lifestyle is currently affordable but in future when we stop earning how do we ensure we can continue to live in the same way?



Many people will receive a state pension in retirement although state pension age is constantly being pushed out. The pension received is typically only around 30% of annual average earnings and for many significantly less than this. This is unlikely to be sufficient to cover the basics.

Some people are members of their workplace pension. If you work in the public sector or a large company, you may be fortunate to have a defined benefit or final salary pension scheme, although these are becoming less common. Even if you are a member of a final salary scheme it is unlikely the benefits will exceed 50% of current earnings.

Therefore, in order to maintain lifestyle, it is essential funds are set aside in savings and investments during your working life to meet the shortfall between secure pension funds and total lifestyle costs.

If your average annual lifestyle expenditure is £40,000 and you only have secure income from state pension and workplace pension of £25,000 you have £15,000 to fund from savings and investments each year.

Assuming an average annual investment return of 5% (moderate risk) and an annual withdrawal of £15,000, a starting fund of £242,000 will be required to last 30 years. You can do the maths to work out your own futureproof fund or you can work with a Chartered Financial Planner to help determine your own number.

Another factor to consider is the rising cost of lifestyle over time i.e. inflation. Money held in bank savings tends to lose real value over time because of inflation and in the example the starting fund would be exhausted after just 20 years with inflation at 2.5% per annum.

So how will you pay for your next golf trip or fine dining experience and maybe more importantly how will you pay for it in 10 or 15 years' time?

Talk to us and we can show you how. Email me: ncowie@robson-laidler.co.uk or call us on: 0191 281 8191.



# CASE STUDIES

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

We have helped numerous clients so far during 2019 across all areas of the market allowing satisfied clients to receive the keys to their new home, remortgage to a better interest rate or perhaps develop a Buy to Let portfolio.

The opportunities available in the mortgage market are now very diverse...could we help you at some stage in 2019? Below are some examples of the types of scenarios that we have helped our clients recently - all of the following mortgage offers were successfully received from mainstream lenders at prime rates.

Downsizing with existing mortgage early repayment charges – our clients approached us to look at mortgage options and expected to have to pay early repayment charges to their existing lender. We were able to allow them to downsize and remain with their existing lender as there was a clause which they were unaware of which allowed them to downsize by up to 25% without incurring early repayment charges saving them a substantial amount of money.

Convert to Interest Only – our clients had an existing repayment mortgage over a very short term (due to their ages) which was making the mortgage payments unaffordable for them. We managed to move them onto an interest only loan with downsizing being the exit strategy when their youngest son leaves home as the property would then be too large for their needs.

**Borrowing shortfall** – these clients were first time buyers and had approached several lenders and each time were unable to obtain the level of borrowing required to buy a home that they had seen. One client received regular overtime and



bonus and we were able to take all of this into account so that they were able to borrow the figure that they required.

Joint borrower, sole proprietor — this client wanted to buy a property with parental help but the parents were concerned about the Stamp Duty charge that would become liable. By choosing a lender that allowed the parents income to be taken into account but not named on the title deeds, we were able to match the level of borrowing needed and avoid the Stamp Duty charge.

Business owners buying their first home — we were approached by a couple who own their business as 50/50 shareholders. Whilst the business is extremely profitable, they did not take large divdends in the past due to having low personal outgoings. When trying to find a mortgage this

caused issues with some banks. We found a lender which considers the profit of the business rather than dividends and this allowed them to buy the home of their dreams.

Releasing capital for a marital settlement — sadly our client was divorcing and needed to pay his ex-wife a considerable sum in relation to this or risk having to sell the family home. His existing lender was not prepared to offer a mortgage past his state retirement age even though as a professional he is fully capable and intending to do so. After a review of the wider market a suitable lender and product was found preventing the sale of his home.

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

Paul Hardingham and Tony Ibson are Mortgage and Protection Advisers at Innovate Mortgages and Loans. Both have over 20 years of experience advising individuals and businesses across the North East of England. They can be contacted for bespoke advice at paul@innovateml.co.uk or tony@innovateml.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.

# ACCOUNTANTS SADDLE UP FOR CHARITY

A brave group of accountants from Robson Laidler Accountants in Newcastle and Durham, along with their friends and family, are taking on The Coast 2 Coast Challenge this August.

The 16 strong team will cycle approx. 150 miles from Whitehaven to Tynemouth over three days to raise funds for the Firm's Charity of the Year, the Freeman Heart and Lung Transplant Association.

The team, which is being headed up by client manager Jack Spoor and senior client manager Stephen Willis, have begun their training in preparation for the challenge.

As well as cyclists, volunteers from Robson Laidler are also attending to help support the riders as they travel.

Stephen said: "After completing various challenges to help us reach our charity goal of raising £100,000 in time for our 100th anniversary in 2020, the conversation turned to the Coast to Coast cycle challenge and, as I have done it myself before, I promised to look into it. A couple of conversations later somehow "looking into it" had changed to 16 staff members being committed to it!

"Most of us are not regular cyclists so this will really be a challenge. I hope that as well as the feeling of satisfaction at the end of the ride, there will also be the satisfaction of knowing we have raised money for the Heart and Lung Transplant Association at the Freeman — a charity that is close to the hearts of one of our members of staff."

The team have kindly been supported by Neil McGregor Property Services who are providing the transport and The Cycle Hub who are providing a free bike maintenance services for all cyclists.



If you would like to donate please do so via the Firm's Just Giving link here: www.justgiving.com/companyteams/FHLTAC2C

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# RESOLVE CARE ON THE ACQUISITION TRAIL WITH HEXHAM CARE HOME PURCHASE

A North East care professional has completed her second residential care home acquisition six months after her first – and she is already on the lookout for further similar properties to add to her growing business.

After acquiring the Langley House Residential Care Home in Horden near Peterlee last year, Elaine Reay has now bought the Carntyne Residential Care Home in Hexham through her consultancy Resolve Care.

Elaine was approached about taking on the 19-bed property by its founders, the Sisters of Mercy in Sunderland, who wanted to ensure it could have a sustainable future and could continue to provide great care to its residents.

Carntyne is run by a 35-strong team, all of whom are being retained by the home's new owners, and it takes the number of people employed by Resolve Care to around 120.

Michael Cantwell of RMT Accountants & Business Advisors worked with Elaine on all aspects of the acquisition, while legal advice was provided by Craig Malarkey, partner in the corporate & commercial team at Tilly Bailey & Irvine LLP and advice on personnel matters by Michael Dobson of MD Advisory Services.

The Sisters of Mercy were advised on the disposal by Emma Moody, partner and head of charities at Womble Bond Dickinson in Newcastle.

Situated in the centre of Hexham, Carntyne Residential Care Home was founded in 1990 following a request to the Sisters by the late Roman Catholic Bishop Hugh Lindsay.

It is located close to the Sele Park in the centre of the town and also has its own extensive private grounds.

Most of its residents come from along the Tyne Valley and live there on a permanent basis, but it also offers respite care beds.

Sister Aelred of the Sisters of Mercy says: "The Sisters

set up Carntyne Care Home in 1990 and we have many happy memories of the staff and residents there, but with fewer Sisters in the community now, we can no longer continue to be responsible for running it.

"In order to ensure the best possible outcome for our residents and staff, we agreed to transfer the business to Resolve Care and worked closely with Emma and her team at Womble Bond Dickinson to make this happen.

"We wish all concerned a very happy future, thank the people of Hexham for their support and care over the years, and send the residents and staff every good wish."

A nurse by training, Elaine Reay has been working in the healthcare sector for more than 30 years. She moved into the private sector in the mid 1990s and established her own care consultancy ten years ago to provide bespoke care planning, management and consultancy services to a range of industry clients.

Elaine Reay says: "Carntyne has great facilities, terrific staff and a lovely atmosphere, and its position in the centre of Hexham means many of our residents can get out and enjoy what the town has to offer.

"The Sisters rightly wanted to know that whoever took over the property would continue to look after its residents in the right way and we're fully committed to doing just that.

"We also want to become more involved in the local community and plan to hold coffee mornings and other events that will enable residents to interact and build relationships with other local people and groups.

"We're looking for opportunities to acquire several more similar-sized properties to Langley and Carntyne, but want to stay within the North East, so that we can retain a hands-on, personal style of management and ensure that all our properties are always run to the high standards that our expert staff set. We do not want growth to compromise quality of care in any way.

"RMT and TBI's expert guidance and advice has helped ensure the purchase process has gone extremely smoothly, and they will both be a central part of realising our future growth plans for Resolve."

Michael Cantwell, head of corporate finance at RMT Accountants, adds: "Carntyne is a high-quality property that fits perfectly with Elaine's experience and style of management.

"She has the industry and commercial knowledge behind her to create a strong regional care home group and we're very pleased to be using our own care sector expertise to support her in realising this ambition."

Craig Malarkey, partner in the corporate & commercial team at Tilly Bailey & Irvine LLP, says: "We were thrilled to work again with Elaine in bringing Carntyne into the group. I'm looking forward to continuing our partnership with Elaine and Resolve, and helping her realise her ambitions of creating a group of care homes which is focussed on high levels of care and service for the residents."

Emma Moody, head of charities at Womble Bond Dickinson, says: "I am delighted that my team could support the Sisters in the sale of Carntyne, making their vision for its future a reality. We wish Elaine every success."

www.r-m-t.co.uk

# **AUCTION BRIDGING LOANS**

Most purchasers in today's housing market do not have the amount of cash available to buy a property outright, that's where Bridging Finance comes in, which enables buyers to 'bridge the gap' between property sales.



This type of finance works particularly well when buying a property at auction, as a bridging loan is much quicker than mortgage finance which, due to the requirements to check credit and affordability, can take much longer to arrange. That's right, unlike a mortgage, a bridging loan is not always based on income or credit, so the lender may not require to see any employment history or business plans. This ultimately makes for a quicker exit, giving you more time to secure your mortgage.

When purchasing a property at auction, you are required to pay a 10 percent deposit on the day and sign a legally binding contract to pay the remaining 90 percent within a 28-day period. A bridging loan will bridge the gap until a long-term mortgage or sale can be secured. The exit of the loan is usually either sale or refinance and the lender has to be confident that either one is fully suitable.

As well as efficiency, there are many benefits to bridging finance when it comes to property, including the ability to purchase properties that high-street lenders may not consider. This includes; properties in need of refurbishment, non-standard construction types or those without a fully functioning kitchen or bathroom. Bridging loan lenders will also consider new builds and properties that require conversion. For instance, the purchase of a commercial building at auction to be converted into flats, exiting the finance after either selling or refinancing.

At Advanced Funding Solutions, we are able to support the purchase of your property through a bridging loan and help guide you through the process. We have access to a wide range of investment and finance solutions to give you the flexibility required.

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# FORUM WELCOMES NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A leading business membership organisation in the North East has made a significant appointment, following the retirement of its respected chief executive.

The Entrepreneurs' Forum has appointed Jonathan Lamb as its new chief executive, who will officially take over from Gillian Marshall during the summer.

Gillian has led the organisation since 2014, having previously enjoyed a successful career in business development and finance. Over the last five years in the role, she has helped to grow the Forum's membership, engage with new corporate partners and enhance entrepreneurs' standing at the heart of the North East's growth agenda.

Jonathan joins the Entrepreneurs' Forum following a career spanning more than 20 years in marketing and business strategy. He established strategy consulting company Spurr in 2016, which works with and advises a diverse range of companies and business leaders.

He is also a grant panel member on the Tees Valley Combined Authority and was previously the executive director of business development at BE Group.

Jonathan Lamb said: "I am delighted to have taken up this position at an exciting time for the Entrepreneurs' Forum. I am passionate about the North East and supporting businesses to be the best they can be, which I hope to reflect in my role as chief executive across our membership.

"The organisation is a fantastic platform for entrepreneurs and business leaders from various sectors, and I hope to build on its wide-ranging network to support North East business further, continue the growth of the Entrepreneurs' Forum and, above all, champion the region's business and enterprising prowess."



Gillian Marshall said: "It has been a privilege to serve our members in what has been a thoroughly rewarding role. The region is home to many thriving and entrepreneurial businesses, many of which form part of the Entrepreneurs' Forum. These are the companies investing in their people, creating valuable jobs in the North East and making it a great place to work and do business in.

"Over the past five years as chief executive, I have met so many incredible people and worked alongside an excellent team who have been incredibly supportive and made the role even more enjoyable.

"It has been an honour to represent the Forum and its membership which is made up of the region's most ambitious entrepreneurial businesses. These are the companies investing in their people, creating valuable jobs in the North East, and making it a great place to work and do business in. "Jonathan's experience, combined with his

region, made him an outstanding candidate for the position, and I wish him all the very best as the new CEO of the Forum."

James Robson MBE, Chairman of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, said: "Jonathan is a well-respected leader in the North East and his proven track record within the region's business community made him an ideal choice for the role of CEO. I'm looking forward to working alongside him and the board to drive the Forum forward.

"It's been a pleasure working with Gillian since becoming Chairman eighteen months ago; she has played a fundamental role in the development of the Forum and in supporting our entrepreneurial members to become a focal part in the North East's growth agenda. I'd like to wish her all the very best in a well-deserved retirement."

The Entrepreneurs' Forum represents more than 300 individual member companies, which have a combined turnover of more than £2.3 billion and in excess of 25,000 employees.

www.entrepreneursforum.net

passion for supporting business growth in the



# VIRTUAL REALITY: A GAME-CHANGER FOR NORTH EAST BUSINESSES

Northumbrian Water has teamed up with Gateshead College to pioneer a virtual reality training tool, to help improve key areas of the business and prepare the future workforce for jobs in the real world.

The UK gaming industry is worth £4.2billion and is growing at a rate of 10 per cent a year. It directly employs over 20,000 people and is one of the most creative, challenging and dynamic career routes you can pursue.

However, there's still a common misconception that gaming and video production studies are irrelevant to the wider business world. In reality, gaming and everything it brings - virtual reality, animation and audio and visual production - can produce ground-breaking tools that can really benefit any business, no matter what sector.

"Technology has and will continue to transform how businesses operate," says Richard Ward, curriculum leader at head College. "Just ask Northumbrian Water. They commissioned our Higher National Diploma Games Production students to create a video-based virtual reality training tool, which formed part of their assessment. They wanted it to help explain what their engineers did, how they pinpointed water supply issues and how they're able to rectify such issues. Our students visited Northumbrian Water's Control Room and were asked to virtually recreate this in a way that can be used in other areas of the business to describe how

engineers spot a problem and create a plan to fix it.

"I am so proud of the students and their capabilities in responding to this real-life business challenge with a viable solution. Our courses are about so much more than what happens in the classroom; we focus on ensuring our students build industry relevant skills and knowledge and throughout this project they showed passion and maturity and developed a strong relationship with Northumbrian Water"

Once produced, the virtual reality tool will provide a range of benefits to the water company. It can be used during onboarding for new people joining the organisation, to share some of the Control Room activities and challenges with other teams in the business and in outreach activities in schools and colleges.

During the project, students learned real, handson skills that will stand them in good stead when it comes to getting a job. As well as honing their project and client management talents, they also acquired vital character traits that can't necessarily be taught in a classroom such as patience, consideration and reflection. The project has been so successful, Gateshead College is looking to roll it out again with next year's students.

Sophie Carvin, academy manager at Northumbrian Water, adds: "It's been a really educational experience for us as a business to work so closely with Gateshead College students and wonderful to see them grow their confidence and skills.

"Not only have they impressed us with their abilities, we genuinely feel that the tool, once it's up and running, will be valuable to the business. It will, for example, be used to raise awareness amongst young people of the worthwhile, challenging but often hidden careers in the water industry that are critical to ensuring we all have clean, clear and safe water.

"I am interested to see how this works and how people respond. Hopefully it will also open up opportunities to change the way we deliver some of our training to the business in the future.

"The students have shown a great work ethic and attitude and we are looking forward to them showcasing the project and the benefits virtual reality can provide, not just to our business but to other businesses across the region too, at our 2019 NWG Innovation Festival."

For more details on Northumbrian Water's Innovation Festival, visit: innovationfestival.org/



### An Entrepreneur Interview with...

# RALPH THOMPSON

Silvermoor Haylage

### Tell me about your background in business?

I first started an agricultural contracting business in 1999 whilst I was on my placement year in college; I was doing a national diploma in agriculture. I wasn't supposed to be starting my first business at this time, though; I was supposed to be working on a farm but my focus was elsewhere at the time and so was my attendance to work!

### How was Silvermoor Haylage founded?

Our family had built a reputation for quality forage for horses, my Mum produced and competed horses herself and people would often comment on how well they looked which she attributed to their diet.

When I took over the family farm in 2000 I continued to develop the contracting side of the business and wanted to make the most of the land I had available. The timing coincided with another haylage producer in the area moving away from producing grass so I made the decision to dedicate all of our land to equestrian haylage production, selecting specialist grass mixes and management techniques to ensure a high quality product tailored for horses. In the early stages the packaging was crude and the process was very manual (imagine me making every 20kg pack by hand forking all of the haylage into the packing machine!).

It was in 2005 when I created the Silvermoor brand and chose to sell the products into retail and wholesale channels to enable opportunities to expand the business and to scale it up. We now sell over 200,000 packs of haylage per year and have a range of other products for horses all meeting our healthy-horse ethos.

As forage is the staple of a horse's diet it is a competitive field. In order to develop the business and allow opportunities for further expansion, we have actively sought to develop new products that complement the haylage and capitalise on the resources we have available such as our distribution network.

# In your own words, what is it that Silvermoor Haylage does?

What we want to do at Silvermoor is produce a range of excellent horse feeds that are natural, healthy and delicious to ensure owners can feel totally confident they are feeding the best to their animals. We want to exceed customers' expectations and building strong, lasting relationships is paramount to our success.

Our haylage is dust free, highly palatable and highly nutritious as we control every aspect of production internally. We have a full range to enable us to be confident we have a haylage suitable for every horse and every pony.

In addition to our core haylage business we have a range of healthy treats (with neigh-naughtiness) we call 'Treatsies' which have proved to be popular. Customers can choose between Calming Chamomile, Tremendous Turmeric, Brilliant Beetroot and Magical Unicorn flavours.

We are also very proud of Silvermoor Swingers, the only hanging forage block on the market. This was developed following a request from one of our larger customers for a healthy boredom buster in the stable that promoted gut health. After intensive research we devised a unique method of compressing dried grass in a cylindrical shape that hangs in the stable from a rope ensuring it swings and horses can't get purchase on it to allow it to last a long time and stimulate the digestive system over time. We have a patent on this design and hope to start exporting worldwide.

### What is your proudest moment with the company?

I am proud to have such a great team of staff who all work so hard and are enthusiastic about Silvermoor. We also have some really great products and I am proud of what we have achieved overall, how much we have grown and where we are now.

We are currently building new premises to move all operations from our current site. This purpose built shed marks a real milestone in our company's development and I am incredibly proud and excited at how much we have achieved. I still think there are a lot more proud moments to come and am looking forward to them too!

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

We all make mistakes!

I think the main thing is not to employ the wrong people. Our team is excellent, but in the past, I have hired people who do not have the right attitude or experience. I have learnt from this which has led to the creation of a fantastic team here at Silvermoor.

### What is your USP?

Our relationships with customers and customer service which encourages loyalty. Hearing our customers recommend our products above others is very rewarding.

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

When we first started, we only had two types of haylage. Today, we have different ranges and have a much larger customer base. We have grown through developing the products to be the best they can be.

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

Do the right thing, it might not always be the easiest path but I have always found doing the right thing is best in the long run and makes those awkward decisions very simple.

### What are the future plans of Silvermoor Haylage?

We have a plan to triple the size of the business in the next three years. We are also in the process of building a new site, so our production size will grow, and we are installing a grass-drying system in the winter which will introduce a range of new products. We're also diversifying into storage and machinery refurbishment.

Ralph Thompson 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

# AVENIUM ENGINEERING WINS SIX-FIGURE FW CAPITAL NPIF INVESTMENT



Teesside-based engineering firm Avenium Engineering Ltd, previously known as Prosafe, has received a £225,000 investment from NPIF – FW Capital Debt Finance, managed by FW Capital and part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.

Avenium designs, supplies, installs and maintains process safety systems for the oil and gas, petrochemical, processing and energy industries across the world.

Established three years ago, the company has a team of highly skilled engineers who provide

bespoke solutions to major blue chip clients to optimise production, reduce down-time, reduce risk and contribute to an overall safer, more productive asset.

The firm recently moved into new premises in Middlesbrough and now has 1,500 sq-ft of combined warehousing, office and recreational space.

The FW Capital funding will be used to facilitate the growth and development of the business in the new premises. Up to four new jobs will be created as the firm looks to make key appointments.

Steve Teasdale, Investment Executive at FW Capital, said: "Avenium Engineering is an established business with a strong blue chip customer base. The experienced management team has a clear vision for growth and development and is on track to more than double turnover. Our funding comes at an exciting time for the team and we are delighted to have been able to provide this support."

Operating from the British Business Bank's Sheffield head office, the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund provides a mix of debt and equity funding from £25,000 to £2m.

# LEADING SPECIALITY CHEMICALS COMPANY LAUNCHES NEW PIGMENT RANGE

Consett-based speciality chemicals distributor and manufacturer Devine Chemicals has launched DeLOUR, its first range of pigments. This will further strengthen the company's diverse portfolio and help to cement its position as a leader in the speciality chemicals market.

The DeLOUR pigments are a range of phthalocyanines available in blue and green and are appropriate for both water-based and solvent-based applications. Tailormade for the coatings, inks and plastics markets, the pigments have been optimised to give UV stability, solvent fastness, light fastness and chemical resistance.

Devine Chemicals also offers a range of products for the coatings, inks and plastics markets including its own range of DeCAL grades which comprise a wide range of thickeners, dispersing agents and defoamers for aqueous and non-aqueous systems.

Dan Devine, Commercial Director at Devine Chemicals, said "The launch of the DeLOUR pigment range is an important milestone for Devine Chemicals as we remain focused on strengthening our product portfolio through extensive research and development, anticipating changes in the market and delivering the right solutions for our customers.

"We identified a gap in the market and an opportunity to strengthen our portfolio and after vigorous testing, we are thrilled to be able to offer our customers the new DeLOUR range. This product range is another example of how our business is committed to serving the coatings, inks and plastics markets."

Devine Chemicals has over 30 years' experience in supplying speciality chemicals internationally and for use in many sectors.

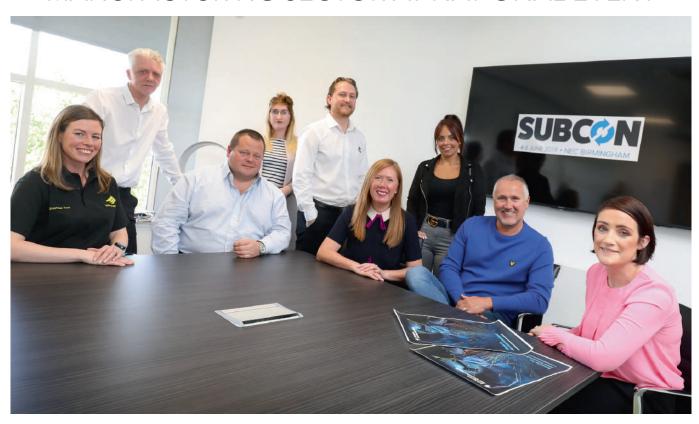


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# HORIZON WORKS REPRESENTS NORTHUMBERLAND'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR AT NATIONAL EVENT



Horizon Works helped highlight the strength of Northumberland's manufacturing sector last month, at Subcon, a major national industry show.

The business to business marketing agency, which recently moved to Northumberland Business Park near Cramlington, represented the sector along with four other manufacturing businesses based in the county.

Horizon Works specialises in working with innovators in complex industries and offers market research, strategy, brand, design, digital, communications and PR services.

Horizon Works was successful in securing a fully funded exhibition space at Subcon, which took place from June 4 to 6 at the Birmingham NEC, from economic regeneration company Advance Northumberland.

Subcon is firmly established as the must-attend event for manufacturing buyers across all industry sectors, with more than 350 different suppliers from over 20 different countries in attendance.

Advance Northumberland funded the exhibition space and hosted the Northumberland Pavilion at Subcon, which included other successful businesses who were selected to represent the region including Arian EMS, OEL Group, Universal Wolf and Texo Group.

Advance Northumberland's aim is to showcase investment opportunities and the strength of the supply chain and manufacturing cluster in Northumberland by offering a platform for

businesses operating in the supply chain who want to grow or diversify.

The best of British manufacturing was on display at Subcon alongside a wealth of market-leading international suppliers all looking to help UK manufacturers optimise their supply chains. Visitors included key decision makers from a range of industries including automotive, aerospace, electronics, energy, rail, oil and gas and defence and security. The exhibition received around 4,000 visitors and over 400 exhibitors, with 70% of visitors attending finding new suppliers/ solutions.

Samantha Vassallo, founder and managing director of Horizon Works, is also a board member of the Advanced Manufacturing Forum (AMF), a network organisation for manufacturing business across North East England.

Richard Wearmouth, chair of Advance Northumberland commented: "We have a strong manufacturing sector in Northumberland and it's great to see that illustrated through these five businesses. They all bring something different to the table and through Subcon we were able to demonstrate the variety of opportunities within Northumberland and showcase the county as a great place to do business."

Samantha Vassallo, managing director of Horizon Works said: "We were absolutely delighted to

have been selected by Advance Northumberland to represent the region at Subcon. It provided us with the opportunity to promote our business to a national and international audience and was another step forward in our growth plans as we see an increased demand for our services throughout the UK and overseas."

Horizon Works is headquartered on Northumberland Business Park, Cramlington and has a diverse portfolio of clients including: INVISTA Performance Technologies, one of the world's largest integrated producers of chemical intermediates; US-based water purification specialist AmeriWater; Fera Science (formerly the Food and Environment Research Agency) which is based at the National Agri-Food Innovation Campus near York; Middlesbroughbased hydraulic engineering specialist Industrial & Marine Hydraulics (IMH); and The Expanded Metal Company, a leading expanded metal mesh manufacturer.

Horizon Works is the official marketing partner of The Advanced Manufacturing Forum (AMF) and is a member of the North East of England Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC), North East Automotive Alliance (NEAA), NOF Energy, Digital Union, North East England Chamber of Commerce (NEECC), Engineering & Manufacturing Network (EMN) and the Entrepreneurs' Forum.

For more information visit www.horizonworks.co.uk

# NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD OF GOVERNORS



Northumberland College has announced a new board of governors to drive forward an ambitious new vision, which will benefit students, stakeholders and the local economy.

Including prominent, senior and well-respected figures from the North East business community and covering a range of diverse industries, the combined expertise of the new board will play a significant role in delivering an ambitious strategic vision including a multi-million-pound investment programme across all College campuses, improved learning provision and enhanced facilities for students and the local community.

With a strong focus on industry and employer partnerships, commercial offering and maximising the College's £2.5 million, custom-built STEM Centre at its Ashington campus, head of HR, Kerry Patterson from Blyth-based advanced machine and robotics manufacturer, Tharsus, has been appointed to the board.

With nearly 20 years' experience in the HR sector, Kerry's expertise has been instrumental to developing strategies to drive business growth since joining Tharsus in 2014. In her role on the senior management team, Kerry has been responsible for a number of key transformational HR projects which share similar values to those which Northumberland College is keen to drive

forward in its new iteration as part of Education Partnership North East.

Likewise, Andrew Ferguson, commercial and real estate manager and chartered surveyor at Virgin Money has joined the board to help support the College with the management of its key assets at its campuses across the county. With a wealth of experience in investment, corporate real estate and business operations, Andrew has taken part in a leadership programme with Virgin Money, providing him with the opportunity to spend time with both Bath Rugby and Team GB to better understand high performance environments and the behaviours required to succeed within them.

Furthermore, energy and renewables business leader, Ian Brown of MKM Technology is also one of ten appointed, alongside Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel Ashington, John Holmes, chairman of Bernicia, finance expert Dawn Chadwick of Dawn L Chadwick Insolvency Ltd, chartered secretary, Neil Salvesen, legal advisor and county councillor, David Towns, visiting Professor of Innovation and Enterprise at Newcastle University Business School, Alison Shaw, Holly Thompson of Future Skills Vision and

Louise Doyle, founder and director of Mesma.

Nigel Harrett, Principal of Northumberland College commented: "This is an incredibly exciting time for Northumberland College as we drive forward significant improvements and investment across all campuses, and embark upon a new chapter, providing new opportunities for students, staff, employers and the local community.

"The governing body will play a highly instrumental role in successfully delivering this period of change following our merger with Sunderland College earlier in the year and their experience across all areas of business will help consolidate Northumberland College as the county's premium provider of further and higher education. We're delighted to welcome them on board"

Northumberland College is part of regional college group, Education Partnership North East, which also includes Sunderland College and Hartlepool Sixth Form. The College, which has sites in Ashington, Berwick and Kirkley, Ponteland, provides a range of further and higher education courses and employer-focused apprenticeship programmes.

For course information and enrolment enquiries, call 01670 841200 or visit www.northumberland.ac.uk



### MAKING THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY WORK FOR YOU

DFDS proves its plain sailing Apprentiships are a hot topic, with the Government hoping to increase the number of apprentice starts in England to three million by 2020.

Yet last year, just 13 per cent of the Government's apprenticeship budget was spent which begs the question – do you fully understand the opportunities and benefits of working with apprentices?

#### The Apprenticeship Levy explained

In a nutshell, the levy means firms with a wage bill of £3m or more now contribute 0.5% of that bill to invest in apprenticeships.

Putting control in your hands, businesses receive a £15,000 fixed annual allowance to offset against levy payments and to invest in training.

#### But what if I don't pay the Levy?

If you're a non-levy paying business with more than 50 employees, you can take advantage of the Government's 'co-investment' rate whereby it will pay 90% of the training and assessment costs.

If you have fewer than 50 employees, the Government will fund the full cost of any apprentice so long as they are under 18 years old.

#### An opportunity rather than an obligation

Apprenticeships can encompass a whole range of different training methods that can be tweaked and modified to suit your business needs.

Perhaps you need new technical skills to grow your product offering, you've got a group of promising junior staff who you want to retain or you're looking to develop your management team.

Apprenticeship programmes could be the solution to these issues, from bringing new staff into the

business to equipping existing employees with the skills they need to progress.

It pays to talk to someone who can assess your challenges and match them with solutions that can be structured to suit your business needs.

Northern Skills Group (NSG), the training arm of Middlesbrough College can help levy paying companies access funding via the Government's digital apprenticeship service.

#### Apprentices in action

One international business putting apprentices at the heart of its work is Danish shipping and logistics company DFDS.

Through its long-standing partnership with Northern Skills Group, the business's North East division employs a new cohort of apprentices every 12 months, with the majority progressing into permanent careers with the company.

As well as their day-to-day role as a travel advisor, DFDS apprentices also study for a qualification in customer service, with training provided by NSG.

Lynsey Chappell, head of DFDS's UK contact centre, said: "We recognise the importance of investing in future skills – that's why we've been working with apprentices – and NSG – for the past seven years.

"Put simply, our apprenticeship scheme works. We've found this route allows us to shape the learning and ensure we have the skills we need in our company – all the while, helping apprentices learn on the job and build the confidence to forge a successful career in the industry.

"It also allows us to develop our talent in-house and we've had former apprentices progress into senior roles, with many others taking on permanent careers with the company.

"It's also great for our culture and makes us an employer of choice."

And now, DFDS is encouraging other firms to consider the benefits of running an apprenticeship programme.

Lynsey added: "It's easy for business owners to feel they may not have the time to dedicate to taking on apprentices - but in fact, they can be a real asset to your team.

"We've built a really great relationship with Northern Skills Group – the team really understand our needs and make the whole recruitment process easy and hassle-free."

### Ok, now I'm considering an apprenticeship programme, what's next?

Northern Skills Group works with more than 2,000 businesses across the North East and Yorkshire to support learners and businesses in more sectors at more skill levels than ever before.



To find out how your business could take advantage of the Apprenticeship Levy, contact NSG on 03453 40 40 40 or info@northernskills.co.uk



In a new series of features, we explore the dynamics of family life in business.

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

Gary Powell, managing director at Admired Properties, has been working alongside his son, business development manager, Connor Powell, since the business began in 2017. The company specialises in linking global property investors with UK developers and is based in Morpeth, Northumberland.

#### **Gary Powell**

I am one of three siblings, with an older brother and sister. My parents live in the same house, in Kenton, Newcastle, that we were raised in and where the family still comes together. Family has always been at the heart of everything I do, it motivates me every day to strive for better things.

Before Admired Properties, I spent many years working in Asia, away from my wife, Louise and children, Connor and Grace. I don't regret this time, as it taught me everything I know about business and provided me with great contacts. However, it takes a toll when you are separated from the people you love most.

As a family, the long-term aim was always to set up a business back home where we would work together. It is no coincidence that both my children studied business at university! We are extremely close and I'm very lucky to have such a respectful son who shares the same passion for Admired Properties that I do, and the hard work he puts in is the foundation of our family's success.

People often ask what the downfalls of working with my son are, but there honestly aren't any, he even holds the fort on a Friday so I can go and play golf! Our relationship is exactly the same, we have always had a strong father-son bond and, if anything, we are closer now. I certainly have nothing but admiration for Connor's drive and ambition to grow the business.

I am extremely proud of Admired Properties, but my proudest achievement is my children. As a parent, the thing you want most in the world is for your kids to be happy and it brings me great satisfaction to see how settled, confident and dedicated Connor is with anything he takes on in life, whether it be at work or home.

As we continue to grow rapidly, I see Connor's responsibilities growing and as more employees come in to the business, his role will be to manage them and to, one day, take over the business. There is no doubt in my mind that he is the future of the business, alongside my daughter, Grace, who will be joining shortly. Together, they will be a great team.

Looking to the future, I am set to become a grandfather for the first time in September, as Connor and his Wife, Bethany, are expecting a little girl. There is nothing like the arrival of your first child to give you motivation you never knew possible, to succeed and provide for your family. As this new chapter begins for Connor, I look forward to seeing the growth he makes professionally and personally.

#### **Connor Powell**

I knew from a very young age that I wanted to work with my father and, for this reason, my education was geared towards business.

When you meet my father, you soon discover his passion and love for everything he does. Whether that's raising a family or building a business, if he puts his mind to it, he will succeed. When you grow up around someone like that, you can't help but find their positive outlook infectious.

I have always looked up to, and appreciated, everything that my father has done for me and I am aware that, although I work hard and I'm focused, it would have taken me a lot longer to get to where I am now in my career, if the opportunity to work alongside him hadn't come to fruition.

When you work for a company, they want you to do well and perform for the business, but you don't get the same level of support or opportunity to develop your skills that you do when you work with family. I have big ambition for the business that I look forward to achieving, both whilst my father is in charge and when he hands the reins over to me and my sister. While we already have achieved great things in the UK, I want us to reach into worldwide markets and be a household name!

My father has had an amazing career, both in Asia and the UK, and there is still so much he can teach me. Colleagues, clients and third party businesses have great respect for him because of his knowledge, work ethic and the way he treats people. I know that when the time comes for me to take over, I will be left with a great legacy to continue.

You might think that spending 9-5, Monday to Friday with my father would be enough but we actually socialise a lot outside of work together as we have very similar interests. If we're not in the office, you will more than likely find us at Morpeth Golf Club. Whilst we're very supportive of each other at work, I will admit we can be a bit more competitive on the golf course! We also spend a lot of time together as a family, with regular weekends away and holidays abroad.

I don't think you truly understand or appreciate what your parents have done, and continue to do for you, until you have your own family. My wife, Bethany, and I, are expecting our first child in September and, naturally, you think about what kind of parent you will be. I've learnt from the best and if I can be half as good as my dad is, both in business and as a father, I'll be doing something right!



### RAISING CAREER ASPIRATIONS FROM AN EARLY AGE

Primary schools in the North East will be piloting a new initiative designed to help raise the career aspirations of children and young people.

Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) explains why the programme is being put in place and what it will mean for young people in the North East.

What age were you when you started to think about what you might do as a career? 15? 18? Possibly even older?

Would it surprise you to know that children have their first career aspirations aged two to four years? By age five and six, children are already beginning to narrow their choices based on their gender, and by age 10 many young people have already made career limiting decisions, which are fixed by age 14. It's for these reasons and more that the North

East Local Enterprise Partnership, working with EY Foundation, is launching the Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot – a brand new initiative to build careers aspiration and inspiration from an early age.

We know, first hand, the transformational impact good careers education can have on young people. The North East LEP led the Good Career Guidance Benchmark Pilot in partnership with 16 secondary schools and colleges from across the region, which led to government launching new statutory

guidance for schools on how to deliver careers education, with the Gatsby Career Benchmarks at its very heart.

Through the Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot, we want to translate the Benchmarks so they meet the needs of primary schools, and then test them in action. Do they improve student outcomes, do they support primary schools in delivering high-quality careers education for all students, and can the approach be replicated in other areas of England?

We'll be working with 70 primary schools from across the North East LEP region as part of the two academic-year pilot. Each school will have the support of a Facilitator, to help them implement and achieve the benchmarks, an Action Researcher to capture the impact, and be part of a community of Primary Careers Leaders, helping to deliver a shared vision for achieving the primary benchmarks.

Our partnership with EY Foundation and the team's enthusiasm, expertise and financial support has been fundamental in making this happen. It's been an absolute pleasure to work with the team and the Foundation's Trustees, and we are so excited to kick start the activities within the 70 schools across the North East.

The Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot forms part of North East Ambition, which is our commitment to improve social mobility by supporting each and every young person to make informed decisions about their future careers. We can do that by ensuring young people have meaningful encounters with a broad range of employers and understand the link between the subjects they study in school and the career opportunities available to them. It may sound simple, but it's a huge culture change for many schools. We need to ensure careers education is viewed as important as curriculumbased learning, and that it's embedded across the entire school.

Improving skills and social mobility is central to the North East LEP's Strategic Economic Plan to boost our economy and create more and better jobs for people living and working in the North East. We want young people to be aware of the opportunities available to them and aspire to achieve their full potential, whatever their circumstances.

The Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot is supported by funding from the European Social Fund, EY Foundation and the Local Growth Fund.

Read more about the North East LEP's work with schools and colleges at www.nelep.co.uk



# 1350 BUSINESSES AND GROWING

As well as running her own events and wedding stationery business, "Made to Treasure," and a business mentoring consultancy, Karen Goldfinch is also the Vice Chair of North Tyneside Business Forum. Here she tells us some of the benefits of being part of the Forum.

"The North Tyneside Business Forum is free to join for any North Tyneside business no matter how large or small and offers support, networking opportunities and events.

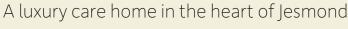
"We're a friendly bunch, lead by businesses for businesses and we actively encourage our members to grow, achieve sustainability and strive for corporate responsibility. We offer free advice, host regular events, give help with funding information and keep you up to date with the latest business news affecting North Tyneside.

"In my time as Vice Chair, I've enjoyed many interesting events, made a lot of meaningful business relationships and my businesses have thrived. You can do the same by joining the Forum."

Karen is one of the founder members of the Forum, contact her via karen@karengoldfinch.com or the Forum directly business.forum@northtyneside.gov.uk or call 0191 643 6000

www.northtynesidebusinessforum.org.uk





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### STARS IN THEIR EYES FOR WARD 20

Staff at a Newcastle hospital ward have been awarded a "Healthwatch Star" reflecting the care and attention given to their patients.

The Star certificate was presented to Ward 20 at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary by Healthwatch Newcastle, the health and social care watchdog whose job is to protect the rights of patients and hold public services to account.

Ward 20 is an ophthalmology ward for adults who require eye surgery. The staff on Ward 20 also provide care for patients who have trauma from the neck upwards including maxillofacial surgery. The ward is widely regarded as one of the best ophthalmology and maxillofacial centres in the country.

One patient so appreciated the care that they contacted Healthwatch Newcastle to nominate staff for a Healthwatch Star award. The award was given for "having staff who were really good at explaining every step."

Steph Eduesi, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Newcastle, said: "We hear a lot of positive comments about health and social care services when we speak to people in Newcastle. It is only right to recognise the contribution that individuals and organisations make to the success of these services in our city. When people are in hospital it is so important that they are given the right information about their treatment and Ward 20 has clearly demonstrated that staff have kept this patient fully updated.

"I'm especially pleased that this award has been presented just as we learn that the services at Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust were inspected by the Care Quality Commission and rated as outstanding."

Sister Caroline Dunn was delighted that the ward had been recognised: "It's so nice that one of our patients took the time to nominate us. We are very proud to hang the certificate in the ward for all to see."

Senior Sister Julie Mulroy agreed. "Getting recognition for doing our job is really appreciated. We explain to every patient exactly what their treatment plan is so that they can be reassured that they are receiving the very best care during their time with us."



PR Media enquiries contact Keith Newman Highlights PR 07814 397951

# NORTHUMBERLAND SEND SCHOOL TO BENEFIT FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WITH AKZONOBEL



An innovative partnership with a decorative paints and coatings manufacturer is set to breathe life and colour into a Northumberland-based school for children with learning disabilities and special educational needs.

AkzoNobel Ashington has announced its new community partner of the year for 2019 as Castle School in North Seaton, which supports children aged 3-19 years who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.

AkzoNobel, which is best known for its household brands, Dulux, Cuprinol and Polycell, was first

introduced to the school through a community project which saw the business donate paint towards developing a new sensory garden. After learning more about the school and its provision, employees at the £100 million manufacturing unit were so inspired, they voted unanimously to support it with a number of volunteer-led projects and activities throughout the year.

"We're absolutely delighted to be working alongside Castle School. The staff at the school do a wonderful job, day in, day out to support the children and we're excited to be able to support them with their vision to improve the school's

facilities," said Jeff Hope, head of manufacturing unit at AkzoNobel Ashington.

"The team at AkzoNobel are already off to a flying start, making the most of the first few school holidays of the year to rejuvenate various indoor and outdoor spaces around the school for the students to enjoy.

"Next on the agenda is for the 150-strong volunteering workforce to work alongside the staff and students to get involved in some garden maintenance work and create interactive outdoor areas to inspire the children to learn and play, as well as brighten up some of the classrooms."

Sara Wild, principal at Castle School, commented: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to AkzoNobel Ashington for choosing Castle School to be its community partner for 2019.

"The pupils that we support have a profound range of different learning difficulties so the work that we do to support them through their education is absolutely vital.

"Everyone at the school, staff and pupils, are all very excited about the partnership project with AkzoNobel. The development work for our outdoor areas in particular is going to be absolutely fantastic."

For more information about AkzoNobel, visit www.akzonobel.com or for more details about Castle School, visit castle.ncea.org.uk



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### ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE

Five years ago, I was appointed a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE), the first youngest British Asian within the North East. Which I must admit is one of my life's highlights and I believe my late mother and father would be exceptionally proud of, I just wish they had been around to share the experience and honour.

Whilst prior to receiving the award I was familiar with people becoming MBE, OBEs and Knight Commanders, the CBE wasn't something that I had really heard of. And I will never forget the phone call in May 2014 from the Cabinet Office telling me that the Prime Minister was minded to put my name forward to become a CBE, whether I had received notification and would I be prepared to accept the honour. As I hadn't received anything, I thought it was a wind up, it clearly wasn't and it just goes to show how long and detailed the nomination process is, they had sent notification to an address I had not lived at for over three years.

Visiting Buckingham Palace later on that year with my wife, mother in law and daughter just brought home how lucky we are to have a monarchy, led by Her Majesty the Queen. Having been fortunate to attend a Garden Party previously, it was amazing to see further aspects of Buckingham Palace and share that experience with those close to me.

I was subsequently asked to read a prayer in

2017 at St Pauls Cathedral with Her Majesties the Queen and Prince Philip for the 100th Anniversary Celebrations of the British Empire Awards which were established by King George in 1917 to recognise non-military people within the whole community. An astonishing, nerve racking, unforgettable momentous experience. This proud Asian Geordie stood at the front 2000 people at St Pauls

And at the beginning of last month I had the privilege of attending the Her Majesty the Queen's Trooping of the Colour Birthday Celebrations with all its pomp and pageantry, once again another amazing experience.

I am truly humbled by these experiences, especially given that I was born in Benwell, brought up by my mother alongside five siblings and we all suffered from abject poverty not knowing where food was coming from. Statistically I shouldn't be who or where I am in life, but through a desire to achieve coupled with drive and determination I have and I am. The point is anyone can, and everyone should

be encouraged to reach their potential. I still have dark days, but I get up and get on, always doing the best I can.

Being recognised for all you do, has to be one of the most endearing and rewarding aspects of humanity, and since being appointed a CBE I have probably doubled my efforts to help more people achieve their ambitions, together with tackling inequality, poverty and deprivation. However, I do so unreservedly and simply to try to focus on the positive aspects of our whole community.

Which leads me to highlight I couldn't be me without everyone in my life, and I am ever so grateful for all the support received during my journey. As the world becomes more divisive, we need things and people to bring us closer together, our monarchy is exactly that, we should be proud of. Our Royal Family and all they do selflessly, showcasing our history and heritage bringing people together and recognising from walks of life

Let's stand one for all and all for one.

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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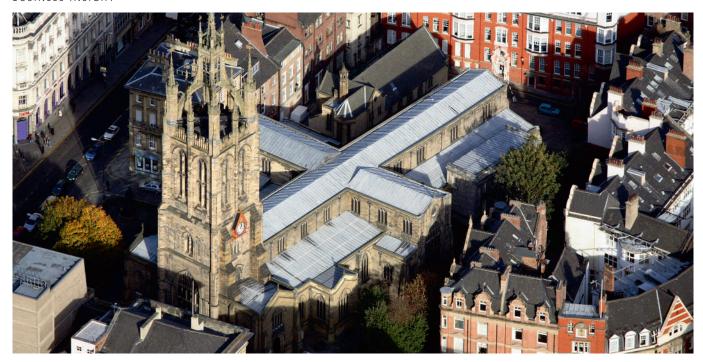












### MAKING SACRED SPACE COMMON GROUND

The North East's rich historic past has been well recognised and rewarded of late thanks to a series of grants awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Since 2013, Newcastle has received multi-million pounds worth of investment in three key areas of the city, all centred on its historic, medieval quarter. The most recent award of £4.2 million has been awarded to Newcastle Cathedral, the 'Cathedral of the City'.

The money will fund an exciting and ambitious project which is expected to cost almost £6 million, with The National Lottery Heritage Fund grant bolstered by additional funding from the Cathedral's supporters, benefactors and charitable trusts. A large slice of the money will pay for physical changes to create an amazing open space capable of hosting exciting new events and activities.

The Cathedral will also launch an Activity Plan to encourage local people to get involved with the Cathedral and their heritage and will be recruiting hundreds of volunteers to help bring alive the 'story of the stones'. The history of the city is written in the Cathedral stones, walls and windows. It tells the story of local people who built Newcastle, fuelled the industrial revolution and put Newcastle on the world map. Creating engaging and imaginative ways to bring these stories to life and provide the backdrop for this exciting new events space will be a major part of the Heritage funded project. The overarching ambition is to reinstate the Cathedral as a dynamic hub for the whole community, a vibrant, must-see attraction in the city centre and a unique events space for all.

The Cathedral is working closely with NE1 Ltd, who have already set the bar high with their National Lottery Heritage Fund supported redevelopment of the Bigg Market. Cultural heritage is one of the main cornerstones of NE1's business plan for the next five years and its work in the Bigg Market is already coming to fruition with the public realm complete and two hugely successful events, The Bigg Market Bash and the first Bigg Foodie Friday already setting the tone for how the space will be



used in the future. The Cathedral team is keen to learn a lot from its collaboration with NE1 and aims to work closely in future to create events that bring the wider community into these new spaces. The Cathedral plans to host its very own Medieval Markets and will be looking to NE1 for support to make these events a roaring success. On a practical level, the knowledge and experience NE1 has amassed through its work on heritage projects will also be a major asset when shaping and delivering the Cathedral's plans.

It is no coincidence that the city's historic and heritage regeneration has been led by the coming together of Church, State and Business. The Cathedral represents the church; Newcastle City Council the state with its successful regeneration of the Castle; and, business is personified by the team at NE1 Ltd, the modern face of the market economy, representing the city's business interests and championing the regeneration of the Bigg Market and the wider redevelopment of the city.

This 3-way partnership strongly echoes the city's

medieval past and reflects how Newcastle was originally formed.

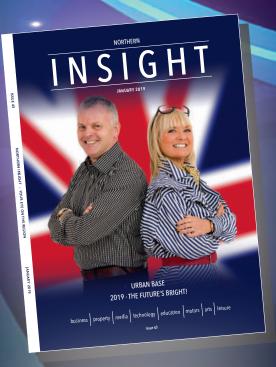
The history and heritage of Newcastle is the golden thread running through all this recent redevelopment of Newcastle's medieval quarter, its historic heart. The Cathedral's efforts, combined with those of the Council and NE1 Ltd, aim to ensure that the area continues to play its rightful part in the city's future. It is already paying dividends; consider what the Bigg Market was like a decade ago and it is easy to see that the transformation has already begun. The area covering the Castle and Black Gate, the Cathedral, the Mining Institute and the Bigg Market all provide a much more appealing offer for locals and tourists alike and it is only set to improve.

The aspiration is to make the Cathedral a place where people come for events, activities and to worship, where they socialise and do business. This will echo a bygone era when the great and good of the city, the eminent merchants and industrialists of the 17th and 18th centuries came to church to see and be seen. It was here that they lived their lives, conducted business, worshipped and connected with other leading families of the day.

Working with NE1 the Cathedral team want to bring modern day business and entrepreneurs back to the Cathedral, recreating a centre of city life for business, locals, families, tourists and pilgrims alike, the heart of modern business.

Re-establishing these links between the Cathedral, the public and the business community are crucial for the next chapter of the city's history. Collectively, NE1 Ltd, Newcastle City Council and the Cathedral are all working to shape the development of the city. History is not just about the past, with this investment and greater collaboration, it is about positioning the city and contributing to its future economic development.

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# JUST WHAT SOME OF OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US...

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I'm always looking for new and varied ways to promote my clients. The exposure my clients get in Northern Insight Magazine is fantastic. Not only do they appear in a high quality glossy magazine but they are also featured online in the e version. Being featured is always a talking point and a great way to raise any businesses profile.

Keith Newman, MD, Highlights PR



We have advertised in Northern Insight magazine since its inception and it now plays a huge part in our media strategy, helping us to reinforce our brand presence in the North East Business Community. We love the quality of the magazine and find the rates to be of good value. We highly value our relationship Northern Insight Magazine - they are a lovely team to work with!

Claire Fenwick, Marketing and Business Development Manager, Mincoffs Solicitors

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Mike for many years, when I launched Exclusive Business; Northern Insight was my first choice as a media partner. The magazine consistently delivers well-considered business news across a wide variety of sectors; the features are well written and insightful.

In 2017 when I set up the Exclusive Business Lunch events, Northern Insight became our media partner for the events in Newcastle and now in the Tees Valley. Mike is a great "people person" and as co-host of the events his warm personality helps create the easy ambience we want to encourage guests to relax and enjoy the social aspect of business networking. This is a really valuable business relationship and working with Mike is a genuine pleasure.

Linda Hitman, CEO, Exclusive Business

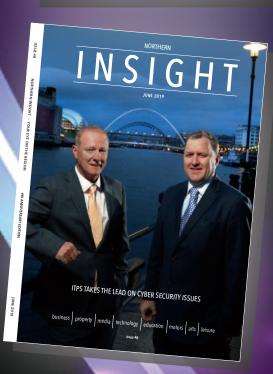
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# HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT JOB?

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, talks about how you know if a new job offer is right for you.

Fear of taking a risk is a common barrier for people who are respected at work, great at what they do, on a good salary, but unhappy in their job.

It's no surprise really, as it's much easier to stay somewhere you're comfortable and do something you find easy than it is to take a leap of faith and start afresh

At work, when you feel safe and in control you build self-confidence and, if you're delivering for the business, over time, you can begin to influence the environment and improve your work-life balance. This is a fantastic position to find yourself in but, if you're driven and motivated by personal development, learning and growth, it won't take long standing still before you get itchy feet.

Working in recruitment, I speak to people in this dilemma all the time, particularly in the accountancy sector where the job market is driven by the availability of skilled people.

Right now, I'm working with several accountancy practices who are looking for talented people and this can mean the time between joining the job market and being offered a new career opportunity is quite short.

One minute you've made the decision to look around and see what your options are, and the next you have two or three options on the table. For some, this speed can be quite unsettling and when the reality of stepping out of your comfort zone kicks in, it can be quite scary.

So how do you know if a new job is the right one for you? Well, to be completely honest I can't answer this question for you, because you don't - and never will - know 100%.



Moving job, buying a house, joining a club, trying a new sport, and even going to an unfamiliar restaurant, all involve taking a risk; and you can always find an excuse not to do it. The only way you'll ever truly find out if it's better is by taking the plunge, but you can easily reduce the level of risk and limit your gamble.

In order to step out of your comfort zone, the first thing you need to have is faith in yourself and your ability. Are you confident that you can prove to a new employer that you're as good as your current boss thinks you are?

Assuming you are, the next question to ask is whether you've approached your job search sensibly. Have you sought advice from people you trust? Do you know what is making you unhappy in your current role? Have you spoken to your employer to try and improve things?

This is very important because, if you've thought things through in a considered way, hopefully, you won't feel a huge amount of pressure to decide when the time comes.

It's imperative that you remain calm when weighing up a career move, rather than going into panic mode. If you're confident and level-headed, sit down and make a list of the pros and cons of the options available. Include your current role and drill down on the detail, making sure you address why you want a change.

I'm a strong believer that you only live once, so don't try to find excuses, instead, try to put your emotions aside and be guided by the reality of the situation. After this, you should know deep-down whether any of the possibilities excite you, or if you'd prefer to stay in your current position.

Too many people compromise and stay in a job when they're unhappy because they're scared to make a change. Moving on is a big and brave decision, especially if you've been employed by the same company for a long time, but you only live once and if your passion is no longer there and you've done your homework, what have you really got to lose?

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

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# IN CONVERSATION WITH...

#### **ADAM JACOBS**

Executive Chairman - Bloom Procurement Services

#### Tell us about the inception of your company?

Bloom Procurement Services (launched 2012) was born out of my reading that the professional services marketplace in general and consultancy, in particular, was problematic on both the customer and supplier sides. The prevailing model based on Inputs of Time and Materials (T&M) incentivises the wrong behaviours on the supplier side and customers invariably struggle with specifying and contracting for services. It seemed so obvious to build a service that dealt with these issues - to enable the delivery of outcomes whilst cutting out unnecessary costs of procurement, sales, administration and contract negotiation. Seven years on we now have over 320 customers, 6,500 suppliers and have completed over 4,500 projects.

#### What services do you provide?

At Bloom we specialise in bringing together a community of buyers and suppliers to help the public sector buy professional services better.

We are transforming procurement by opening up the way it's done, giving the best choice for buyers and more business opportunities for suppliers, big or small.

Bloom is the UK's exclusive operator of the NEPRO professional services framework on behalf of NEPO (North East Procurement Organisation). The framework was set up to help the public sector buy and manage professional services spend whilst achieving better outcomes and improving value.

### What is your proudest business achievement?

I have immense pride in providing a service that really makes a positive difference to the lives and communities of people across the UK. Social values are critical to all that we do, and we are making a real difference in the way that public money is spent in support of some of the critical challenges facing the UK. For example, housing, social care, safeguarding, regeneration, inward investment and the environment to name but a few.

#### What challenges have you encountered?

Every day brings its own challenges, that is the nature of building a business from the ground up. I have had to develop an innate Chumbawamba ability - when I get knocked down, I get up again! For every entrepreneur, there are always setbacks



and mistakes are made - that is life. The life of an entrepreneur is not for the faint hearted!

#### How has the industry changed?

Data, data, data - we are awash with data and often overwhelmed by it. There is significant value on intelligence and insight as opposed to the collection, cleansing and presentation of data. What is the data telling us? What is important: What actions do we need to take? The developing market opportunity is for real intelligence and insight. That is changing the skills profiles required in the professional services marketplace.

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

In business there are three people who immediately stand out for me for not only being visionary, but for their transformative ability to execute and build organisations that became global power brands. They are all characterised by driving growth, scale and brands from start up. Chris Gent who built Vodafone into a global brand and was a phenomenal deal maker, Sir Terry Leahy (Tesco) and Jeff Bezos who started Amazon from his garage.

Outside of business, Mo Mowlam (sadly deceased) was a phenomenal politician who was so critical to the Good Friday Agreement which saw the end of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

My wife Genevieve is a super hero in so many ways

www.bloom.services

(we have just celebrated our 20th anniversary) she has an amazing talent of holding my feet close to the fire.

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

Be clear about your objectives and the outcomes that you're looking to deliver. Work with data and evidence and leave emotion to one side (all easier said than done!).

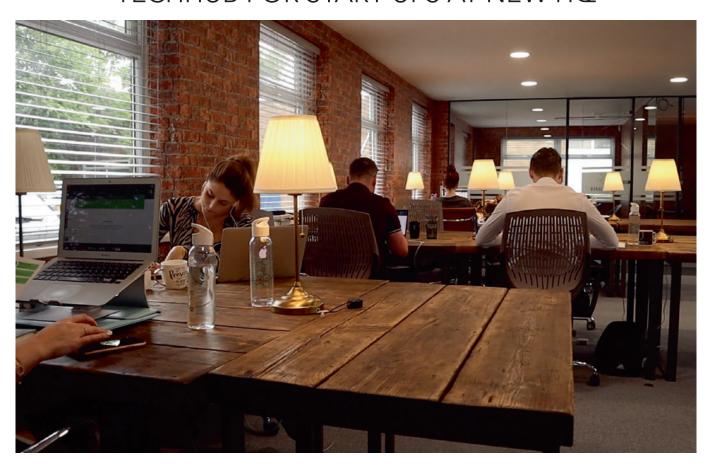
### Which fictional character do you most relate to?

Jack Bauer in 24 - he is constantly running from one crisis to the next. When he solves one problem he then finds himself with another impossible situation to resolve. I often describe my life as being in 24!

#### How do you like to unwind?

I have three children and a dog. I'm Uber to my children! To unwind I enjoy going to the gym, running, swimming and dog walking whilst listening to podcasts (Flintoff, Savage and the Ping Pong Guy is a real favourite). I also enjoy going to the theatre, cinema and watching live sport (I am a Liverpool FC season ticket holder). Over the last few years, cooking has become a real passion of mine; I find it incredibly relaxing (although my wife cannot abide the mess that I make).

# DIGITAL AND TECH TALENT AGENCY TO LAUNCH TECHHUB FOR START UPS AT NEW HQ



Leading North East Digitech talent agency Ronald James Group are enjoying an exciting time of growth after moving to brand new 5500 sq ft, fully refurbished premises allowing the agency to build a state of the art TechHub for start up businesses in the region.

The company has enjoyed an exciting start to 2019 with a growing headcount, development of an extensive client portfolio and a rapidly increasing pool of some of the top digital and tech talent in the region. Their recent office move brings additional space for the agency to grow their offering whilst attracting start up talent from across the North East to come together under one roof. The space will also be used for networking events hosted for tech and digital professionals.

CEO, James Blackwell explains the ambitious plans for growth: "Starting the business with a credit card and growing it as a bootstrap to where it is today has been a proud achievement, but it is only just the start. We have exciting plans to get to 2021 and hit £10 million, whilst we are also growing into the North West, and internationally into the US with an office in Boston. We're



obviously keen to grow our presence in the North East region too so our new HQ gives us the perfect opportunity to do so."

Ronald James' latest recruits to the team include Sarah Woodhall, Senior Recruitment Consultant joining from NRG with extensive experience placing candidates in Digital and Sales roles. Roger Burn joins from Nigel Wright as Managing Consultant specialising in IT and Infrastructure. Kelsey Leonard is the latest addition to the team, joining to head up the Marketing department as the agency grow their presence in the North of England and beyond.

Plans for the rest of 2019 include targets of £1.5 million and further into 2020 with a target of over £2 million, increasing headcount to 20+ staff.

#### **About Ronald James**

Ronald James Group are a specialist IT, Digital and Tech recruitment agency based in Gosforth, Newcastle. Founded in 2015 by CEO James Blackwell, the business has grown from a credit card start up at a kitchen table to one of the leading Digitech recruitment agencies in the region.



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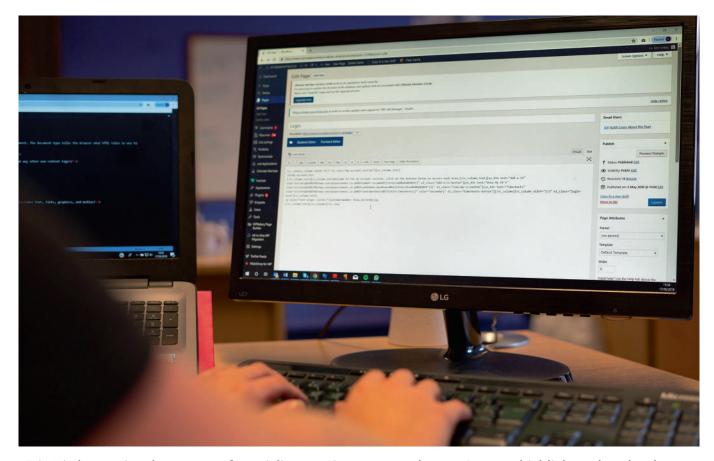


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### RECRUITING AND RETAINING DEVELOPERS



Erin Kirtley; regional manager of specialist recruitment consultancy Concept highlights what developers are looking for in a job and how employers can retain great talent.

It's no secret that the UK is facing a major talent shortage in the digital and tech sectors. Everyone is looking for great developers and this skills gap is growing all the time, which means attraction and retention of great people is becoming harder and harder.

The typical length of time spent within a creative or digital role is usually three years. However, with developers in today's industry, their heads could be turned before their probation period is complete.

To get to the root of the problem, we conducted some industry research. We spoke with hundreds of developers to figure out what attracts them to roles, which benefits really matter and what keeps them satisfied at work.

#### Job satisfaction

When asked for information about what factors made them leave their last role, a huge 70% of the respondents stated a lack of job satisfaction. Although salary and career development were mentioned, they weren't the main drivers behind candidates actively looking for new opportunities.

We then asked participants to provide details of something their last company could have done to make them think twice about jumping ship. Of the many answers, there were two main themes – the provision of both regular training and up to date

technology.

Developers love to learn, so offering an annual budget that can be spent on any relevant learning and/or tech is quite an interesting proposition for most. If you want to keep employees for the long haul, make sure they get the greatest information and the best tools to do their job.

#### **Employee benefits**

We asked respondents to consider a long list of employee benefits, selecting those they deemed interesting. Friday beers, health insurance and free fruit, food and drink are all nice things to have, but they all ranked low on the list.

A huge 80% marked great holiday allowance most important. A good work life balance is important to every member of staff, but with such an intense and all-consuming job, developers want to make sure they can fully switch off.

A handful of our clients now offer unlimited holidays to staff members, a bold move that is paying off. They don't struggle with recruitment and their teams are fully invested, not taking half as many holidays as you would expect – could be something to consider!

Developers are increasingly conscious about pensions, with 50% selecting them as important. While pension provision is a legal obligation in the

workplace many employers don't offer a private pension.

Flexible working hours came out high on the list too. Interestingly, this is one of the most frequently requested perks for developers in full-time, permanent roles, as they often work late or start early. Coding isn't limited to standard office hours.

Although important to match or increase salaries for development roles, these additional perks can make the job all the sweeter.

The best tip I can give would be to communicate with the team, get them to complete a quick and usually free personality test online to decipher what it is that drives them. You can then tailor rewards and perks that matter to the individual.

The above findings have helped us identify the motivations behind developers when they're on the hunt for a new opportunity. This information arms us with the knowledge to advise our clients on how best to attract, retain and incentivise the best developers in the region. High staff turnover can be one of the most costly factors when running any business or operation, if you would like any advice or support when it comes to recruiting the best members of staff for any part of your digital and creative teams please do get in touch with us to discuss your requirements.

More information: www.conceptpersonnel.co.uk



### MASONIC MARATHON RUNNER GETS SET TO SQUARE UP TO 20 MARATHONS IN 2020

A Newcastle based runner has put his best foot forward and pledged to run 20 marathons in 2020 to raise much needed funds for charity.

Ian Richardson from Gosforth organises marathons and is treasurer of the North East Marathon Club. He started running more than 20 years ago on a treadmill in the gym to help him lose weight and gain basic fitness. Since tackling his first marathon in Nottingham in 1997, he has now completed more than 200 distance events and ran all over the world.

As well as being a prolific athlete, Ian is also a Northumberland Freemason. He is combining his running with charity fundraising in aid of the Province of Northumberland's 2020 Festival.

The 2020 Festival is on target to raise £2m in aid of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. Giving has always been a core principle of Freemasonry with individuals donating time and money to help others, whether locally, nationally or globally



# GEORDIE MUSLIMS HELP CITY'S VULNERABLE PEOPLE

As Muslims across the world observe the holy month of Ramadan and reflect on the needs of others, kind hearted members of a Newcastle Mosque have helped The People's Kitchen by providing traditional curry and rice as well as entertainment for Newcastle's vulnerable people.

Organiser Ajmal Khan, from Bilal Jamia Masjid Mosque in Elswick arranged for professional caterers and musicians including Doc Amand and South Shields based musician Ivon Jolly to feed and entertain around 150 "friends" of The People's Kitchen at their Bath Lane premises. This is the second year that the Mosque has helped The People's Kitchen.

"Ramadan is a period of reflection where a person can feel the hunger of those people that may not have the support or the means to feed themselves and their family from day to day," said Mr Khan. "Fasting helps us understand that there are people out there that don't have a conventional life, maybe through mental health, trauma,

circumstance or self harm.



#### NELLY CELEBRATES HER 100 YEARS AT HARBOUR VIEW

Born and bred in the fishing town of North Shields, 100-year-old Nelly Telford has celebrated her milestone birthday by inviting her family from Canada for fish and chips at her favourite restaurant.

Despite the excellent quality of restaurants available in her home town, Nelly likes nothing better than a visit to The Harbour View in Seaton Sluice to sample her favourite food.

The restaurant, voted the fourth best in the UK by Trip Advisor regularly has queues of people waiting for their food and celebrities including Ant Mcpartlin and the Hairy Biker have been known to pop in for their food.

Nelly's son, Ian also from North Shields said: "We discovered Harbour View about a year ago and now we go almost every Friday for lunch. The quality and size of the fish is amazing, so much so that we invited my mother's sister (Sylvia aged 93) to try them when she came back to the UK from Canada to celebrate the birthday. Everyone was astonished as they hadn't seen anything like it in Canada."

# FOREST NURSERY HELPS PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA REMEMBER THEIR ROOTS

An innovative forest school and nursery based in South East Northumberland is branching out with a new partnership involving North East charity MIND Active, so that people with dementia can join in with the children's memory-building exercises.

Footprints on the Moon was established in 2015 by Annie Blight from Cramlington. As a child, she frequently cycled to Plessey Woods to play in the peaceful woodland surroundings while enjoying exciting adventures beneath the trees. It became Annie's mission to help children enjoy nature and learn from the forest, as she had done herself as a child.

After running a range of activities at various outdoor locations in Northumberland, Annie's dream came true last year when she set up Footprints on the Moon's permanent base at Plessey Woods Country Park.





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#### SINTONS' SUMMER DRINKS

More than 160 healthcare professionals from across the North East attended the annual summer drinks held by law firm Sintons.

The event, at Wylam Brewery, was held jointly by Sintons' nationally-renowned healthcare and neurotrauma teams, both of whom work extensively within their sectors in the region and beyond.

Sintons' healthcare drinks have become a much-anticipated bi-annual occasion, with events attracting well over 150 key figures from the sector.















# THOUGHT MILLENNIALS WERE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE? GET PREPARED FOR GEN Z!

Tired of opening your office fridge to find it full of coconut milk or vegan food? Or have you removed your conference table and replaced it with a circle of bean bags? Sorry Millennials, I know I'm stereotyping, but for us Generation X's it's taken us ten years to get used to your strange ways.

#### ...BUT there is a new change on the horizon.

Another upset to your cultural balance and working practices. Navigate this change successfully and your company will attract the best talent, gain traction and accelerate. Fail to adapt and you'll fall behind.

#### Why? Because Gen Z are coming!

Millennials (those aged between 24yrs – 38yrs) are maturing. Taking up management and leadership positions, and if they're not already your target customers, they'll likely become your next corporate customer demographic, so you'd better know how to sell to them – and quick!

Meanwhile, Gen Z (those aged between 9yrs – 23yrs) are beginning to enter the workplace and it'll be your Millennials who need to manage them. Oh, what joy.

#### So, what's different about this lot?

Some consumer brands who already sell to Gen Z's have this sussed, but the key difference is how they were raised, and therefore how their values and expectations of the world are different from the generation before.

Millennials don't remember a time before Google. Gen Z don't remember a time before a smart device. They learnt to swipe before they could talk.

Millennials were raised by the Baby Boomers, you know the ones. Bought a house for £2,000, grew up in the manufacturing boom, retired with both a workplace AND state pension. Therefore, their offspring (Millennials) have mostly grown up with economically comfortable parents. This has shaped their global views. They're more selfless. Worried about the bigger picture, the planet, justice, doing the right thing. They value experiences over cool products, and they want to do meaningful work. Making money (especially profits for you) is about fifth on their list of priorities.

Gen Z's meanwhile, were raised by Gen X's. The ones caught up in the middle of the financial crisis, who



found themselves mortgaged to the hilt, juggling crippling childcare costs with rising interest rates and squeezed household incomes. Both parents likely worked, just to make ends meet. This generation have drilled into their children that the world doesn't owe them a living, that they need to go out and make it on their own. Therefore, Gen Z are more ambitious, entrepreneurial (61% would rather start a business than work for someone else), materialist (stuff the cool experiences, give me the cool products), and aware of their own value - because we raised them that way! These are the kids that when you shout, 'Go tidy your room', they shout back 'Why, how much are you going to pay me?'

They are even more tech-savvy than their predecessors (interestingly though not in coding but in application and use of), they spend on average two hours a day on YouTube (their platform of choice), they have an even shorter attention spans than Millennials (8secs, compared to 11secs) and 11% have ADHD

They are less concerned about green issues. (A smaller percentage are in favour of electric cars or buy organic). Rather than worry about work/life balance, they worry about work/life blend, (if you send me a WhatsApp or an Email at 10pm, I am compelled to respond, I'm unable to set my own boundaries.) The average Gen Z receives around 3000 texts a month! And their greatest fear is phone separation anxiety.

Millennials like a flexible working lifestyle and when they do come into the office, they'll head for that circle of bean bags. They want to feel connected to their peers, to the cause and to doing meaningful work. Whereas a Gen Z is more likely to take that bean bag, go and sit in the corner on their own, put their headphones on and work alone. After a week of producing (what they consider to be) good work, they'll expect a pay rise!

### So how does this affect your business' Sales Engine?

Well, I believe we should be hopeful. The biggest sales growth headache I hear multiple times a day from my clients and the scale-up community is lack of sales talent in the market. And I concur. It's a massive problem.

Gen X's were trained by Coca Cola, Xerox, P&G and in my case, American Express. Those types of structured corporate programmes (particularly in sales) just don't exist anymore and as Gen X we've spent the best part of two decades educating our Millennials in how to combine their passions with sales competence. The world of selling has no doubt changed, but that still doesn't account for the lack of sales ambition in our current employee population – generally.

Perhaps when Gen Z establish themselves in the workplace, we can leverage their innate desires of self-interest and ambition to help us still solve the world's problems, but by making our businesses more successful in the process. Perhaps if we teach them that by developing sales competence they can self-actualise, and they'll be hungrier as a result.

We'll see.

Get on the list to be notified of the next opening of Company Shortcuts Online Sales Academy companyshortcuts.com/neinsight



# PLASTIC NOT-SO FANTASTIC: PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS GET STUCK IN AT BEACH CLEAN

Pupils from a local primary school have taken part in a beach clean at a popular stretch of Northumberland coastline as part of a workshop to teach them about the importance of recycling to help save our oceans.

The children, aged 4-11 from Cambois Primary School, got hands on to collect six bags of plastic waste as well as some more unusual items including a carpet, some discarded fishing net, a lobster pot marker buoy and a large piece of plastic interior from a car from nearby Cambois beach as part of the event organised by the project team behind the North Sea Link Interconnector.

The €2 billion interconnector, which is currently under construction between the UK and Norway with on-shore infrastructure located at Cambois, has so far seen over 271,370 metres of subsea cable installed to connect the energy systems of the two countries. During the course of the installation, contractors were shocked at the amount of plastic waste they found floating in the North Sea, which inspired the project team to take action.

"It's estimated that over eight million tonnes of plastic is dumped into our oceans each year," said Sallyanne Barson, communications and stakeholder manager at North Sea Link.

"The state of the plastic crisis across the globe has been well-documented in recent years but to witness the effects of it first-hand and on our doorstep was quite shocking.

"In Europe, over 40 per cent of plastic items are single-use. The improper recycling of these products is adding considerably to the problem with a lot of these items finding their way out to sea.

"We wanted to organise an event which would help to make a difference to the beach in our local area, but that would also help to educate our young people about the importance of recycling."

North Sea Link enlisted the help of local scuba diving centre, The Fifth Point, to help deliver the workshop.

Blyth-based The Fifth Point, which practices environmentally-conscious diving and carries out monthly survey dives to report vital conservation data back to Project AWARE as part of its 'Dive Against Debris' initiative, delivered a special assembly to the pupils ahead of the beach clean.

"It is incredible what you can find washed up on our beaches," said Nic Emery, managing director at The Fifth Point.

"In areas like Cambois, what you usually expect to find a lot of is plastic bags, bottles, cotton buds and deflated balloons, but in the past, we have

To find out more, visit www.northsealink.com

also found larger, more industrial-type waste like conveyer belts and plastic sheeting.

"We encourage all of our divers to be environmentally aware and I wanted to share this message with the kids at Cambois Primary School to help them understand how the simple things they can do themselves at home can help to save our oceans from drowning in plastic."

Marianne Allan, headteacher at Cambois Primary School, added: "The pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed the day that they spent cleaning up the beach at Cambois.

"While we still have a long way to go to help solve the global plastics crisis, on a local level, projects like this help make a huge difference to our small community so I'd like to thank the North Sea Link project team and Nic from The Fifth Point for doing such a fantastic job."

The North Sea Link Interconnector is a joint venture between National Grid and Norwegian System Operator Statnett. Set to be the longest interconnector in the world, once operational, the subsea pipeline will transfer renewable energy back and forward between the UK and Norway.



# HEALTH VISITOR AIMS TO SET A HIGH STANDARD IN AESTHETICS

A North East health professional who is passionate about improving standards in the aesthetics industry has launched her own treatments clinic.

Having worked for the past 30 years as a nurse, midwife and health visitor, Gateshead's Nicola Jones aims to use her clinical skills and knowledge to provide a professional and high-quality service.

After training as an aesthetics nurse and qualifying as a registered independent prescriber, she turned to experts from the BIC to help her turn a career in caring into a commercial business.

A series of workshops, residential courses and one-to-one advice sessions provided by the BIC's start-up programme gave Nicola the confidence to set up her own business, Vita Nova, in addition to her work with the NHS.

She's now running a regular clinic from premises within Hebburn's Viking Gym, offering treatments including wrinkle relaxant injections and dermal fillers as well as a prescribing service to other aesthetic practitioners.

Nicola said: "I'm starting my business at a really exciting time for the aesthetics industry, when there is now government recognition of the importance of clinical practice becoming professional and regulated and I'm proud to help set new standards of care and safety for clients.

"My clinical experience and qualifications as a registered nurse and independent prescriber give my clients real confidence that they're in safe hands. I feel passionately that this is the way the aesthetics industry should operate, not only to ensure client safety but also to avoid putting more pressure on our already-strained NHS in the event of poorly administered treatments."



# FIRST BUSINESS BORN FROM SUNDERLAND START-UP INITIATIVE

A counselling service to improve the mental health of children in Sunderland is the first business to be born from a programme designed to encourage start-ups in the west area of the city.

The Prospecting for Enterprise Initiative was launched in September last year and is designed to take the expert support of advisers from BIC on the road to six wards in Sunderland.

North Star Counselling CIC is the first business to launch after accessing the programme and now aims to reach children who are struggling with mental health issues – especially those whose parents otherwise could not afford to pay for private sessions.

North Star Counselling CIC will run a programme called Creative Minds, targeting issues including worry and anxiety through workshops using crafts and activities to create a relaxed a fun environment where children feel comfortable and safe to open up about their thoughts.

Backed by Sunderland's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme, and Sunderland City Council's West Area Committee the programme will run until September 2020. The CLLD Programme is a five-year strategy aimed at delivering local jobs and economic growth, supported with funding from the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme.

# SUNDERLAND ECHO IS ON THE MOVE

Sunderland Echo is relocating to new offices at the North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) in Sunderland's Enterprise Park East.

The Echo team will be located in their new home from Tuesday 7th May and can be contacted via the usual email addresses, telephone numbers and social media platforms.

Joy Yates, JPIMedia Editorial Director North East and Sunderland Echo Editor said: "We are very excited to be moving into the BIC into a fit-for-purpose newsroom space where our journalists will continue delivering relevant and engaging content for our audiences.

"The location couldn't be better — we have wonderful views of the Northern Spire bridge, that was named by our readers, and we are minutes away from the Stadium of Light.

"The facilities at the BIC are perfect for us and we have been made extremely welcome by BIC CEO Paul McEldon and his team."



cture by FRANK REID

www.ne-bic.co.uk



# RDA CREATE DELI TO MATCH UNIVERSITY'S **LEADING STATUS**

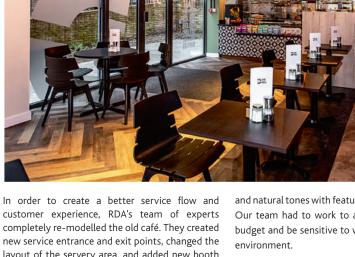




Award-winning design and installation company, RDA, recently created a new high-end deli for Lancaster University.

Lancaster University was named UK University of the Year in 2018 and has maintained its highest rank to date in the Times and Sunday Times League Table 2019, cementing its status as one of the UK's leading universities.

Following a competitive tender, RDA was appointed to transform its outdated café into a modern deli with the aim of attracting more customers and further improving the student experience on campus by matching the high street offer.



layout of the servery area, and added new booth and loose seating. In addition, all equipment from the existing café was removed and a new canopy area, high speed grills, panni grills and MerryChef were installed to cater for its new freshly prepared, deli style offer.

The design was based on a modern, high street look and feel with elements of high - end materials and natural tones with feature lighting throughout. Our team had to work to a tight timeframe and budget and be sensitive to working in a university

Peter Welling, Retail Services Manager at Lancaster University said: "RDA went above and beyond on this project, with regular site visits, customer feedback and a real understanding of our vision for the new deli. We are delighted with the results and look forward to offering a new dining experience to our students, staff and visitors."

For further information on RDA visit www.rdalimited.co.uk or call 08448734993.

### A NEW DECADE OF ZEERA

July has arrived and what a month June was! We celebrated our 10th birthday in style as well as the end of Eid. We had discounts, giveaways, live music and more, and we really did end our first decade in business in the best possible way. Thank you to everyone who came and joined us, we really couldn't have done the last 10 years without you; here's to the next 10 years!

Though the celebrations are over, our brand-new menu is here to stay! Head chef at Zeera Kohinoor Choudhury (South Tyneside curry chef of the year in 2009 & 2011) has spent many months crafting the perfect master menu with his meticulous skills, ensuring the best quality and freshest ingredients in all our dishes.

If you fancy something different to the traditional chicken tikka or onion bhaji, try the chefs Batakh Mango Glaze; tandoori oven cooked duck with delicious medium spiced mango glaze – you certainly won't be disappointed with the zest of flavours in this dish. Is something hotter more your thing? Then go for a Zaal Jhool Murgh; tender chicken tikka cooked with Naga pickle in a hot and spicy sauce.

Zeera also have a wide range of vegan dishes with two extensive vegan food menus and a specific vegan wine menu for those herbivores amongst you, meaning the whole family can enjoy a relaxing meal without the worry of what you can or can't eat.



To book a table or to find out more visit www.zeeracuisine.com Zeera, Ocean Road, South Shields NE33 2JQ 0191 456 18 11



At Eothen Homes we are committed to providing excellent care with Christian values

Residents' happiness is of the utmost importance to us and the team at Eothen are highly trained and strive to provide the very best lifestyle based on each person's abilities, interests and background.

Our aim is to provide a home from home for our residents and we encourage everyone to bring some of their own possessions when they come to live with us so they are surrounded by familiar things.

The homes are set in attractive and spacious gardens and are situated close to local high streets and public transport links allowing those who are used to leading an active life to continue in this way. Our values are traditional and our residents live in surroundings that are warm, inviting and equipped with everything they need.

We recognise the importance of community involvement and run regular reminiscence and art and craft sessions as well as daily group and individual activities, inviting schools and other members of the community into the homes as well as organising regular events and outings.

If you would like to find out more about any of our homes or to book a visit, please contact Head Office on 0191 2819100. Email: enquiries@eothenhomes.org.uk

Gosforth – Elmfield Road, NE3 4BB – Tel: 0191 213 0707

Whitley Bay - Park Gardens, NE26 2TX - Tel: 0191 297 0707

Wallsend – Miller Way, NE28 8EL – Specialist Dementia Care – Tel: 0191 259 8000







# MILLER HOMES BUILDS ON GROWTH BY ANNOUNCING NEW NORTH EAST OFFICE

Miller Homes is opening a new regional office in Teesside supporting the company's strategic regional growth plans.

The leading housebuilder will occupy a unit at Aycliffe Business Park in Newton Aycliffe which will open in the autumn and be a sister office to its current regional office in North Shields.

Mark Bayliss has been promoted from technical director to operations director and will head up the new office. Initially eight local jobs are being created with roles in commercial, sales, land, surveying, construction and technical.

The expansion comes off the back of six new development launches in the first half of the year, and combined with further land investment will support the region's target to grow by 400 homes per annum in the next three years.

So far this year the housebuilder has moved into developments in Sunderland, Hazlerigg, Throckley, Hurworth-on-Tees and Callerton, and will launch in Corbridge later in the year.





# PLANNING AND DESIGN FIRM CELEBRATES 100% SUCCESS RATE AMID FIRST YEAR MILESTONE

A North East Planning and Design firm is celebrating a 100% success rate in planning applications, following the first-year milestone of the appointment of its director.

Since joining as director in 2018, Mark Ketley has led BH Planning and Design, sister company of leading North East property firm Bradley Hall, to expand its team to meet the growing demand for Planning and Design projects in the region.

Mark said: "BH Planning & Design is currently involved in schemes and strategic site promotions that could see the delivery of more than 4,000 new homes and the creation of around 1,250 new jobs across the North East over the next 10 years, all of which represents significant investment in the region.

"The diverse approach and experience of our team also allows us to work for a range of smaller clients, including supporting local SMEs, charitable organisations, public and private sector firms and individual developers with recent schemes ranging from changes of use, pubs and restaurants, gym and leisure facilities, and domestic household extensions."

#### LOCAL HOUSEBUILDER BELLWAY SET TO INVEST OVER £1 MILLION IN MORPETH

Newcastle-based housebuilder Bellway is set to contribute more than £1 million to the Northumberland community, as part of a deal involving an 89-home development near Morpeth.

The payments include a £585,000 contribution for off-site affordable homes and a further £594,000 for local schools.

The money was part of the deal with Northumberland County Council, which granted planning permission for the Taylors Wynd development, sited largely on a former council office and education complex at Hepscott Park, off the A192, south of Morpeth.

Tracey Brady, Managing Director for Bellway North East, said: "A lovely new community is



already forming at Taylors Wynd, and we're delighted that we're able to give back and enhance the local area further with investment.

"Our contribution to off-site affordable homes will help local people buy a home in Northumberland while our investment in education will be a great financial boost for local schools."

# NEW HQ PAVES WAY FOR EXPANSION FOR INTERIOR DESIGN PRACTICE

An interior design practice which specialises in high end residential and retirement living is quadrupling the size of its North East headquarters to help it keep pace with its rapid expansion.

Award-winning Bernard Interiors looking to its next stage of growth through moving to a new 5,000 sqft headquarters, relocating from its previous base in Ponteland

Bernard Interiors, founded in 2008, will now be based in the former St Barnabus & St Jude Church Centre in Sandyford, with significant investment being made in converting the premises into a design studio and showroom.

The expansion of its premises also allows Bernard Interiors to accommodate its growing design team, which currently has 14 people but is predicted to have at least 20 within the next two years.







lan Arkle – 07710693861 Stuart Arkle – 07710693860 Home – 01665 574604 Email – arkleandsons@gmail.com Website - www.arkleandsons.co.uk

"A true local family owned business"



### WESTFIELD, GOSFORTH

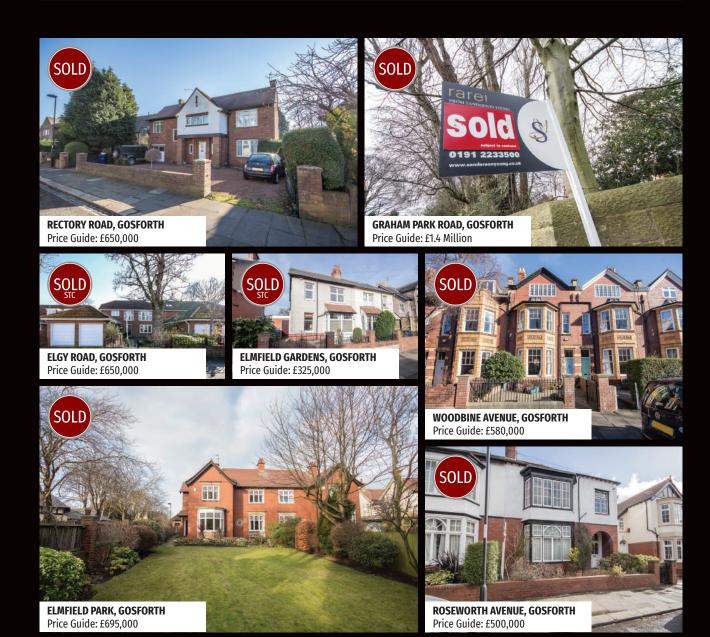


# PRICE GUIDE: £995,000

Beautifully located in the heart of Gosforth, and set back on the south side of Westfield, is this fabulous, detached family home. The property, which has accommodation extending to just under 3000 sq ft, was originally built in the 1920s and has been extensively refurbished and improved by the current owners in recent times. The accommodation includes a formal sitting room with magnificent bay window and a large, open plan family kitchen/breakfast room extending to a dining room at the front of the house and a lounge at the rear, with French doors to the gardens; to the first floor are five bedrooms, four of which are large doubles, a fifth bedroom/study and two bathrooms. The house has a great deal of style and character and is light and bright with lovely views over its well stocked gardens. Planning permission has been approved for a two storey extension and a gated driveway.



# REGIONAL SALES SUCCESS @ SANDERSON YOUNG'S GOSFORTH HQ



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### HIGH STREETS STILL MATTER

By Duncan Young, Chairman of Sanderson Young

Nobody is immune from the impact of technology, least of all retail and our high streets.

Sanderson Young, like other estate agents, has in recent times reviewed operational procedures and recognises the increased levels of business being transacted through online business. This is an opportunity as much as a threat to the traditional way of doing things.

Our Sanderson Young website has always strived to be very easy to use and effective with its large photographs, Google Earth locations and street views, as well as excellent floorplans. All these features are now enabling our clients to gain the information they want at a much quicker speed.

Buyers now expect to use 360-degree camera photography and drone images that we provide giving an overview of the whole house along with its estate and grounds as well as the magnificent high-level mast-shots that we provide, enhancing the look of homes to its optimum.

While we are keen to ensure that we become extremely efficient and streamlined on new business and social media, we would still like to retain the quality of having a very well-located headquarters and local office.

The high street is also vital to us and I am pleased that Sanderson Young is the only family owned, private estate agency which has its headquarters on Gosforth High Street. We are very proud of our prominent corner frontage, with an excellent arrangement of offices at ground, first, and second floor levels, including a board room and good meeting rooms for our clients to discuss their business in private.

I believe the worries of the high street continue to be a threat and we have seen other service industries, such as travel agents, close some of their branches. This will undoubtably lead to vacant units becoming available amid this increasingly mobile world of transactions.

It is important that we continue to support those industries and businesses on our high streets, if we wish those high streets to continue to survive and thrive. I am a great believer in supporting your local marketplace and have great pleasure buying from the butcher, the

seamstress, as well as the travel agent and using the local hairdresser, who all contribute significantly to our day to day lives.

The strength of Sanderson Young locally, expands not just on Gosforth High Street and in Jesmond, where we have a significant number of properties, but also to the Northumberland coast where our newly opened Alnwick office has had outstanding success.

Instruction levels in the first four months of 2019 are up 200%, sales are up by 70%, and I am delighted that we have so many new and exciting schemes coming to the market from our Alnwick branch which will, by the end of June, provide the largest estate agency window display within the whole of the Alnwick area.

Our traditional base in Ponteland provides our third branch and I have always enjoyed the Coates Institute building, in the centre of the village, which has a tremendous architectural quality to it. The branch there is well supported by local experts who cover the Tyne Valley, as well as Darras Hall and surrounding villages, and creates a very good support to our clients.

Sanderson Young's new homes business has continued to go from strength to strength, and we have seen some fabulous new sites being launched in recent times, as well as the selling out of other sites in North Northumberland, especially in Beadnell, Rennington and Lesbury. Outstanding partners are creating beautiful homes that buyers want in these villages and often at a timescale earlier than when the builder can finish the completion of these beautiful houses.

In the next month we hope to announce the instruction of our company on one of the largest new build, residential schemes in the heart of Newcastle and we will undoubtably see significant interest on this site. It will provide stunning family homes in one of the most popular suburbs.

Whether you are looking to buy, sell or let a property in the near future, my team is here to help and assist you and we welcome the opportunity of working with our clients, past, present and future.

If I can be of any personal assistance to clients, please do not hesitate to contact me: duncan.young@sandersonyoung.co.uk

To read a longer version of this article see the latest Sanderson Young Collection Magazine.



### PROPERTY FIRM CELEBRATES £3.5M TURNOVER



A leading North East property firm is celebrating a year of success – including a 20% increase in net profit and a turnover exceeding £3.5m.

# BH Group, which includes Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents, BH Planning and Design and BH Financial, also expanded its team with 12 new members of staff – bringing total headcount to 65.

The firm, which is headed by group managing director Neil Hart, group director Peter Bartley, directors Richard Rafique and Geoff Davis as well as group operations director Catherine Affleck, was recently named as Estates Gazette's (EG) Most Active Agents in the North East while its office sector activity grew by 400%.

Its residential operation, led by director of estate agency, Matt Hoy, has also gone from strength to strength; most recently with the relocation of its Alnwick office to larger and more central premises.

Neil said: "I can sincerely say that the past 12 months has been biggest year yet for Bradley Hall. We've celebrated our 30th anniversary, launched new offices, announced key appointments, welcomed £100m of new homes to market, established further company growth and gained several award wins.

"Although Bradley Hall has been running for 30 years, it is a very different business from what it once was. With the appointment of the current board of directors and senior management team, we almost instantly reinvented our approach and legacy to support the growth we had planned. Throughout the business process there is a time when you have to work hard to go from 'small' to 'bigger' in order to thrive - and today's Bradley Hall has certainly achieved that, and more, in the past few years.

"With the growth in demand for our services for the public sector, we were also delighted to be awarded the Homes England Property Services Framework. The appointment to this national panel now allows us to act as key advisors on future North East and national government housing projects.

"Each aspect of the business is thriving thanks

to the dedicated senior management team who continue to drive their areas of business forward. We've made some outstanding senior appointments, including attracting some of the most successful businesspeople in the region to become members of our advisory board."

Senior appointments have included established solicitors and businessmen John Marshall and David Douglass joining our Advisory Board to further support the growth of Bradley Hall. Mark Ketley joined as a director of Bradley Hall sister company, BH Planning and Design, Jonathan Rudge became head of Land, Development and New Homes, while Nicola Osborne joined the department as corporate client director.

Bradley Hall runs seven offices in the North East including; Alnwick, Morpeth, Gosforth, Newcastle city centre, Durham, Sunderland and Hexham as well as an office in London. Departments include; Commercial Agency, Building Surveying, Residential Agency, Land, Development & New Homes, Property Management, Mortgages, and Professional Services to include valuations and lease advisory.

For more information please contact Bradley Hall on 0191 232 8080 or visit www.bradleyhall.co.uk

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Orchard Dene is a carefully designed mix of four and five bedroom family homes, perfect for modern suburban living. Every last detail has been considered, resulting in a stunning development offering stylish contemporary living. The first release of homes will be available in February 2019. Register your interest today with Bradley Hall.

Orchard Dene is situated in the centre of vibrant Jesmond within walking distance of the array of luxury shops, bars and nightlife and within minutes from Newcastle city centre. Jesmond Dene is on the doorstep perfect for stunning scenery whilst walking or bike riding.

One of the most popular places to live in the Newcastle area and with good reason too, renowned for its multitude of bars, attentive designer stores and sophisticated cafés and restaurants on Osborne Road and St George's Terrace, it is popular with students, young professionals and families alike, creating a great diversity and a busy little hub of activity.

The suburb is flanked by the beautiful Jesmond Dene, a wooded valley and Victorian park, giving a unique haven of peace and tranquillity for the people of Newcastle, it is perfect for delightful short walks or relaxing with friends. Many treelined paths run through the valley, leading past interesting landmarks such as the Eye Bridge and its picturesque weir.

Contact the Bradley Hall New Homes Team on 0191 284 2255

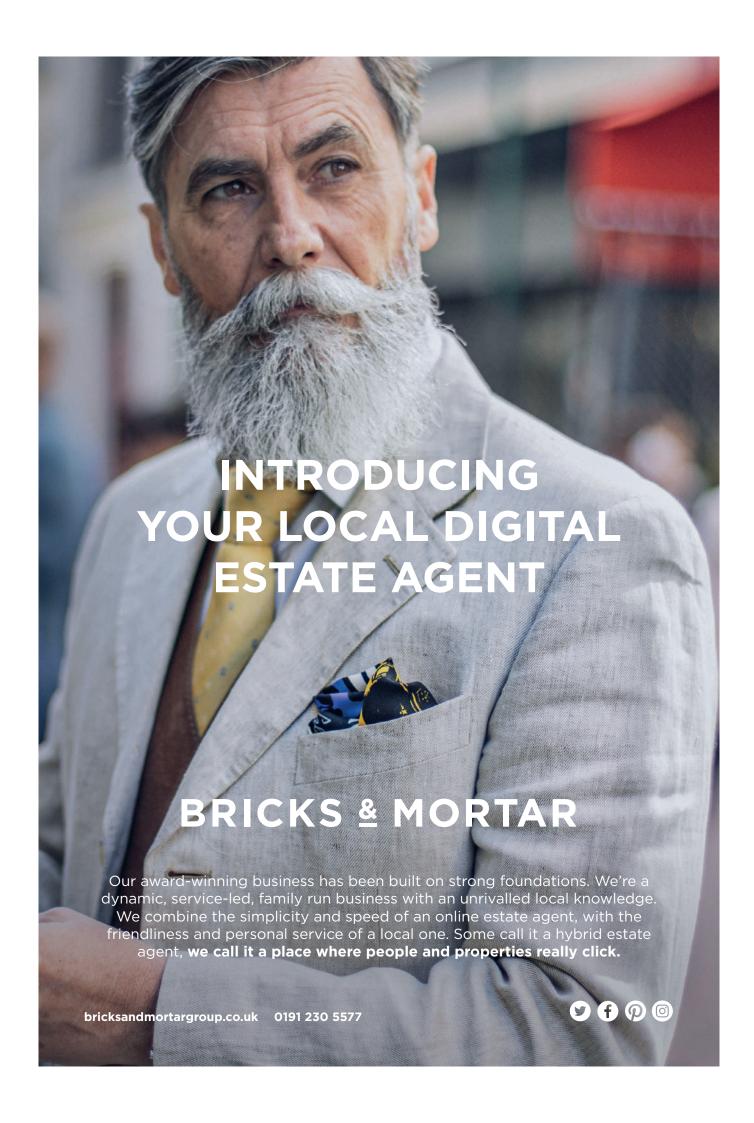












#### STAYING POWER...

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

This month we chat to...

### **DICKON WOOD**

Partner, Capital Markets, Knight Frank Newcastle

#### Did you always envisage a career in the industry?

I was open minded about everything when I left school. My thoughts and interests ranged from joining the army, being a jockey or becoming a stockbroker. I considered a range of careers but after a week of work experience with Storey Sons & Parker in Newcastle, I had my sights set on a career in property. I enrolled on an estate management degree at Birmingham University, which in turn lead to a training contract with Knight Frank in Newcastle in order to become qualified.

#### What is your favourite aspect of the job?

Variety – no two days are the same, whether it is working up a pitch, advising on a sale, underwriting a purchase or helping a client to add value to an asset by working through a business plan. In order to be able to advise on property acquisitions you need a strong commercial background and a clear understanding of funding rates, swap rates, economics and occupier trends.

#### What has been your career defining moment?

Being instructed to sell a £30million portfolio for Northumberland Estates in 2009, in the depths of the financial crisis was a proud moment. Also being head hunted to re-join Knight Frank in Newcastle in 2013, having left in 1997 when I went to work in London. It was a good lesson in not hurning bridges and felt like I was coming home.

#### How do you measure success?

We work in a serviced industry and providing best in class service to our clients is paramount. Our success is measured in parallel with the successes of our clients. The ultimate accolade is repeat business from loyal clients who continue to instruct us in preference to our competitors. We are grateful for their loyalty and endeavour to repay it with excellent service.

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

Technology – I remember measuring the old Debenhams department store in Sunderland in the mid-1990s with a tape measure which took 2 days. Nowadays a laser measurer means it takes a couple of hours. The advent of Google Earth, computer generated images and digital photography have greatly enhanced how we operate as a business. Likewise the free flow of large packages of information on email such as leases, title documents, and marketing material has streamed lined the whole process. With this efficiency comes an expectation of heightened response times and levels of service.

#### How has your skillset developed accordingly?

By working with great people it's not surprising that some of their creative and technological flair rubs off. Where there is a shortfall, there are plenty of young guys and girls in the office to help out.

#### Are you a risk taker by nature or more conservative?

I provide investment advice, so am not a risk taker. Every property has a fair price. The more risk associated with a property, such as a weak tenant, the higher the yield needs to be to reflect this. The majority of our clients are seeking returns of between 10%- 20% which they achieve through a blend of income return, rental growth, gearing and asset management. They dictate how far up the risk curve they want to go and we try and source the opportunities to match.

#### To what would you attribute your success?

Great clients and a great team to work with. I have been fortunate to spend most of my career working for partnerships which I believe is the best structure for a surveying practice to operate under as compared to the large corporate structures that have evolved over the years. The partnership ethos is more entrepreneurial and less limited by corporate rules. We all need a mentor in our career and when I joined Healy & Baker in London in the late 1990's I worked for David Erwin who would go on to lead the capital markets team at Cushman & Wakefield. He provided an excellent grounding in fund management, client management and schooled me in the subtle arts of the property business. We also shared a keen interest in horse racing which is a great leveller. No matter how clever you think you are, horses have an uncanny talent for proving the opposite.

#### What's your biggest weakness and how have

I don't like working under pressure and therefore am good at managing my time in order to ensure that deadlines don't become last minute panics. My Father was an officer in the army and instilled in me the Five P's . – Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance. His advice was largely directed towards my teenage self in response to being late, untidy or disorganised for family events but it has rubbed off into my professional career.

#### How do you remain motivated?

I live in the Tyne Valley with my wife, two teenage children, three dogs, three cats, ponies and chickens – There are lots of mouths to feed!

#### Would you prefer to be liked or respected?

Liked in your personal life and respected in your professional life is how the old adage goes. However we spend more time with our work colleagues than our families so our behaviour needs to reflect that

#### I'll retire when...

I've paid off the mortgage, and my children are able to stand on their own two feet. I became a non-exec Director of Carlisle Racecourse 12 months ago and look forward to expanding on that role in years to come. I still feel I am closer to the start of my career than the end, so there is still plenty of property work to be done yet.

www.knightfrank.co.uk



# **FULL HOUSE FOR SUMMER**

A NORTH EAST DEVELOPER IS HOPING FOR 'FULL HOUSES' THIS SUMMER WITH A RANGE OF DESIRABLE PROPERTIES AVAILABLE ACROSS THE REGION.



A street scene at the Saint George development.

Linden Homes' developments in Morpeth, Birtley and Bishop Auckland offer house hunters quality homes in prime locations, all of which benefit from local amenities and excellent commuter links.

The quartet of sites include Saint George and The Fairways – both in Morpeth – The Aspens in Birtley and Bishops Park at Bishop Auckland.

Sales Director Tracy lles says: "Our four developments all enjoy enviable locations and the quality and finish of the homes has proved popular. We also have a number of 'hot' deals this summer to make moving easier. For example, our Part Exchange Scheme\* available at our Saint George and Fairways developments in Morpeth, could help to speed up the buying process."

"For those who qualify, we can buy their existing property. Estate agents value the home, a price is agreed and the purchase made – paving the way for a speedy move to a brand new Linden home. With interest rates currently so low, it could be a great time to buy."

Other incentives across all four sites include Assisted Move,\* which helps house hunters with the process of selling their existing home, and the government-backed Help to Buy.\*\* Buyers qualifying for Help to Buy receive a 20% equity loan towards the cost of the property, on which nothing is paid for the first five years of living in the home.

Only two properties remain at the Fairways in Morpeth, the four bedroom Nedderton,

designed with the family in mind, priced at £374,995, and the luxurious five bedroomed Hepscott, priced at £499,995. Adjacent to the local golf club, it is the closest new build development to the market town's centre.

The marvellous Hepscott perfectly showcases the quality that Linden Homes delivers. A gorgeous kitchen/family room comes complete with state-of-the-art fixtures and appliances and patio doors to the garden. The home boasts a large living room – also with patio doors – a master bedroom with ensuite shower and separate walk-in dressing room, four further double bedrooms (two with ensuite), an excellent family bathroom and an integral double garage.

Also, in Morpeth, the Saint George development comprises unique four and five bedroomed homes, set beside established woodland. Prices start from £279,995 for the four bedroomed Goodridge and rise to £502,995 for the magnificent, five bedroomed plot 57 Osborne.

As an added mark of the quality being delivered, Saint George boasts a site manager with a National House-Building Council Seal of Excellence Award, for the exceptional standard of his work.

The Aspens, in Birtley, is the house builder's second development in the town and has proved just as popular as its highly successful predecessor, The Sycamores. Overlooked by The Angel of The North and with great links to Newcastle and Durham, prices range from



A typical Linden Homes kitchen dining room.



A Linden Homes living room.

£225,950 for the three bedroomed, semidetached Elder, to £294,950 for the four bedroomed, detached Hickory.

Finally, Bishops Park, in Bishop Auckland, features the two bedroomed, semi-detached Hardwick, starting at £129,995; the three bedroomed, semi-detached Eveleigh, from £166,950; the three bedroomed, detached Maddison, at £189,950 and the glorious four bedroomed Goodridge, on the market at £209,995.

The sales office and Show Homes at all three developments are open Thursday – Monday,

10am – 5pm. Saint George at NE61 2NU; The Fairways, NE61 2BT; The Aspens, DH3 1RY and Bishops Park DL14 8RG. For more information, call: 01670 751 060\*\*\* or visit: https://www.lindenhomes.co.uk/ developments/north-east

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Help



The Bishops Park development.



The Elder at The Aspen

<sup>\*</sup> Full terms and conditions of Linden Homes' Part Exchange and Assisted Move schemes are available on request. \*\* Full terms and conditions on Help to Buy are available on request. \*\*\*\* This call will cost 7p per minute plus a phone company access charge. Photographs show typical Linden homes. Interior may include optional upgrades or extras available at additional cost. Prices and details correct at time of going to press.



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\*Specification varies on each development and plot. Please speak with your Sales Advisor for specification details. APart Exchange scheme subject to Avant Homes terms and conditions, on selected plots only. Please speak with your Sales Advisor for more details. Not in conjunction with any other offer. Prices and details correct at time of going to press. Images representative only and may include optional upgrades at additional cost.



### **HEATON - GREAT ARTISTS FOR GREAT CLIENTS**

Anyone following the property letting sector will be well aware that the first half of this year was pretty dreadful.

Well-meaning but flawed legislation and a raft of new red tape means one in four landlords plans to sell up this year and letting agencies are also faring badly. Many large agencies are closing branches and many small agencies running up the shutters for good.

But Heaton appears to be bucking the trend. Last month we received a record number of new instructions and smashed our record for rental on a two-bed property. At this point I should probably trumpet our investment in training and technology as the cause? Well, yes, they are an element but I believe our success is, in large part due to the fact that we are embedded in Heaton. And Heaton is very much on the up.

This is nothing new. Back in 2017 the TV show 'Location, Location, Location' paid a visit and described Heaton as "a hip and trendy suburb". Since then the area has featured in a number of national newspapers as a great place to live

and work. At Heaton Property we do not need newspapers to tell us this. We have worked here since 2005 and many of us live here.

This means we are embedded in a vibrant, entrepreneurial culture, surrounded by thriving new businesses and the young professionals who support them. On the restaurant scene, early pioneers like the Butterfly Cabinet continue to thrive and it seems every other week there is a new opening.

Our latest addition is Flint Pizza, which does exactly what the name board says — pizza. But this is a far cry from the limp fast-food offering of old. The owners have imported a Stefano Ferrara of Napoli pizza oven. For non-Italians, the Stefano Ferrara is to pizza ovens what Rolls Royce is to motor cars. This is a clear statement of intent from owners who recognise that to stand out in a crowded market you need to offer something unique.

And Flint Pizza is not the result of throwing money at shiny shop fittings. The owners did all the hard graft themselves, swapping chefs whites for hard hats and steel toecap boots. They are not the first to launch a business concept in Heaton on a shoestring and I doubt they will be the last. One of the reasons Heaton is buzzing is, in Heaton you can give it a go. Shop rents are cheaper than in Newcastle's more established trendy postcodes and other local businesses have been down the same road so, are free with advice and support.

It is a constant point of debate in our office – 'which came to Heaton first? The boutique businesses or the young professionals who support them?' I have yet to hear a satisfactory answer but my family and I very happy to live and work in this thriving neighbourhood. In the words of Chinese – American architect I.M. Pei "Great artists need great clients." Heaton, it would seem, has both.

www.heat on property.com

# THE PRIVATE HILL OFFICIALLY OPENED BY MP AT INAUGURAL EVENT

The Private Hill was recently declared open by MP Kevin Hollinrake at the venue's inaugural event, being held in aid of The Alzheimer's Society, Living Well With Dementia Berwick (Royal Voluntary Service) and Berwick & District Friends of Dementia

The event, which raised over £15,000 to be split between the three charities, was attended by over 200 people who enjoyed entertainment and a three course meal provided at The Private Hill, North Yorkshire's newest and most luxurious glamping destination and event venue.

MP Kevin Hollinrake officially opened the site, and unveiled a solid wood carved sign, commemorating the event.

He said: "Ventures like The Private Hill are what make North Yorkshire great.

"It is innovative, luxurious and will attract a new raft of visitors to our region to enjoy its facilities. It is also perfect for weddings and large events with a difference. I congratulate the owner, Roddy Hamilton and am delighted to have supported two such good causes!"

The Private Hill www.theprivatehill.co.uk offers luxury boutique glamping in brand new innovative Geodesic Domes and it is the first of its kind in the North

Each dome comes complete with its own luxurious interior comprising of super king-sized bed (or twins) complete with luxury bedding, private ensuite shower room with flushing toilet, mains electricity, kitchenette complete with Nespresso coffee maker and Miele microwave, stocked minibar, Sonos music system and lots of other high end touches.

Private events and weddings are hosted in stunning marquees on site, chosen personally for each event, with breathtaking views of over 60 miles, top notch catering and lots of personal touches guaranteed.

Organiser of The Forget Me Not Ball, Amelia Clark, said: "We chose The Private Hill for our annual fundraising ball as we were blown away by the location



and the stunning views. Being able to put our own touch on the marquee and moving away from a more traditional event in a hotel or conference facility elevated the event, giving it an added attraction to the guests. We also knew we were guaranteed quality, which is important when we are hosting guests who are kindly supporting a charity."

Jane's dome at The Private Hill is now also open — this is a larger dome that stands as the social hub at The Private Hill. Jane's Dome also welcomes locals, walkers, cyclists and those passing for coffee and cake or a light meal, opening up farm life to be enjoyed by a wider audience.

More information on booking a short break, a wedding or an event can be found at www.theprivatehill.co.uk



# MANY DON'T KNOW HOW MORTGAGE ADVICE COULD BENEFIT THEM

By Lewis Chambers, Director of Mortgages and Finance at Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents



Throughout my many years in the Mortgage industry I have had the pleasure of supporting thousands of people in purchasing their first homes, dream homes or investment properties.

Many of these people have been recommended to us by their friends or family or come across our advertising or branding. Some have sought out specialist mortgage advice and found our services, however, there are still many people who are not even aware that mortgage advice exists.

It was recently reported by Legal & General that 31% of borrowers who go direct to a lender didn't know how a mortgage adviser could support them in their search. The research also found that 60% of people who didn't seek advice when they took out their last mortgage didn't know mortgage advisers were there to help them.

Purchasing a property is one of the most

significant commitments that most people will make within a lifetime. Making the right decisions could go as far as impacting other aspects of your life, including the ability to expand a family, influence career decisions or retirement plans. It is vital that everyone has access to the opportunities which mortgage advisers provide to ensure the best decisions are made.

Industry experts have access to thousands of deals which aren't available directly from lenders to consumers. Twenty7Tec recently reported that deals available through advisers totalled almost 12,000 – whereas lenders could only offer customers just over 2,000.

The advice which a dedicated mortgage adviser provides could prove to be worth thousands of pounds over the term of a person's agreement. This could ultimately damage the possibility of moving up the property ladder or the amount of equity which those have within their property.

The Bradley Hall Mortgages team not only unlocks the best deal for the consumer, we manage the application stage on behalf of the client, taking them through it step-by-step to ensure the process is as stress-free as possible. We take all personal information including credit history, deposit size, preferred monthly repayments and pair you with a bespoke solution.

For further mortgage advice or information please visit www.bradleyhall.co.uk or call 0191 260 2000



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### BUILDING A BRAND

One that's relevant, memorable and valuable online requires a lot more than attractive photos and video. Standing out from the digital noise requires more than just posting. You have to earn attention, then trust and inspire subsequent action whatever it may be.

You need to learn how to connect with your customers in a real way. You have to know how to leverage the technology to be more real, to make people laugh, to share your story and inspire them to take action.

#### Be vou

The best way to attract your ideal customer, which will create value is letting your true colours shine. Don't pretend you're someone, or some brand that you're not. Find your voice and share your personality with the world.

Life and business work so much better when lived in high human definition, with no filters. Share your story, and invite, engage and bring others with you for the journey.

Let them help build you. For my Instagram profile, I mix business with pleasure yet ensure my images are on brand using my branding colours.

### Create a content calendar and plan

Though many spontaneously post content to social profiles, your results will increase if you take the time to plan out your content.

The more you can focus on the right audiences, objectives and strategies to attract your ideal audience, the more successful you'll be.

Planoly is a good content planner for Instagram that allows you to see what your images look like on a grid format before you post. You content calendar does not need to be complex. A simple document or diary with your content planned out for the month ahead is enough to help keep you organised.

### Create content that inspires and empowers

Inspiration does not equal a link to your blog post or sales page - you need to truly connect. Create content that's easy to digest, share and remember. Inspirational quotes or short stories that people connect with are both great ways to create meaningful and inspirational content, without spending a ton of time.



### Focus on one or two social networks

It's always better to start with one or two social networks where you can have a major presence, versus spreading yourself too thin across more than you have time or budget to achieve a measurable ROI.

### People by from people

People buy from people they know like and trust. When was the last time you woke up in the morning excited to talk to a logo on social media?

Invest in your personal brand and the payoffs will be significant in regards to building relationships, earning trust and growing your business.

Learn the difference between authenticity and transparency, and know that you don't have to share everything you do 24/7 in order to build a rock-solid personal brand which generates result.

### Collaborate

You don't have to embark on your digital and social media journey all by yourself - connect with other leaders in your industry, such as influencers and highly connected thought leaders. Share their content, build relationships, then partner up for strategic, fun and inspiring co-marketing campaigns that ignite your combined audiences.

### Don't sweat the small stuff

The right baby steps that are aligned to the bigger vision will ensure you that you keep winning. Don't get down with small setbacks or short term losses. Imposter syndrome is real and can kill your creativity and confidence if you let it.

You will win and you will lose deals, and even social media followers. However, the world is big, and there will be more where those came from.

Stay focused on your goals, and don't give up.

What's your thoughts? Tweet me: @play\_thefield

# R//EVOLUTION EXPANDS NORTHERN OPERATION WITH MANCHESTER OFFICE



Revenue growth agency r//evolution has expanded its northern base with the launch of a new office in Manchester's thriving Spinningfields district.

As a certified HubSpot Gold Partner, the business specialises in assisting ambitious companies to

scale-up their marketing and communications in order to accelerate growth. The expansion announcement follows a raft of new client wins across the technology, professional services, tourism, property, and training sectors.

In a busy start to the first half of the year, the team also launched a new animation arm, r//eplay, and is now looking to recruit a range of Manchester-based roles across their online marketing, digital and design departments.

Speaking about the latest expansion, Adam Blenkinsop, Director at r//evolution, said: "This is a significant move for the business and our long-term future. Having secured a firm base in the North East, we spent a long time looking for the right location to expand the business to. Manchester was the clear choice, with a thriving community of diverse, ambitious businesses who are dedicated to long-term growth.



### REBRAND FOR NORTHERN PR AND MARKETING AGENCY IN MILESTONE YEAR

A Northern PR and marketing consultancy has rebranded as it marks a decade in business.

Sarah Hall Consulting Limited was set up by Sarah Waddington (formerly Hall) in 2009 to capitalise on demand for senior talent within the regional marketplace.

It has now relaunched as Astute. Work to mark the company's change in focus and the launch in 2018 of a London office.

It also reflects the agency's growth to a core team of nine, supported by trusted associates and sector specialists who enable the agency to scale its provision for clients as needed. The company won North East Small Agency of the Year at the 2016 PRide Awards.

Managing director Sarah Waddington said: "It feels really positive to mark our ten-year anniversary this way. The agency scaled a long time back and Astute.Work tells the story of what we do and why. We've grown from offering solely PR and marketing, to video and podcast production which is a third of the business, and now have a strong management consultancy offer."

### VISUALSOFT UNVEILS MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT OF STOCKTON HQ

eCommerce and digital marketing agency, Visualsoft, has announced plans to drastically overhaul and expand its Stocktonon-Tees headquarters.

The large-scale project, due for completion in August, will see redevelopment of an existing 4,000ft2 site with the creation of three new spaces – all of which have been designed to foster innovation and collaboration.

The first comprises an auditorium in which the company can host events and hold informal team catch-ups. The team also hopes to engage with the local digital community to allow start-ups, university students and businesses to benefit from the space.



This will sit alongside a new client "village" with a range of interactive meeting areas. The company currently counts more than 1,000 clients nationwide — including Sik Silk, Lusso Stone and Daniel Footwear.

Visualsoft's growing R&D department will also be re-housed in a new wing of the office. This expansion will help to support the team's growth plans and talent acquisition over the coming years.



# MORE THAN £250K CONTRACT WINS FOR NORTH EAST MARKETING AGENCY

Narrative Integrated Communications, a full-service marketing agency in the North East, is celebrating more than £250,000 worth of new contracts following a period of growth.

Narrative, who are champions of professional marketers across the North East, has welcomed clients including Mandata, Wolviston, Altia-ABM and the North East LEP to its existing client base in the last few months.

The contract wins coincide with a period of growth for Narrative, having recently welcomed two new staff members to its client partnerships team, and are currently recruiting for three more roles.

Kieron Goldsborough, managing director, said: "We launched our new business strategy at the start of the year and it's been fantastic to see the whole team get behind it. Our new clients are not only great to work with, with exciting projects and inspiring objectives too, they are also completely in line with our new strategic approach."

Listen to the Northern Insight Business Show on Radio Northumberland

INSIGHT



www.radionorthumberland.com

### A GAME CHANGING CAMPAIGN

By Veronica Swindale, managing director of nesma

I've decided to use this space to connect with members of nesma's network to talk about the marketing and communications issues they face in their various day to day roles.

My first chat is with Ashley Lowe, Health and Wellbeing Manager at Newcastle United Foundation. I went to talk to her about the 'Be a Game Changer' campaign she launched in February.



### So, what's the basis of the 'Be a Game Changer' campaign?

It was fully supported by Newcastle City Council and the Premier League, and its aim is to change the conversation about mental health among Newcastle United fans. As part of the campaign, we are providing tips on how to look after your physical health and mental wellbeing, sharing real-life stories from supporters and signposting to support services. To reach our target audience, we are using a mix of traditional channels including press, social media, community events and match day activities.

### How did the Mental Health Awareness week campaign go?

We were out and about in the community talking to people and spreading the word about the campaign. People are taking a real interest and want to be part of it. Social Media helped us make a real impact. We got a significant engagement through our channels which was supported by interviews with members of our Health and Wellbeing team on fan podcasts, BBC Radio Newcastle and ITV Tyne Tees. As a result of this

combined activity, we had 20 fans contact us who wished to share their mental health story on the basis that it could help others, which is fantastic.

### Can you describe your ideal target audience?

We are targeting NUFC fans, particularly men, age 30-49. Male suicide rates are terrifyingly high, and we feel that by using the Newcastle United brand, we can help them tackle an issue that otherwise they might not talk about. 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime, and it's important that society knows how it could support someone who finds themselves in that situation.

### What are the main problems you face in getting the message across?

The message has been really well received with lots of positive feedback from fans. A potential issue is reaching the fans who don't come to the match and who don't use social media, but we have a few ideas to combat this! Due to demand, we have recently developed two toolkits - for businesses and grassroots football clubs, these act as a 'how-to' guide in using our campaign materials which will help us to reach more fans. We will also contact local venues such as pubs, barber shops, social clubs etc. to offer our campaign resources to their clientele.

### What have you found works well?

The usual activity did have the desired effect in generating interest and raising awareness, but we needed to do more than that. We needed to change mindsets towards mental health - and we wanted to create a space where male fans could feel comfortable learning more about mental health and wellbeing. We set up a Facebook group that has enabled us to create

a community for Newcastle United fans who want to share information on health and wellbeing and also offer support to each other. The group grows daily, and although the Foundation does post regularly, we now see members sharing useful tips and information, which is precisely what we hoped we could achieve in that space.

### What are the next steps for this campaign?

Our up-coming plans include:

- Football tournaments to raise awareness of the campaign
- Match day activities
- Growth of the Facebook community
- Launch of our toolkits
- Creation of a promotional video

### What measures do you use to gauge whether your campaigns are successful or not?

So far, we have been monitoring our reach and engagement online and the qualitative feedback from those engaging with the campaign. The next steps will be to reach out to the community to get some real impact data about how the campaign has affected the lives of the fans so far.

# How significant is it that we can have this conversation sitting in your flat overlooking the sea on a Thursday morning instead of being in the office in town?

Many things are positive about this situation! Being able to be so close to nature and access to lovely walks on a lunch break, flexible working. All have substantial positive effects on your mental health for sure!



If you would like more information about this campaign please contact Ashley Lowe on Ashley.Lowe@nufc.co.uk



Whether it's working on your current skill set or exploring a new area of expertise, nesma has all your marketing, communication and digital know-how covered.

T: 07734 222 254
E: hello@nesma.co.uk
W: nesma.co.uk





# CURTIS GABRIEL ON TRACK FOR RECORD YEAR

2019 is proving to be another year of significant client growth and expansion for fast-growing Social, Digital & Design Agency Curtis Gabriel.

Following a new office opening in February, the popular agency has continued to increase its client base, welcoming 48 new clients so far this year. CEO, Martin Such, puts the success down to the continued rise in demand for professional social media management and digital marketing services across the UK and North America.

"Over the last 18 months we have invested heavily in our people, systems and processes to strengthen the business and we have established the infrastructure that will enable us to scale the business. We have recently appointed a new HR Officer, Zoe Bell, to help support our growing team and built closer links with the local universities to identify the top local talent. So far this year we have welcomed seven new team members and expect that number to reach 12 by the end of Q3.

Our business development team lead by Simon Curtis have worked tirelessly to achieve our ambitious growth targets, including new clients in the United States and Canada. Sales have again doubled in the last six months."

Martin added "The quality of our service and delivering ROI for our clients is our number one priority. I'm hugely proud of our training and development policy that has seen our senior account management team undertake Facebook Ad Manager certification, meaning we can continue to provide the highest quality of service to all our clients. This is currently being cascaded down to the rest of our account management team.

Our digital marketing team have also excelled this year and gained Google Partner status for search advertising, demonstrating our keyword strategy and budget planning skills. This is allowing us to provide integrated marketing campaigns across social and digital channels.

Martin Such, CEO

We are committed to becoming the number one Social Media Management and Digital Marketing agency in the UK. We are building a team that is delivering exceptional results for our international client base and I'm excited to see what we can achieve over the next six months."

For more information visit www.curtisgabriel.com or drop us a message at info@curtisgabriel.com

# **2019** in **Numbers**

At Curtis Gabriel we like to let the numbers do the talking.

















35,075

### Website Visits:

Number of client website visits directly from our social media posts.



34,722,000

### **Impressions:**

Number of times our social media posts have been seen.

**\** 0191 340 3600



**CURTISGABRIEL.COM** 









### A MOVE TO A BLUER PLANET

Recently, the print and mailing industry has witnessed a shift away from single-use plastics. This has largely been a result of Sir David Attenborough's 'Blue Planet' series, which increased environmental awareness of single-use plastic by publicising the devastating damage it can cause.

'Each year, an estimated 18 billion pounds of plastic waste enters the world's ocean from coastal regions' (National Geographic 2019).

The print and mailing industry is a contributor to this pollution in the form of polywrapped items and we, along with many other recognised brands, are making it our social responsibility to lead the plastic free mission.

'More than 40 major businesses have pledged to eradicate single-use plastics from packaging in an effort to tackle the global pollution crisis' (Independent 2018).

This pact consists of a series of targets that the industry as a whole will aim to meet by 2025. At MetroMail we want to ensure we can offer our

customers' alternative, environmentally friendly solutions to polywrap.

As a result, we have invested in two new Sitma 1050 machines, which have paperwrap capability. This investment will allow us to keep up with client demand and help us to become a more sustainable business.

### The benefits of paperwrap are:

- Recycled paper can be used.
- The outer can be personalised with marketing messages and tailored offers.
- It creates intrigue, as the receiver has to open it to see what's inside.
- There are eco-friendly postal discounts available.

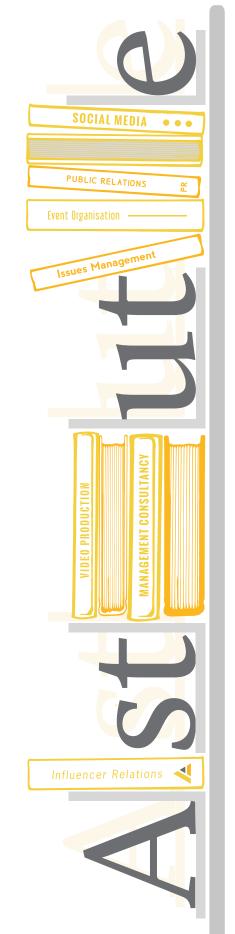
www.metromail.co.uk

### What other options do you have?

Paperwrap isn't the only eco-friendly solution, other options available include:

- Bioplastics These are plastics derived from renewable biomass sources, such as sugar, starch etc. This includes bio-degradable and compostable film, which can be used in a similar fashion to polywrap.
- Envelope enclosing The use of traditional envelopes to enclose your products.
- Naked mailer/One-piece mailer Move to single item mailings which are simply addressed and posted, with no packaging required.





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Contact Sarah Waddington - sarah@astute.work / 07702162704 www.astute.work

# ASK SILVER BULLET...

66

# HOW RELEVANT IS THE RELAUNCHED HOVIS TV ADVERT IN MODERN TIMES?

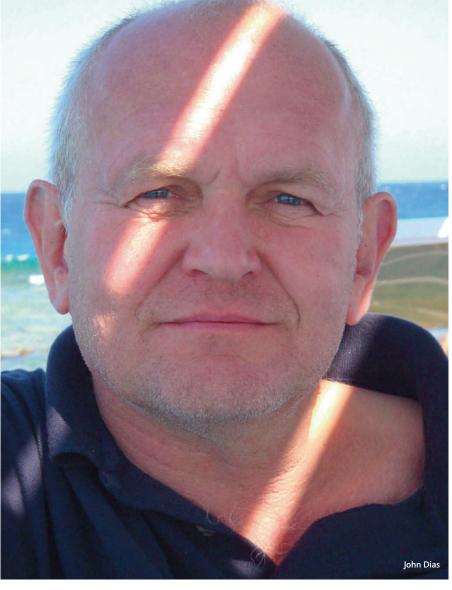
99

It's interesting that although Ridley Scott's iconic 'Bike Ride' TV advert for Hovis was only broadcast in 1973, it's already assigned into the 'historic' bin by some, so Hovis' decision to release it on a new TV audience some 46 years later is seen by many of the new generations as desperate nostalgia and by some in the creative industry as a lack of new thinking.

The 'Bike Ride' advert was produced in what has become known as the Golden Age of TV advertising and is set in post-war 40's or 50's Britain. Filmed on Gold Hill in the village of Shaftesbury in Dorset, but featuring the Ashington Colliery Band playing Dvorak's New World and a Yorkshire or certainly Northern voice-over, it features an old man recalling his days as a baker's boy and pushing a bike loaded with bread up a cobbled street. He then freewheels back down the hill to a voiceover: "like taking bread to top of the world — t'was a grand ride back though".

It has since been voted the most 'iconic' UK advert of all times, beating off Cadbury's 'Gorilla' of 2007, Levis' incredibly successful 1985 'Laundrette' advert which boosted sales of 501 jeans by an amazing 800% and Smash Mashed Potato's 'Martians' of 1974. 22% of the 1,000 consumers interviewed by research firm Katnar voted it the most seminal advert whilst 15% said it was the commercial that made them most emotional.

All very good in a pre-digital era where TV advertising ruled with only four channels (although soon to be five with Channel 5 launching in 1997),



no streaming, no catch-up, no Internet – can we imagine how we survived such times...

But, why re-launch it now when the influence of TV adverts is declining due to the plethora of additional media channels now available?

Well, firstly, the advert will be supported on social media with additional footage and interviews including Director, Sir Ridley Scott, but secondly, Hovis sales need a boost.

The UK bread market, according to Mintel, is worth some £3.5bn, with pre-packaged bread representing 70% of the volume sold. But, prices of raw materials are going up whilst alternatives to the traditional sandwich are also increasing with the result that sales of sliced bread are falling – Hovis reported losses of £30m in 2016. Meanwhile the growth of artisan bakeries are creating 'the perfect storm' for the large bakers like Hovis, Warburton and Kingsmill, caught between rising prices, increasing alternatives and falling demand.

Thirdly, it could be argued that the advert is as relevant today as it was in the 70's, indeed with the absence of hard sell pricing, a welcome change from many of today's output as it is purely about

The advert harks back to times of a friendlier society, not split by politics and economics, and to a time where emotion and feeling were maybe more important than price, speed or the other factors that marketers relentlessly hammer home for today's consumer goods.

By emphasising the brand rather than individual products, the marketing cuts across social divides, reflecting a collective identity in troubled times — the country may be tearing itself apart but at least we can rely on Hovis bread! The brand becomes a British institution with the product no longer mundane but a symbol in which we can all share.

As for nostalgia, well, what's wrong with nostalgia? The second most famous UK TV advert in the Katnar survey was Yellow Pages' 1983 'J R Hartley' advert which told the story of an elderly author and his search for a copy of his book. More recently, consider the current Budweiser campaign invoking the spirit of Queen Elizabeth 1 to make the England Lionesses roar in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup. Nostalgia works.

Whether it will work for Hovis, we'll have to see but it's certainly good to see such beautifully crafted adverts on the TV again, but then I'm biased...

Do you need some assistance with your marketing, PR or design? Do you need to review your strategy or do you want to know how we can help your business? Talk to us. Email your questions anonymously to us today hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk or Tweet us (not so anonymously) @SilverBulletPR.

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### MEDIAWORKS DIGITAL BREAKFAST ROADSHOW RECAP

The Mediaworks team recently travelled hundreds of miles up and down the UK for their Digital Breakfast Roadshow.

Undoubtedly a huge success with no seat to spare, they welcomed hundreds of businesses to the events and delivered some insightful talks that covered all things digital.

Everything kicked off in Mediaworks' home city of Newcastle, at the iconic Discovery Museum followed by Leeds, Edinburgh and then at the Google HQ in London!

With some other fascinating venues, speakers and guests, the events all focused on one thing: targeting your customers before your competitors do. But, what did their Customer Acquisition and Engagement: Creating a Path of Least Resistance digital breakfast have in store? Here, we take a look back...

### **EVENT SPEAKERS**

Attending all four events, Mediaworks' Technical Director, Daniel Hoggan, took to the stage with his Don't Focus On The Clicks, Focus On The Customer presentation. He discussed the importance of optimising for customers and how personalisation is key in 2019.

Speaking in Newcastle, Leeds and Edinburgh, Andrew Blenkinsop, who is the Creative Director here at Mediaworks, was also on the speaker list. His Converting Your Customer Experience covered everything from digital innovation to how a user's onsite experience is critical to their conversion — and how this can improve SEO.

Susie Gorman, who is the Agency Development Manager at Google, also attended all four dates to present: Focus On The User And All Else Will Follow. This talk detailed the importance of understanding online users and your customer base to ensure successful results as a business.

Joining us at Google's HQ in London on day four was Performance Marketing Director, Henrietta Foy. Her Using Data And Insights To Inform Your Paid Search Strategy talk highlighted why brands need to understand the power of data and build campaigns directly around their customer insight to ensure conversions.

www.mediaworks.co.uk

### THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WORK

Here we meet one of Highlights PR's clients and find out about their work and what motivates them.

This month, we hear from Ross Parker of Seven Keys Estate Agency.

"There's a lot of competition in the North East housing market at the moment and the philosophy of Seven Keys is to provide people with an affordable solution to the sale or letting of their property. We offer low cost fixed fees, so the sale price of a property doesn't determine the fee. My ultimate aim is to provide the best customer service, whilst creating a better moving experience at a revolutionary low price.

"The best thing about my job is being able to provide people with an affordable service and seeing a positive outcome at the end of the sale or letting.

"As well as having a successful sales arm of the business, we've recently opened a lettings department. I also have plans to expand the business nationwide, however at the moment I'm really focusing on my home region of the North East. My brother and sister have businesses called Seven Bridges Investment Management and Seven Bridges Life Insurance and our future plan is to rebrand the three businesses under the "Seven Group."

"When I'm not working, I play football, squash, golf and snooker. I also fund raise for the charity Meningitis Now as they provided excellent support when my daughter contracted the illness when she was just six months old."



Contact Ross Parker 0191 4971797 info@sevenkeys.co.uk www.sevenkeys.co.uk Highlights PR 07814 397951 keith@highlightspr.co.uk www.highlightspr.co.uk



# SECRET TO COMMERCIAL SUCCESS ELUDES NEW MEDIA OUTLETS



Great journalism costs money. Or at least it used to.

The new media kids on the block have been struggling to make ends meet and make commercial sense of the great journalism they're producing. Buzzfeed recently laid off 15 percent of its workforce across the globe, Vice cut more than 10 percent and media giants Verizon, who owns the Huffington Post among others, dropped 800 workers in its media division. Ouch.

These new media houses do stunning investigative work, and many would do well to see beyond the '15 amazing things about cats' style articles they once may have been known for. They know their audience and speak to them in myriad ways on easy-access platforms. It gets eyeballs, however, as they've been finding out, that's only half the job done.

Their financial models clearly aren't bombproof just yet. And it's a problem as old as news being made available online. Some regional news sites appear to delight in making reading an article like an obstacle course. Get through the survey, then somehow find your way round a full screen assault from the latest Avengers remake trailer before the slow dropdown of a local funeral directors falls onto your screen. Only then can you read the piece you wanted to read. It's tiring work.

Others were mocked from the outset for putting their news behind some financial paywalls. The Sun famously backtracked on that, but its higher brow stablemates at The Times held its nerve and now its paying dividends as the rest have started to follow suit. The FT is another who has always had some form of paid access online and the Telegraph

is putting more and more of its journalistic output behind subscription or paywalls. And its working.

The Guardian too is also reporting transformational commercial success since it introduced requests at the bottom of each online article three years ago for the reader to make donations to great journalism. Latest reports there suggest well in excess of a million donations, with half of those making regular contributions.

It's no surprise to see many of these titles are traditionally embedded in quality journalism. Tabloid fodder and the latest Love Island gossip is not their market. Niche interest and quality writing remains something, it seems, people are willing to pay for.

These traditional media outlets are also trying to wean themselves off the reliance of social media, in particular Facebook. Their outputs garner massive followings, however, Facebook is seen by many in the media as the enemy, and with no little justification.

Our own founder at W, Warren Johnson very recently suggested that the likes of Facebook and Twitter aren't social platforms at all, but are indeed publishers, need to be held to account as such and

face far more stringent regulation on what it (and therefore we) publish on there. The relative ease and lack of parameters they're afforded, he said, likened them to a 'smilier version of the NRA.' Tough words, but it resonates. Who's going to be brave enough to stand up to them? Has Facebook simply become too powerful? It's a dangerous precedent they've set.

As we struggle more and more to work our way through what the truth is, what's propaganda and what's outright lies, we revert more and more to those sources we trust most. And that's the media titles our generation grew up with. Consumed differently, for sure, but there's no doubting the impact media titles, some of whom have been around for hundreds of years, has.

However, there remains a generation that begrudges paying for news. They've been raised on free access and being able to gather information for free. And this is going to cause problems with the ageing fanbase of some of those historic titles.

The answer? Well, if I could find a way of fixing this issue, I'd finally be a couple of quid ahead of you lot. I promise it won't involve surveys about your last trip to Spain though.

Christian Cerisola is head of W North, part of W Communications www.wnorth.co.uk @WCommNorth





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# JOBS BOOST AT NEWCASTLE COMPANY INVESTING IN CONSULTANCY AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT CUSTOMER SERVICES

A Newcastle company that is a market leader in subscription-based technology to help colleges and other FE training organisations and universities improve quality is looking to boost headcount.

Mesma is planning to grow its improvement partner associate team and software developer capability over the coming six months. The move will help national FE colleges and independent training providers implement effective quality improvement systems aligned to external inspection requirements.

The education support specialist continues to see strong demand for its subscription-based software and consultancy services, which allow customers to manage quality improvement processes to help them enhance provision for learners and employers, as well as being better prepared for Ofsted inspections.

Its now looking to bring on an undisclosed number of improvement partners, who can help learning and skills teams to evaluate current performance levels, identify areas for improvement and plan change effectively.



# NORTH EAST TECH FIRM RELOCATES TO NEW OFFICE SPACE TO FACILITATE GROWTH



Expanding software company, Genisys Technology Solutions has moved its Newcastle office to the newly refurbished Enterprise House in Team Valley.

Trading for 25 years and with more than 300 clients, including NHS trusts and local authorities

across the UK, Genisys Technology Solutions has relocated to the second floor of Enterprise House, having spent 15 years at its previous base in Bede House

Developing intelligent software designed to manage paper and electronic documents and data more efficiently, the company has said the move will enable it to grow its service offering and take on new staff.

The 1980's office building, which is conveniently located on the popular Team Valley trading estate, has undergone a one-million-pound refurbishment by UK Land Estates, the largest commercial property investment and development company in the North East - transforming the site into modern office spaces and retail units.



### ALNWICK INVENTOR GETS PARLIAMENTARY RECOGNITION

A Northumberland-based electronic design consultancy with expertise in data flow, process and computation has been featured in the Parliamentary Review.

Alnwick based Dr Neale Smith's pioneering work within the field of computer technology has been highlighted in the prestigious Government paper. His company, Intesym Ltd is the only technology company from the region to be featured.

Dr Smith has designed a unique theory of computation which can be used to develop computer systems (and any other kind of system which handles data). With this, systems can be easier to design than a PC, phone, or tablet, yet have arbitrarily greater computational power. The effect is that it abolishes the need for the internet, mobile phones, servers, PCs and concepts such as downloading and the streaming of media. In essence his system increases the sophistication of technology through the simplicity of designs.

# PERFECT IMAGE ANNOUNCES SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT BUYOUT

Perfect Image, a Newcastle-based IT services company, has successfully undergone a Management Buy Out (MBO), completed by Chief Executive Officer (formerly Chief Operating Officer), Rob Hankin, and Sales and Marketing Director, Andrew Smith. The MBO was backed by Chiltern Capital, a private equity firm that supports exciting businesses with ambitious teams to grow and develop

Joining the board are Thomas Holroyd and Mark Coronato from Chiltern Capital, and new chairman, Tom Kelly, who brings with him 30+ years of IT and MBO expertise. Andrew Robson, founder of Perfect Image, will remain on the board as a Non-Executive Director.



Rob Hankin said: "I am very pleased to be working with Thomas, Mark and the team from Chiltern; they rolled up their sleeves and supported us all the way. We appreciate their direct and straightforward approach and it has been a pleasure dealing with them. We now look forward to working alongside them to deliver our vision for Perfect Image."



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### BRINGING CLARITY TO CLOUD COMPUTING

The latest report from industry experts Gartner shows that cloud services will continue to drive global IT spend, as increasing numbers of organisations move towards having IT delivered as a service.

Key market drivers include providers such as Microsoft and Google steering businesses to consume more cloud, backed by the growth of subscription services such as O365, and end of life support announcements on popular hardware.

We like to think of cloud as the fourth utility, delivering IT via the internet, giving the client full control and allowing the flexibility to up and downscale according to business needs. Because it removes the need to own hardware and software and site it on your premises, cloud can also improve security, efficiency and flexibility, as well as cutting

Here at ITPS we have been implementing successful cloud infrastructures for many years. Despite it being a well-established approach, there is still some uncertainty, particularly around security and the myth that you must decide between public and private cloud. This could not be further from the truth.

Every organisation is different and cloud is not for everyone of course, but if you think it might be the right solution for you, how do you know what is the best route for your business? A specialist cloud partner will guide you through the options, but here is a quick overview.

**Private cloud:** this can be on or off-premise, dedicated to your organisation, running over your own IT infrastructure.

**Public cloud:** this involves off-premise IT capabilities or applications, provided by other parties and shared between multiple organisations, using high tech tools to keep your data separate and secure.

**Hybrid cloud:** an environment that uses a combination of private, public, on and off-premise cloud services. Applications and data switch seamlessly, according to where the computing power is required. Public cloud services can also be deployed in a private cloud model.

For example, client A might hold its business critical applications on its own, on-premise servers and locate other less critical functions at our three data centres; while client B might rent servers in our data centres and hold all applications and data there. In both examples the systems, applications and data can be securely backed up to our data centres. Both solutions would appear to be cloud delivered, which in reality neither is hosted in cloud, merely accessed by cloud. Client C may operate everything in the cloud or a combination, for instance some in a private data centre or on premise, with some in the public cloud.

There are two main factors in cloud success. The first is that all models need a super-fast, high capacity, high connectivity backbone in place so there is a big enough pipeline to deliver a quality cloud service. Incorrectly provisioned communications will always deliver a poor result.

The second is to choose the right IT partner carefully. As cloud, security, data centre and communications experts with our own £4m ISO27001-certified data centre, we guide our clients towards the right solution for their needs, tailoring cloud models to their specific requirements, including setting their own service level agreements around connectivity, access, and other elements. We also furnish them with fully equipped workspace recovery premises should disaster strike their business.

### So what benefits can you expect from cloud?

You only pay for what you use - instead of the cost of maintaining an infrastructure designed to cope with peaks and troughs in demand, cloud pricing works on pre-agreed credit limits that keep costs under control.

**Improved resilience and security -** your data is in the cloud so no need to worry about lost or damaged devices.

**Everything as a service -** infrastructure, platform, software, disaster recovery and unified communications can all be provided on a service basis.

Part or all of your infrastructure can live outside your organisation - it's your choice. A virtual private data centre solution means your infrastructure is independent of physical server requirements, delivering more flexibility and simpler management.

**Increased flexibility** - you have instant extra bandwidth as and when you need it, for instance to spin up new virtual servers to test applications in a live environment without affecting service.

That's a very simple outline of cloud services and how they can benefit your organisation.

Hundreds of clients, from SMEs to financial institutions and emergency services, trust our experts to help them create and manage an increasingly complex technology infrastructure. If you're still uncertain about what cloud can bring to your business, give us a call and we will talk you through the options, and help you create a model that is right for your needs.

For more information call 0191 442 8300, email contact@itps.co.uk or visit www.itps.co.uk

### DAYDREAM BELIEVER

By Justin Short, Chief Technology Officer, Synergi.



As we approach Summer, my mind strays – as I'm sure many do - to holiday planning. As I daydream about road trips on my motorbike and evenings spent sipping drinks in the sunshine, it strikes me that whether you're on a long-haul journey or a weekend in the country, one factor, makes or breaks your trip - packing. If you haven't got everything to hand it's frustrating, right? But at the same time, you want everything to be easy to travel with, you want to travel light. Moving to a modern intranet is much the same. You want all your components available, with as little maintenance or third-party add-ons as possible. So, let's have a look at some suitcase essentials...

### Grooming/Cosmetics (Interface and appearance)

Whether it's packing a razor or make-up bag to look your best or designing a beautiful intranet with a high-quality interface, first impressions are important. Leading intranet provider, Valo, offer a choice of pre-made user interface templates and allow you to fit your intranet to your brand without coding. Aesthetically and effortlessly pleasing!

### Phrase Book (Effective Communication)

Whether you speak the lingo or get by with some questionable sign language, being able to communicate is vital. Valo intranet is available in 23 languages. With features such as an employee blog, targeted news publishing and surveys available for use, Valo encourages efficient communication within both organisations and smaller teams.

#### Mobile (Mobile capabilities)

Let's face it, our phones go everywhere with us. We like feeling connected. Your intranet should enable this. Valo is mobile compatible and also available as a mobile app which allows you to browse your intranet even when you're not connected to a network.

### Fast Boarding Pass (Deployment)

Ok so maybe not an essential, but certainly a nice-to-have, quick delivery is important in our fast-paced business world. Unfortunately, we often see speed compromise quality. Not with Valo. Valo offers a beautiful, professional intranet that can be deployed in as little as one to four weeks.

### Only what you need (Individualisation)

Travel light. You don't want a tennis racket if you're going scuba diving! Valo allow you to build on to a foundational intranet. They offer modular pricing, meaning you only pay for the add-on components you'll use. Pair this with your customised theme and you have an intranet that truly reflects your brand.

### Peace of mind (Reliability)

Investing in a holiday, or an intranet, requires trust in the provider. 1.5 million users and a host of awards (Including ClearBox's Intranet choice for value 2018 & 2019 and European SharePoint & Office 365 Community Best Intranet/Extranet award winner 2016 and 2017) illustrate Valo's worth. To top it all off, Synergi are 1 of 3 Premium Valo Partners in the UK and the only Premium partner in the North East.

Contact enquiries@synergi.it or call us on 0191 477 0365 for further details





### AERO NETWORKS: ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER CHAPTER

Cloud and IT Specialists company Aero Networks, have been in the works since May 2006.

Each year they continue to create a new and revolutionising face to cloud technology, by providing professional and sophisticated services for their clientele. The family owned business have established themselves as experienced cloud technology consultants and have many more promising plans for the future.

Since Aero Networks' last cover article in May 2018's issue, the company has further advanced and developed their Cloud Platform offering. Below entails a small and personal interview with Directors, Paul Curry and Ben Curry. Together, they discuss the accomplishments and prosperous future of Aero Networks.

## What makes Aero Networks the go-to company for specialised Cloud and IT services in the North East?

Ben comments "We have adapted quickly to the recent and ongoing changes in Cloud Technology. We have a great understanding of the latest technologies, and we are always looking ahead to embrace new products as they become available."

Aero Networks have made a successful name for themselves, which continues to grow with each chapter in their business journey. They provide clientele with specialist services, and an established, friendly rapport, allowing them to highly advance from other IT and Cloud companies in the North East. They have taken an advantage to the current uprising of cloud technologies, allowing the company to strive forward and utilise their services each year. Aero Networks provide professional

Cloud and IT services such as SharePoint, office 365, Hosted Exchange Email, Cloud File Storage and Cloud Data Backup. These services are extremely coherent and synced with modern day technologies, and are especially valuable to those in the SME sector.

### From your perspective, how do you see the business advancing in 2019?

Paul comments "We started 2019 with a view to simplify our product offering, allowing us to offer a more specialist approach when designing solutions. We use selected partners for our other services, allowing us to focus on our core areas of expertise. IT Consultancy, Office 365 and SharePoint. We also achieved Microsoft Silver Partner status in 2017, further enhancing our commitment to clients and the cloud."

Aero Networks has continued to adapt their company through learning about the importance of cloud technologies, and what they have to offer. Since the future of modern day IT technology is predominantly within cloud, the company has utilised the aspects of Office 365 and SharePoint, and currently offer these products as part of their services. These Microsoft products hold such an extraordinary presence in the Cloud and IT industries, allowing Aero Networks to further advance. Director Ben Curry has been able to intensively learn the ins and outs of Office 365, to extend his IT knowledge, and further extend the ever-promising future of the company. The company's knowledge and service of Office 365

and SharePoint, is another two out of the endless reasons for why companies start their journey together with Aero Networks.

### How has being a family owned company shaped the promising future for Aero Networks?

Paul comments "Family first is the answer to that. We all have a common goal. Look after the team, the clients and grow the business."

With guidance from father, Paul, and son, Ben, Aero Networks have established a bright and encouraging future on their horizons. Ben became a part of Aero Networks in 2014, and has solidly thrived alongside his father, and the rest of the team, to mould and create the company that it is today. Being connected to such a family led company, automatically assures clients with a sense of authenticity, solidarity and trust, as family always comes first. Managing Director, Paul, is straightforward and concise when it comes to establishing Aero Networks' relationships with its clientele. The rapport between companies and clients is a necessity for all, and Aero Networks make it their priority.

With a friendly smile at Aero Networks, we always welcome any company to get in touch if you have any interest in creating a future with us, or simply want to know more about our IT and Cloud services. If you are interested in any of the services or products we provide, including Office 365 and SharePoint, we can offer you a free demonstration or trial, to see if it suits you.

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# CELEBRATIONS AT THE PRIVATE HILL

A celebratory launch was held at the 5 star glamping facility, The Private Hill, involving local businesses, local authorities and regional agencies, where the team behind the successful future of the venture were both thanked and congratulated.

Guests included: Ian Bell of Folk2Folk, Glenn Garrett of Beeline BroadBand, PJ Edgar of Visit York, John Stockdale of Stockdale Construction, Lauren McKenzie of Welcome To Yorkshire, staff of The Private Hill and many other people who have helped with making it an early success. Northern Insight's very own Mike Grahamslaw was also in attendance.

Owner, Roddy Hamilton, said: "Its been a fast paced journey this last few weeks and I would like to thank the entire team for their hard work and input."

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

















# BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

By Kieran McLaughlin, Headmaster at Durham School.

By the time you read this the school year will be coming to an end. Pupils and teachers will be looking forward to the long summer holiday.

Youngsters in Year 11 and 13 will be breathing a sigh of relief at having finished their exams and looking forward to the next stage of their education and indeed their lives.

They will have spent hours both taking and revising for exams over the past three months. A typical GCSE student can take over twenty different types of assessment, from oral exams in languages to maths tests. A Level students too can take well over ten different exams. Conscientious students will have spent hundreds of hours learning facts, drawing mind maps and practising past paper questions. A huge amount of effort has been put in by pupils, teachers and parents to make sure nothing can go wrong on the day and the boys and girls get the grades they deserve. The shocking and depressing fact is that in many cases their efforts won't be worth it because in around 1 in 4 cases, the grade will they get in their exams will be wrong.

The reasons for this are not what you might expect. Yes, there are a shortage of high-quality examiners in some subjects, but exam boards are getting better all the time at quality control and weeding out poor markers. It's not because of exam board errors or horror stories such as scripts being lost and so on. The reason why up to 50% of grades in subjects are wrong is much more fundamental than that and, under our current system of exam grades, is unavoidable.

It's also quite technical so bear with me. Grade reliability means, in an exam context, that a particular script submitted by a candidate should get the same grade no matter which examiner marks it i.e. if it was marked twice by two separate examiners, their marks should agree.



In a subject like Maths, this happens most of the time; answers are either right or wrong and so there is little room for dispute. In a subject like History though, the quality of a candidate's answer is much more subjective. Of course, the examination board produces guidelines, but it still requires the examiner to distinguish between, say, good analysis of a source and excellent analysis of a source. This isn't easy. So, for example, one candidate may score 55% on a paper marked by one examiner whilst another would score it 58%. Not much variation, but if the grade boundary for a B grade is 57% then we have a problem. This problem is even worse at GCSE, where the marks which separate a grade 4 from a grade 5 may be only a few percent. This isn't poor marking or bad examining; the fuzziness of the grade is inherent to the nature of long discursive subjects like History or English.

Does this really matter? Well, if you look at the stats, it could easily be that a pupil who needs AAA for History at Durham University could attain AAB and be rejected even though there is a 50:50 chance that if another examiner had marked his paper he would get the three As he needs. More seriously, thousands of youngsters each year score a 3 on English Language and need to resit at their and the country's expense to get that grade 4. Another examiner, they would get that 4 first time round.

So, what's the solution? The short answer is there isn't one. Or at least, there isn't until we scrap the "cliff-edge" nature of grades and grade boundaries which suited education in gentler times. Now, with university grades hanging on such fine margins, we need to go back to the drawing board to find a fresh approach to pupil assessment.

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 731 9270, email admissions@durhamschool.co.uk



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### FRIENDS REUNITED

By David Tickner, Headmaster at Newcastle School for Boys

Laughter and fond recollection filled the room - engrossed conversations across generations. The ages of those present spanned six or seven decades. But what connected them, crossed the age divide easily.

School days are the best of our lives, they say. The evening proved that they are certainly the most vividly recalled.

The occasion was a gathering of the School's old boys. All of those in the room were connected by their association with Newcastle School for Boys although when it comes to alumni, this requires a little explanation.

Given the School's relatively recent formation in 2005 and the opening of its sixth form in 2009, the School's oldest alumni left that sixth form in 2011. They are still only now in their mid-twenties.

But that is to overlook history and its influence on Newcastle School for Boys. The School was formed out of the merger of its two predecessor schools: Ascham House and Newlands — both long established boys' prep schools each with their own proud traditions and no small amount of local rivalry.

Given the economic downturn in 2008, the vision of the two schools' governing bodies and head teachers to combine the two schools was a prescient one.

Both were represented in the room: Christopher Rippon, the chair of governors from Newlands at the time of the merger; and Phil Garner, the former head of Ascham House and the founding head of Newcastle School for Boys.



As anybody involved in, or even close to, a school merger - there have been two others involving local independent schools since 2005 - will testify, the joining of two educational entities, two business operations and two identities is not always straightforward.

One of the refreshing things about Newcastle School for Boys is its freedom from the tyranny of the past - a modern outlook unfettered by the shackling inertia of 'it's always been done that way'. It is equally validating to be part of a tradition, of something larger, more enduring than just our own history contained in the twenty-first century.

We are proud to embrace our school's origins in Ascham House and Newlands schools. These origins are preserved in the names of our houses that facilitate so much of the School's delivery of its aims, particularly in developing boys and young men of excellent character.

The School's other two houses are named Aldridge and Mavor. Mark Aldridge, during his 52-year association with Ascham House, was its head from 1951 to 1977. He died in 2012 generously bequeathing the site at North Avenue to Newcastle School for Boys.

Michael Mavor, who died in 2010, was a Newlands governor whose legacy had previously been acknowledged in a building at The Grove named after him. Mavor has been described as 'a dynamic and energising headmaster who, throughout the course of a distinguished career, led three of Britain's foremost schools – Gordonstoun, Rugby and Loretto.'

As Newcastle School for Boys continues to grow, we are keen to continue to build our old boys' association as a valuable part of and extension to the School's community. In doing so, we are proud to embrace the traditions of our predecessor schools: Ascham House and Newlands.

If you are a former pupil or member of staff of Newcastle School for Boys, Ascham House or Newlands Prep and would like to maintain your association and to be a part of our exciting future, do get in touch via oldboys@newcastleschool.co.uk

### "TEACH THESE BOYS AND GIRLS NOTHING BUT FACTS!"

By Simone Niblock, Headteacher, Durham High School for Girls

Mr Gradgrind's infamous paean to facts (above) in Dickens' *Hard Times* is often used to highlight a form of soulless Victorian indoctrination that is, quite rightly, meant to horrify readers.



Don't get me wrong, I love facts and, much to the chagrin of my husband, I am intensively competitive when it comes to quizzes, to the extent that he now refuses to accompany me to any such events. A situation where I was vociferously incredulous that a marker did not know that Prince William and the Duke of Cambridge were one and the same is often held in evidence against me...

However, as a Headteacher and someone who has been a passionate teacher of English over many years, I am concerned how our facts-bound, content - laden exam specifications may be stifling the creative spirit amongst our students. Professor Bill Lucas, Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester, gave a lecture at Durham University in May, in which he set out some of the concerns that he has about modern education. He works for PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment - and he mentioned how Singapore - one of PISA's highest-ranking countries - is now emphasising the importance of creative and critical thinking in their curriculum throughout all age ranges; they have recognised that they want critically-aware, creative and expressive people across all disciplines.

It is of note that recently, the Russell Group Universities ie the top Higher Education institutions in the UK, have abandoned the concept of 'facilitating' subjects at A Level for its courses, as critics claim it has resulted in a narrowing of the school curriculum, squeezing out Arts and creative subjects in favour of the more traditionally academic subjects. It seems that there has been a dawning realisation that a lack of Expressive and Performing Arts being studied in the UK could be deleterious not just to the future workplace, but to the essence of our culture and humanity per se. After all, as the Swedish songsmiths Ulvaeus and Andersson once penned: "Without a song or a dance, what are we?"

www.dhsfg.org.uk



### andow Hill Nursery

### **OPEN MORNINGS**

Saturday 28th September 10am - 12.30pm Saturday 16th November 10am - 12.30pm

### SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Thursday 10th October 6pm

Farewell Hall, Durham, DH1 3TB
Tel: 0191 384 3226 Email: enquiries @dhsfg.org.uk



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/DURHAMHIGHSCH

# YOUR EYE ON THE REGION...

### MOHAMMED TARIO

Fenham Garage Services

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

I grew up in the North East. I have lived in Newcastle all my life. Used to go to St. James's Park to watch the matches as I'm a huge Newcastle United fan.

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

It takes a lot to be a businessperson in the North East, especially the current way the climate is. It's a very competitive place and you have to have a good knowledge of your industry as well as determination and patience.

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

Meeting new people and talking to them to find out more about them. Everyone in the North East is so friendly and welcoming. If you're lost, you can ask people for directions and they would always help, in fact they would go out their way to help, in some cases even give you a lift to your destination. When I visited London recently, it was the complete opposite. I got lost on the underground and when asking for directions, I was completely ignored by people. Total opposite of the North East.

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

Best places for a meeting are usually a nice room with a cup of decent coffee. In terms of my hotspot, I don't really have a particular favourite but I enjoy meeting up at places such as the Hilton Hotel and Crowne Plaza.



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

I like to eat at the local restaurants. My favourite one is Luigi Khans in Newcastle. Their food is absolutely outstanding.

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

Best place to unwind would be my back garden. I love to just chill and sunbathe in my garden. Also, I have a large budgie collection and I like to go home and see them. They certainly keep me entertained.

### Are the people really friendlier?

Yes, indeed they are. Newcastle was voted the friendliest city in England last year, that's no coincidence. I have lived in Newcastle my whole life and I have never had any problems or issues with anything.

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

Best view in the North East would be standing at the quayside overlooking the River Tyne. It's good to see how much Newcastle has changed and developed since I was a child. The city is quite cosmopolitan now and has grown in culture and diversity, which is good to see.

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

I enjoy living and working in the North East. You can do anything you please in the region within the limits and there is something for everyone. I have travelled many countries and cities and have been away for a while with work trips, but I always enjoy returning to Newcastle. It's always a relief to be back home. Nothing better than home. I miss Newcastle when I'm away as I personally feel welcomed and safe in Newcastle, unlike other cities in the LIK

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

Before I opened my own bodyshop and workshop (Fenham Garage Services), I was working in a food outlet. It was really hard work and long hours. I never really enjoyed it. When I came into the motor trade, I was so happy as I was always enthusiastic and passionate about cars. Do the job you love, don't do it for the money but do it for the love. If you love a job so much it doesn't feel like work it feels like you're making the most of your life













# AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY MON 26TH AUGUST 2019

CARS ORGANISED BY MALCOLM VANCE

11:00am 'till 4:00pm







Market Place: Millennium Place: Palace Green: Elvet & Framwellgate Bridge

● DURHAMCITYCLASSICCARGALA

plus Full Moon Street Food Market

# "SOMETHING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY"

## Mon 26th August

Durham Market Hall will be open 10.45 - 4pm



#### FREE Bugs 'n' Stuff

workshop Durham Market Ha



### FREE

Face Painting & Story Telling

Durham Market Hall







FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.DURHAMMARKETS.CO.UK

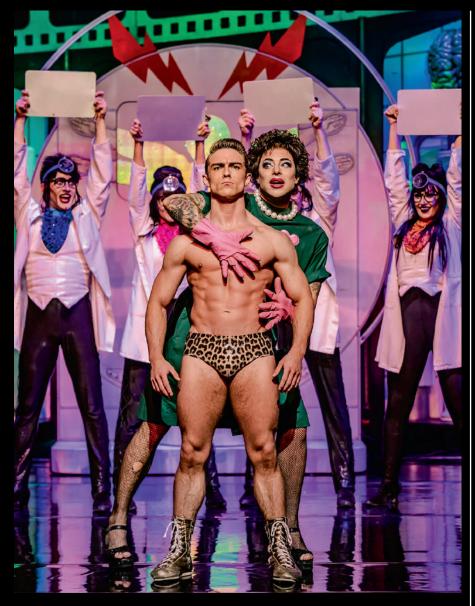
TEL- 0191 384 6153



Durham Markets durhammarkets



durhammarkets



## THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW SET TO TIMEWARP INTO NEWCASTLE

One of the world's favourite rock 'n' roll musicals The Rocky Horror Show is bringing fun and frivolity to Newcastle Theatre Royal this summer with Strictly Come Dancing's Joanne Clifton and Duncan James from pop phenomenon Blue starring in the much-loved and outrageous production (Mon 5 - Sat 10 Aug 2019).

Former Strictly champion Joanne thrilled Newcastle Theatre Royal audiences in 2017 as she triumphed as Kansas girl Millie Dillmount in Thoroughly Modern Millie. Joanne will play the role of Janet and has been winning rave reviews for her portrayal of the squeaky clean college kid who, along with her fiancé Brad, meets the enigmatic Dr Frank'n'Furter by chance when their car breaks down outside his house and go on an adventure that they will never forget.

Donning the infamous corset and heels to play the instantly recognisable character, Duncan said: "I'm just loving every minute. Frank is such an iconic role - it's an honour to play him."

Directed by Christopher Luscombe, the smash hit show features all of the famous musical numbers which have made The Rocky Horror Show such a huge hit for over four decades including Sweet Transvestite, Dammit Janet and the timeless floor-filler The Time-Warp.

The Rocky Horror Show is a guaranteed party, which famously combines science fiction, horror, comedy and music while encouraging audiences to get dressed in the most outrageous fancy dress.

#### RAY'S PLANNING AHEAD **FOR FEBRUARY**

In just over six months, the Newcastle Utilita Arena will be packed out for two very special and spectacular shows. Sunday for Sammy, locally dubbed The Geordie Command Performance, celebrates its 20th anniversary and already plans are afoot to make sure it is the biggest and best ever.

In true tradition, the audience won't know who is appearing until the star comes out onto the stage to rapturous applause. Previous shows have included Tim Healy, Denise Welch, Mark Knopfler, Kevin Whately, Charlie Hardwick, Jimmy Nail, Jill Halfpenny, Jason Cook, Timothy Spall, AC/DC's Brian Johnson and many more who have given up their time to take part in the show.

Show Producer Ray Laidlaw is, as ever, remaining tight lipped about who will be appearing in the 2020 20th anniversary show which will take place on Sunday 23rd February.

Ray said: "We never reveal the cast list beforehand, so every show is packed with surprises. I've already made some tentative phone calls and I've had some very positive and exciting conversations. I'm inviting a lot of the people that have appeared over the last 20 years but that's all I'm saying for now. What I will say however, is that every year the tickets sell faster so I'd urge fans not to leave it till the last minute to guarantee their part in the shows."





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#### AN EVENING OF QUEEN

Following the success of An Evening of Abba with formers stars of Mamma Mia last year and on the back of the smash-hit Queen biopic Bohemian Rhapsody, this year Emirates Riverside brings An Evening of Queen.

On Sunday 15th September 2019, a dazzling collection of performers from London's West End, including former stars from the smash hit musical We Will Rock You, will come together to present an incredible tribute to one of the world's great rock bands in a one-night spectacular outdoor concert at the home of Durham Cricket

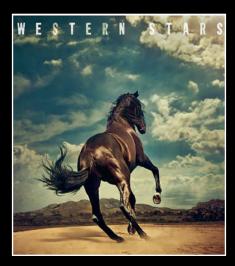
The show will feature dozens of hits from an astonishing back catalogue and is a concert evening no Queen fan should miss.

Tickets for the unmissable event are on sale now, priced at just £29.50 for seats, £26.50 for adult standing and £15 for junior standing (under-16).

# RECORD OF THE MONTH – BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN "WESTERN STARS"

Bruce Springsteen's first new studio album in five years takes his music to a new place, drawing inspiration in part from the Southern California pop records of the late '60s and early '70s. The 13 tracks on 'Western Stars' encompass a sweeping range of American themes, of highways and desert spaces, of isolation and community and the permanence of home and hope.

Ron Aniello produced the album with Springsteen and plays bass, keyboard, and other instruments. Patti Scialfa provides vocals and contributes vocal arrangements on four tracks. The musical arrangements include strings, horns, pedal steel and contributions from more than 20 other players including Jon Brion (who plays celeste, Moog and farfisa), as well as guest appearances by David Sancious, Charlie Giordano and Soozie Tyrell. All in all, another hugely strong offering from The Boss.



# WHAT'S ON THIS JULY?

Kinky Boots July 1 – 6

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022 www.atgtickets.com

> Madeleine Peyroux July 8

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661 www.sagegateshead.com

**Rod Stewart** 

July 9

Utilita Arena T: (0844) 493 6666 www.utilitaarena.co.uk

KISS

July 14

Utilita Arena T: (0844) 493 6666 www.utilitaarena.co.uk

The Simon & Garfunkel Story

July 17

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022 www.atgtickets.com

> Caitlin Moran LIVE July 17

Northern Stage T: (0191) 230 5151 www.northernstage.co.uk

ABBA Mania

July 1<u>9</u>

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022 www.atgtickets.com

The Carpenters

July 20

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022 www.atgtickets.com

Rock of Ages

July 23 – 27

Sunderland Empire T: (0844) 871 3022 www.atgtickets.com

The Bodyguard

July 23 – August 3

Theatre Royal Newcastle T: (0844) 8112 121 www.theatreroyal.co.uk

**Billy Bragg** 

July 27

Sage Gateshead T: (0191) 443 4661 www.sagegateshead.com



It's THE Geordie command performance!





## MAGICAL MOORISH SPAIN

By Caroline Preston

Andalucía, the hot southernmost region of Spain. Beyond the resorts this vast landscape supplies wow in abundance. Breathtaking mountain views and stunning architecture I set out to discover 'real' Spain.

Supplying 44% of the world's olive oil and boasting 40,000 hectares of Vineyards it's not only agriculturally rich but historically rich. In 711 AD North African invaders known as the 'Moors' invaded Southern Spain and Portugal and ruled until 1492. During this time great advancement was achieved, literature and learning thrived, and great architecture flourished.

I'm starting in the town of Coin 'Co-Inn' located at the foot of the Sierra de Mijas mountains, Coin has an interesting old town and great local facilities. It's here I'm staying with family, but many accommodation options exist for visitors. Finca la Toronja www. finca-la-toronja.com is a fine example in this former country ranch, doubles from €90. Bigger groups could consider a holiday rental, luxurious Finca Maroc offers 9 bedrooms, designer pool, your very own rural pad in Andalucía. www.mijas-villas.com/finca-maroc-villa-mijas-costa-del-sol

Next stop rural Monda, and vineyard Remsamen. Dutch expats René and Marjolijn offer a fascinating tour of their adventure setting up a vineyard in Spain in search of less stress. Their sparkling white rural home now sits proudly and despite many setbacks they now produce some delicious wine. A tasting is included and costs €13 per person, book at www.remsamen.com

Onward to Mijas Pueblo (Village of Mijas) a tourist hotspot and one of the most picturesque Moorish villages. Pretty wrought iron balconies and colourful plant pots adorn whitewashed walls and the winding streets offer an array of cafes and restaurants for a leisurely lunch or tranquil evening. A must see is Paseo de la Muralla, at 430 meters above sea level the stunning views are not to be missed.

Onto the City of Granada and the grand Alhambra. Our accommodation, Suites Campo del Principe in the Realejo district. Handily close to the Alhambra yet minutes to the city our two-storey apartment with spiral staircase is a bargain at €78 per night www.suitescampodelprincipe.com

In the Centro district The Alcaicería is Granada's Bazaar and original Moorish Silk Market. Featuring Arabian inspired walkways and shops this is now the only original part in what would have previously been many streets. At every turn here, you'll find stunning buildings and streets that open onto plazas adorned with eateries

Eating is big news here; during daytime, backstreets come alive with alfresco diners. The menu del dia is worth noting, €8-12 gets you great set menus and this gigantic wine region offers refreshment at bargain prices.

Evenings are a quieter affair here, the trendy Realejo district offers some eclectic choices. Stumbling upon street Campo del Príncipe, several eateries appear. Taberna La Ninfa is an easy choice boasting amazing Moorish decor, open kitchen and wood oven. We ordered Calamari, King Prawns and delicious pizza washed down with excellent white wine, for €40 we dined like Kings under the stars, my kind of heaven.

Budget eating in Granada is very doable, you can actually eat for free... Tapas are a huge part of Spanish life and here, one is offered 'gratis' for each drink purchased, a fun way to sample Spanish cuisine.

Onto the Alhambra, this is bucket list architecture. Featuring three distinct buildings the first view for many and mega structure is Alcazaba the Fort. Climbing the multitude of steps to the very top offers the best view of snowy Sierra Nevada mountains and city beneath.

The Generalife Gardens, so grand and beautiful thanks to much needed water from the 'Rio Daro'. Early engineering enabled an 8km diversion of this river to supply the many fountains and streams even today. The Nasrid Palace, such exotic rooms were occupied by Nasrid Kings. The intricate Arabic design and decor adorns and it's still the most impressive Islamic building in Europe. Access is by strict time slots on booking.

Tickets for the Alhambra can sell out months in advance and a full day is recommended. Temperatures can exceed 40 C in summer, early June saw 32 C. The gorgeous Parador de Granada in Castle grounds provides a tranquil quality refreshment stop.

One final 'to do' in Granada, 'Flamenco'. 'El Tabanco' on Cuesta de San Gregorio, little more than a converted house offering authentic performances to tiny audiences. Entry €9, beers €1.50...booking essential. The Albaicin is one of the oldest centres of Muslim Culture, the narrow streets of this UNESCO World Heritage site show fine examples of ancient Moorish architecture.

Heading away from Granada to one final destination, Ronda. Situated on top of spectacular El Tajo Gorge this beautiful white town offers the most amazing feature, Puente Nuevo, the bridge joining either side of Gorge. Popular with tourists my top tip is to head to Casa Don Bosco, the €2 entry fee allows access to this 20th Century Mansion, rear gardens and crowd free viewing platform for the ultimate photo. It's here I leave Andalucía, the warmth of its people and the wow moments of its towns, cities and landscapes. Farewell for now but with so much yet to explore, I'm already planning a return.

Caroline travelled flight only with TUI from Newcastle International to Malaga for 7 nights. 5 nights were spent with family in Coin and 2 nights in Granada at Suites Campo del Principe www.hotels.com or www.suitescampodelprincipe.com. Doubles from €78, prices based on travel in June 2019.

Many flight options exist flying from Newcastle International to Malaga (AGP), fly direct with www.easyjet.com www.ryanair.com www.jet2.com www.tui.co.uk/flights and indirect with www.airfrance.com www.britishairways.com

## **OUT & ABOUT - CHANGING PLACES & TOILETS**



I have been writing this column in various magazines since 2003, with over 170 destinations to date. But this month I am taking a step back and looking at Places to Go in a different way: for those who need to go to the toilet and for whom there is little or no provision.

This is for severely disabled people, adults as well as children, whose needs cannot be met by conventional accessible toilets, such as are generally found on trains today. For profoundly disabled people, transferring from a wheelchair to a toilet seat using grab rails is not enough.

These people need additional help, and usually find that they have to have their nappies changed on the floor of a public lavatory, which is not only undignified but also positively unhygienic. What is required is a proper hoist to move someone out of a wheelchair on to a bed, on to a toilet, and to a washbasin, with open space to accommodate someone who is assisting too. This type of toilet is known as a "Changing Places" toilet, and at the time of writing there were only 1,308 in the whole United Kingdom.

The Changing Places campaign was officially launched in July 2006. In celebration, the Consortium of charities which developed the concept decided to make July 19th an annual awareness day for the campaign. This year it falls on Friday. Changing Places Awareness Day is all about celebrating all that the campaign has achieved to date thanks to the dedicated support of campaigners from charities such as Muscular Dystrophy and MENCAP. It also involves visitor attractions, leisure centres, motorway service stations, community centres, theme parks and



museums. It is also an opportunity to help raise more vital awareness of the life changing difference Changing Places toilets make to people's lives - not just in the UK but around the world!

The only railway station with a Changing Places toilet that I am aware of is at York on the East Coast Main Line and managed by LNER. Owing to the required size of the toilet, which is 12 square metres, it is no possible to accommodate one on the

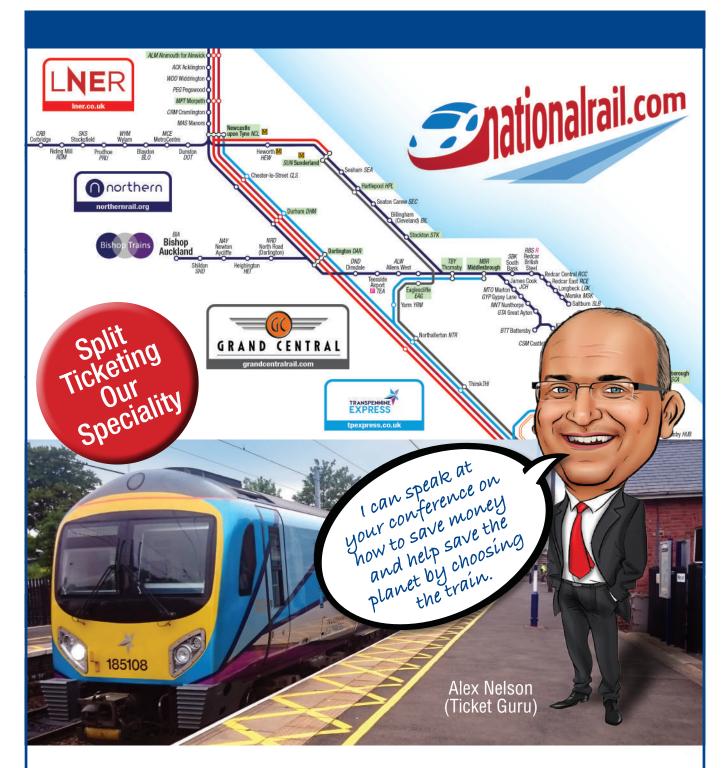
train itself, but many passengers use it at the start or finish of their journeys, some even break a long journey to use it, and the LNER's credit the facility is open for 24 hours so that even people who are not travelling by train can make use of it, even through the night. York as a city is well provisioned, with seven in the area, including McArthurGlen Designer Outlet. Durham has two at Freemen's Quay Leisure Centre and the University on South Road. Just out of interest – if you have the luxury of nobody being severely disabled in your family - think about when you last went out by car or train and see if there would have been a facility on your trip.

To check where Changing Places toilets are, use uktoiletmap.org.

I had my eyes opened to this subject at a seminar arranged by the Changing Places charity with a manufacturer named iHus, based at Bircotes near Doncaster. The other major provider is aveso from Andoversford near Cheltenham.

For many families with a single disabled child, the whole decision about where the family can go for a day out is determined by where the Changing Places toilets are. Therefore, many theme parks and attractions have installed them to encourage visitors. Even many motorway service stations are building them, and some day more railway stations too.

www.aveso.co.uk www.ihuschangingplaces.com www.changing-places.org



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**National Rail Bishop Auckland Ltd, DL14 7TL** 

### ALEX NELSON STARS IN TRAIN MAN

Up until 1994, buying a railway ticket in this country was a fairly straightforward business. Let's face it, how complicated can it be to, for example, want a return ticket from Newcastle to London?

Check the timetables, select your outward and return trains, and bingo, you bought your ticket. Of course, for most of the time up the 1990s you either bought your ticket at the station, at a travel agent or actually on the train.

Wow. How things have changed. 1994 saw Prime Minister John Major oversee the start of a three year process which would see the train operating companies become private. We also saw the rise of on-line websites where you could buy your tickets.

And that was where things began to get complicated. Now, when you select a departure station and destination, you are met with a plethora of ticket choices, prices and even different train companies.

Thankfully, there is a way around all of this and, the best bit, a way to get the cheapest ticket.

Alex Nelson is a walking, talking, train encyclopaedia. If you happen to mention in conversation that, rather than driving , you were thinking of using a train to travel from Durham to Bournemouth with your family for a holiday, Alex takes a deep breath and will proceed to fire a choice of dates, times, routes and prices at you.

He runs a ticketing company called NationalRail.com based at Bishop Auckland railway station which, in case you were interested, is one of the oldest stations in the country having been established in 1842. You can access a host of train options and also ensure that you get the cheapest fare. If you're not exactly sure what to do, it's a huge relief to find that you can actually give them a call and speak to someone. They're based in Bishop Auckland, not a city on the other side of the world.

If you'd like some common sense information from a real person, call them on 01388 661394. They're open office hours Monday – Saturday.

'One of the key features of NationalRail.com is that we have a really clever piece of software that allows split ticketing,' said Alex. 'If you were travelling to London from Newcastle, it can often be cheaper to buy a ticket from Newcastle to York, then another from York to Doncaster, and another from Doncaster.

to Peterborough and, finally, Peterborough to Kings Cross. You stay on the same train in the same seat but it invariably saves you money. There are often even bigger savings if you switch trains and switch operating companies by getting off at somewhere like Northallerton and then waiting for 5 minutes for the next train to arrive.'

You probably won't be surprised to find that other ticketing sites won't do this on your behalf...but NationalRail.com will.

If you are a regular train user, the amount you can save over the course of twelve months can be considerable. Those savings will multiply if you are travelling as part of a group.

'I regularly give talks to companies and organisations about how they can save money on train travel. The question and answer sessions are always great fun when people come up with various scenarios but the key message to get across is ensuring that you shouldn't take the the most obvious option. Do a little bit of digging, juggle a few departure or arrival times... and possibly dates...and you will see an immediate benefit. Granted, for a lot of busy organisations this can be time consuming so why not let us do the work for you via NationalRail.com

Alex has been running the NationalRail.com ticketing site since 1999. His experience and knowledge of the rail network and the vagaries of the ticketing system is second to none, and his boundless enthusiasm for saving you money always makes for a hugely entertaining and informative presentation.

Oh, and take a close look at the map on the preceding page. It shows which operators run where around the country and includes all the three letter short codes which can speed up your booking...for example...KGX (London Kings Cross) DHM (Durham) NCL (Newcastle) MPT (Morpeth). Maps are available on the website and cost £10 each with postage extra at £7.70 for a cardboard postal tube and carriage anywhere in the UK for up to five maps.

National Rail.com....the local train ticketing company that keeps your ticket prices on the right track.





### HEATHER SMALL TO HEADLINE 16TH ANNUAL OYSTER FESTIVAL

Guests at one of the region's biggest fundraisers will be Moving On Up, thanks to a distinctive performer from the 90s.

The voice of M People, Heather Small, has been revealed as the headline act when the 16th annual Oyster Festival returns to Hardwick Hall Hotel, at Sedgefield, County Durham on 27 September.

The singer has enjoyed more than 25 years in the industry, going on to forge a successful solo career after leaving the popular group and releasing her debut solo album, Proud, in 2000.

The Oyster Festival is supported by main sponsor Great Annual Savings and this year's car sponsor, Mill Volvo, and will raise money for the Angel Trust, which offers support to those in need in Darlington and County Durham.

"We are delighted to have Heather Small performing this year and I am sure she will put on a fantastic show," said John Adamson, who owns Hardwick Hall Hotel.

Guests will enjoy a champagne reception on arrival, with a three course Fruits de Mer menu, oyster stalls and complimentary lager, beer and wine throughout the event, which takes place from 12pm to 6pm.

## BAR4HIRE REBRANDS AND EXPANDS TO THE MIX EVENT COLLECTIVE FOLLOWING INVESTMENT

The Mix Event Collective will redefine the art of the possible in events delivery, exceeding the needs and expectations of clients

Event management company, Bar4Hire, which was founded in 2006 by Ollie Bennett has rebranded as The Mix Event Collective. The rebrand follows investment from entrepreneur, George Heydon, after Ollie successfully delivered his daughter's 18th birthday party.

With a portfolio of clients including Barbour, Fentimans, Govia Thameslink Railway, Winn Solicitors and Northumbria University, Bar4Hire has rebranded and expanded under the guidance of George to better reflect its range of services, position in the market and ambitious plans to become a leading, national events provider.

The Mix Event Collective, which has already been appointed by Northern Pride, the biggest LGBT Pride Festival in the North East of England, will redefine the art of the possible in events delivery, exceeding the needs and expectations of the most discerning clients, from personal intimate affairs to large corporate events, anywhere, anytime. In addition, and drawing on Bar4Hire's great links and work with national drink brands including Fentimans, Molson Coors, Kopparberg and Redbull, The Mix Event Collective will provide experiential marketing campaigns to drive awareness and sales.



## GOLF CLUB JOINS FORCES WITH LONGSTANDING MEMBER IN RENOVATION WORK

Gosforth-based City of Newcastle Golf Club has recently re-opened its doors to both members and the general public following a complete remodelling of the clubhouse by local companies including one of its oldest members.

The 128-year-old golf club, which opened to the public again on Monday 3 June 2019, has been undergoing a full renovation since the end of January this year which has included work on the bathrooms, kitchens and structure.

Alongside its brand-new look and a new food and drinks menu, the venue has also employed an additional eight members of staff including a new chef, an apprentice chef and six new bar staff.

Amongst those working on the refurbishment was electrical contractors Ridley Brothers of Gosforth. David Ridley, who is a director of Ridley Brothers alongside his brother Andrew, has been a member of the golf club for over 30 years and was delighted to be involved with the refurbishment.

Starting work on 28 January 2019, Ridley Brothers worked across a range of electrical work including

the installation of fire alarms and security, CCTV cameras and lighting. Now that the base of the work has been completed, the electrical firm will continue to work with the golf club on ongoing maintenance work.





'To eat well in England, you should have breakfast three times a day." Somerset Maughan

Breakfast served all day, every day!



Willi's Café Jesmond

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#### MACDONALD LINDEN HALL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



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Set within our own 450 acres of private estate, our grounds are perfect for team adventures. Looking for a team building experience with a difference?

Try one, or all, of our fantastic concepts.

End your day relaxing in the Linden Tree Pub, with a company BBQ and drinks in the courtyard.

#### **CREATE**

Galvanise your team dynamics with pottery painting. Give us the objective of the day and we'll do the rest.

#### EAT

Work in teams and make your own Northumbrian Sausages - leave with us to cook them for lunch, tasty!

### **ACTION**

Action - Kidnap the MD or get hunted within our estate - the choice is yours!





## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

#### Feather Blade of Beef -



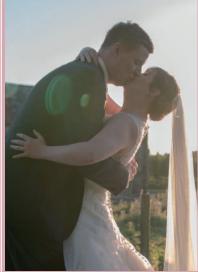
#### FOR THE BEEF...

- Preheat the oven to 180°C
- · Place a large casserole dish (big enough to hold the whole blade) over a medium heat and add the sunflower oil and butter. Once foaming, add the beef and colour for a few minutes on each side until dark brown
- · Add the sliced onions to the pot and seasoning, turn the heat low. Cover the casserole with a lid and cook gently for about 15 minutes until the onions are soft and golden
- · Remove the lid and pour in the stock. Bring up to a simmer, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any bits stuck to the bottom. Stir in the garlic, bay leaves and sugar, adjusting the seasoning to taste
- · Add the wine and place the lid back on. Transfer to the oven and cook for 3 hours and 30 minutes. After this time, remove from the oven and leave to stand with the lid on for a further hour
- Once the beef is rested it is ready to serve, our preference is to flake the meat down adding more roasted vegetables and beef stock to add depth of flavour, it's still delicious either way.

#### FOR THE RISOTTO...

- Take the thyme leaves off the sprigs and finely chop, then set to one side for later
- · Heat 1 tbsp oil with the butter in your pan over a medium heat - not too hot.
- · Add the onions and garlic. Cook the onions until they reach a golden brown colour then add the sugar, continue to cook stirring occasionally for 2 minutes or until the onions reach a deep caramel colour. Add the rice and stir well.
- · Now add half a cup of the stock, stirring occasionally again until it has all disappeared into the rice. Carry on adding and stirring in a large splash of stock at a time, until you have used up all the stock – this will take about 20 mins.
- Check the rice is cooked. If it isn't, add a splash more stock, and carry on cooking for a bit. Once the rice is soft enough to eat, add the parmesan and the thyme and any seasoning if needed.







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## SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALRIGHT

By Michael Grahamslaw

In many years of writing food reviews, one restaurant which consistently proves to be great is Low Fell's Eslington Villa.

Be it for a business lunch or social occasion, overnight stay or flying visit, this classy hotel restaurant delivers with much style and panache whilst the staff always pull out all the stops to ensure the best possible customer experiences.

Dark and ambient through the Winter and bright and airy in Summer, the conservatory dining area boasts a lovely, leisurely atmosphere whilst the Modern British/French cooking on offer showcases some real culinary pedigree.

After a relatively lazy Saturday afternoon, we dressed up accordingly and got a taxi across for what would be a meal to remember.

The team at Eslington Villa are a closely knit unit and are always on hand for a warm welcome, whilst returning visitors are greeted like long lost friends.

On arrival we first chose to drink in the atmosphere in the lounge with a quick aperitif whilst soaking up a cracking "golden oldies" playlist featuring the Beatles, the Beach Boys et al.

We were then seated in a prized window table which boasted views across the hotel's sundappled lawns and encroaching woodland.

Whilst the restaurant's lunchtime offering is concise, their evening menu is much more extensive and has been carefully curated by Head Chef, Jamie Walsh — a former North East Chef of the Year recipient who brings great flair and enthusiasm to his role.

Jamie's was also a finalist on a Gordon Ramsay scholarship and has brought his expertise to a menu which is best described as a simple and honest approach to cooking with a few modern inflections.

We decided to put this to the test and ordered up a pair of stunning sea food starters. I chose the British Oysters spiked with fresh lemon, shallot vinegar and tabasco whilst my wife Lisa opted for the locally smoked salmon, embellished with blobs of feta, sweet peas and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

After a suitable digestive interlude, our main courses arrived. Melt-in-the-mouth tender, Lisa's beef featherblade was an absolute revelation dusted with a mustard and parsley crumb and paired with pomme puree and braised carrots.

I elected for the roast chicken in a white wine and garlic sauce with gourmet potato rosti, fresh leeks

and Paris Brown mushrooms.

Demonstrably enjoying her meal, Lisa then polished off the classic crème brulee, burnt expertly with a supremely good texture. Yours truly settled for a very virtuous coffee as I'm still trying to lose a few pounds on a liquid-based diet!

Speaking of which, Eslington Villa has a farranging wine menu which has been carefully chosen by Thierry, the hotel's super-friendly General Manager. Being a Frenchman and thereby something of an expert, each wine is neatly arranged by its character profile – floral and exotic, oaky and robust etc – meaning you're sure to find the perfect accompaniment to each course.

With two courses available for £24.99 and three for £28.99 we also both agreed that this was good value for the quality of the fayre on offer.

Tucked away in a nicely secluded spot in a leafy part of Low Fell, Eslington Villa might just be one of the area's best kept secrets. Whilst popular with those "in the know", this is a venue deserving of much wider acclaim.

For more information, visit www.eslingtonvilla.co.uk



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### GOOD OL' EL PASO

#### By Michael Grahamslaw

It hasn't taken long for El Paso to capture the hearts and minds of Jesmond. Initial shock at the departure of much-loved Scalini's has been replaced by joy as the restaurant continues to dazzle a mix of friends, family, couples and groups alike.

The restaurant's funky concept draws inspiration from the street food of Mexico, Spain and South America and the team have succeeded in bringing the bold colours, spicy aromas and tongue-tingling flavours which characterise the cuisine to its prime site on Osborne Road.

Inside, the dining area is atmospheric and possesses a great social vibe. Exposed brickwork and loud patterns combine to create a stylish interior whilst many groovy skull platters offer a typically Mexican, day-of-the-dead chic.

You might say then, the perfect place to celebrate the 27th anniversary of my wife Lisa's 21st Birthday.

On arrival, we were greeted warmly and shown to a prized corner table where our much-obliging waitress cracked open a celebratory bottle of fizz.

El Paso is a place to revel in the good times. Its menu reflects the zip and zing of Latin American cooking, using only the highest quality ingredients to stimulate all the senses.

Whilst perusing an extensive menu, we snacked moreish-ly on a bowl of authentic tortillas with salsa, sour cream and guacamole.

El Paso aims to provide a truly authentic experience so its menu is prefaced by a glossary of Latin American terms which helped us to better understand the menu. We're talking 'Pibil' – strong, citrus flavoured, slow-roast pork, 'Esabeche' – an acidic Latin American marinade and 'Mole' – foodie parlance for chilli and chocolate sauce.

Diners are given the choice of a selection of main plates: fajitas, burritos, tacos, burgers and steaks or can order all-out in a grand, tapas-style feast.

Naturally, we did the latter, plumping for a portion of Cajun chicken fajitas alongside a medley of standout dishes from their tapas menu.

From this, we chose: tempura king prawns with charred pineapple and a zingy chilli jam, latino rib eye chunks with chimchurri salsa, Mexican cerviche (latino-style sea bass), lamb meatballs with feta and almond pesto and sweet potato bravas topped off with garlic aioli.

This was a lovely, social meal which we really took our time over, each of us mixing and matching from the dishes we'd ordered and 'still grazing' long after our waitress had offered to clear the plates. Of course, all of this was washed down by a couple of glasses of a very good house rioja.

We also learnt that Mexican food isn't necessarily the unhealthiest. Our server — who was very well clued up — explained that the black beans found in many of the dishes are a great, natural source of protein and complex carbs whilst their homemade salsas — made with fresh fruits and chillis — are loaded with essential vitamins. Now, I think I've found the diet for me!

If it's fun, high quality cooking you're looking for, look no further than El Paso Jesmond – this classy restaurant delivers in spades.

Happy Birthday Mrs G!





For more information, visit elpasojesmond.co.uk





# DURHAM CRICKET T20 BLAST 2019 FIXTURES

Friday, July 19:

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Wednesday, July 31:

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Friday, August 2:

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Sunday, August 11:

Durham Cricket v Notts Outlaws

Thursday, August 15:

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Friday, August 23:

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Tuesday, August 27:

Durham Cricket v Birmingham Bears

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# BIGG MARKET FILM LAUNCH

NE1 Ltd hosted a private screening of its new film, 'A people's History of the Bigg Market' at the Tyneside Cinema. The audience was made up of contributors to the project and stars of the film.

The film, produced by Northern Stars, is part of NE1's project to reinvent and reinvigorate the Bigg Market, a project co-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The film will be screened at several venues in Newcastle during the summer, for more details visit: ne1biggmarket.co.uk









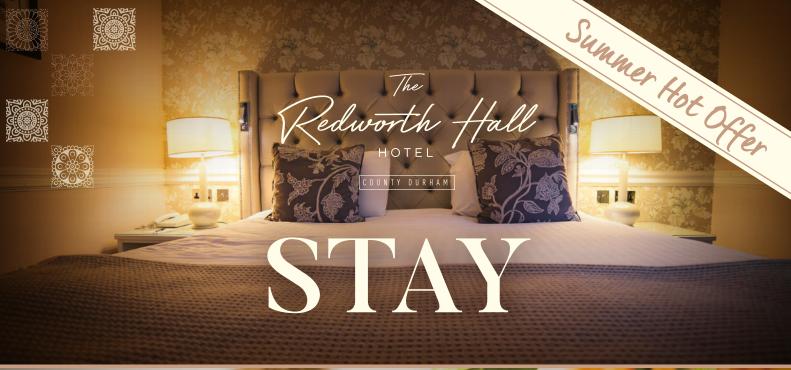
















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# KEEPING THE WINE FLOWING AT ST VINCENT

There's a buzzy, wine bar bistro in town, rapidly making a name for itself. St Vincent - part of Terry Laybourne's 21 Hospitality Group, in Newcastle – is winning plaudits for its wines, small plates and atmosphere. We talk to manager Matt Clarkson, the man responsible for keeping the guests happy.

## What's the vision and idea

It's fun, buzzy and relaxing. It's a wine bar with a restaurant. It's a place to fall into after work — to simply have a glass of wine, or to stay longer, unwind with a bottle and some food, chatting with friends. It's classic while being informal. It's open for breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner.

#### What's different about the venue?

The wine is the star of the show and our big point of difference. The wine offer is exceptional and completely different to anything else around Newcastle and the North East. We've got plenty of accessible and classic wines but there's also some quirky and more challenging choices. We've gone to many small, independent producers who are making some lovely wines. Many are served by the glass and are changing regularly. You can go with an old favourite or be a bit more adventurous with a new. craft wine.

#### How does it differ from its predecessor, Caffe Vivo?

In some ways it is a natural morph from Vivo. I worked there for 10 years and it's where we wanted to take Vivo, but it never quite got there. There's still a lot of Italian personality, along with a French influence. Clearly, there's a greater emphasis on wine but we've been determined to keep the informality to ensure people relax and are not intimidated by the wine selection or the waiters

#### What do you love about the job?

I don't see it as work; it has become part of my life...almost a hobby because it involves things I genuinely love. You do have to engulf yourself in



it; it takes over your life. But, it also means you end up meeting some amazing people – both in terms of some of the diners you meet but also going out on trips to meet and better understand suppliers and producers.

#### What are the biggest challenges?

Keeping on top of all the wines; we started with a selection of 3,000 bottles of wine and they're changing all the time. You really have to love and understand your wines. It's a never ending journey for me and my team but I think we might already be among the most specialist and knowledgeable front of house team in the area. We see part of our role as informally educating drinkers, even wine drinkers, about new producers and new-styles of winemaking.

#### Your stand-out career defining moment(s)?

The transition from Caffe Vivo to St Vincent

has probably been the most exhilarating and exhausting. Opening St Vincent last year was the most intense working period of my life; there was a lot of blood, sweat and tears – partly because of the huge amount of training and preparation needed and the short turnaround prior to reopening.

#### Your favourite meal and tipple?

I'm tasting and trying wine all the time, so often my favourite is one of the new wines in the restaurant. I always turn to Negroni as my drink of choice. In terms of food, it's invariably Italian cuisine; I love the regional simplicity.

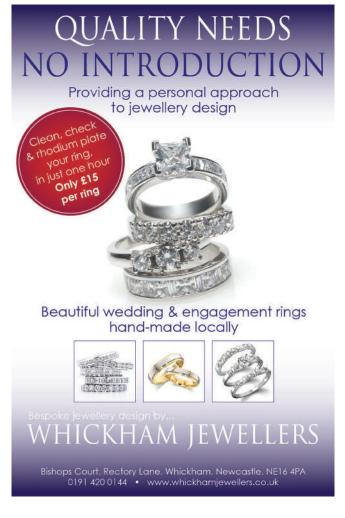
#### How do you relax?

With difficulty with two young kids. I try to find time with my wife and then listening to rock music and following Sunderland FC.

For more information: www.saintvincentncl.co.uk









## LUSCIOUS LANGLEY CASTLE

By Michael Grahamslaw



To round off my wife Lisa's "Birthday week" with real aplomb, we paid a visit to Langley Castle in Northumberland.

The 14th century castle is steeped in history and is one of the last remaining British castle hotels with its original fortifications. Visitors can expect exposed, thick stone walls, wrought iron candelabras, heraldic wall coverings and hanging tapestries.

The venue possesses character in abundance then and its almost "Game of Thrones" feel has made it an increasingly popular choice for romantic breaks, special occasions and fairytale weddings.

The hotel is now under the management of Margaret Livingstone-Evans, an astute operator who is busy putting her own inimitable stamp on the place.

Transport wise, the hotel is easily reachable via the A69 whilst a scenic, twisty driveway builds a real sense of anticipation on arrival.

Nine of the guest rooms are situated within the castle itself with a further 18 "castle view" rooms in an adjacent converted lodge and coach house. Castle rooms are magnificently appointed and play up to the medieval back drop with grand four poster beds, lavish drapes and window seats set into seven foot thick stone walls.

We'd bagged the highly-prized "Radcliffe" feature suite which derives its name from local gentry Sir Edward Radcliffe whose connection to Langley Castle stretches back to the 16th century. Bathed in regal gold, this was a real statement room and even featured a sunken bath and its very own sauna.

Other amenities include a power shower, dual-use "his and her" sinks and a large LCD TV.

Already hugely impressed, we soaked up the atmosphere over a glass of fizz before each drawing a long bath and changing for dinner.

The Radcliffe Suite

Dining at Langley Castle is taken seriously, whether it be from morning til moon. Prior to our meal, we enjoyed a quick livener in the hotel's capacious drawing room area — which is ideal for afternoon tea in a luxury setting — before adjourning to the hotel's in-house restaurant.

Langley Castle aspires to provide one of the best possible dining experiences in the region. Dishes are cooked to a AA rosette standard with diners given the choice between a table d'hote menu and a more inventive five course tasting menu.

We elected for the former and were not disappointed by trademark Northumberland cooking and an emphasis on local ingredients.

Starters consisted of the roast butternut squash soup with goats cheese bon bons and toasted pumpkin seeds and the hand-dived scallops paired with glazed pork belly, pickled white grapes and curried cauliflower. Both dishes were artfully presented, befitting of modern British excellence.

Following on, Lisa opted for the crisp lamb shoulder with basil gnocchi, smoked aubergine puree and

roasted fennel. As is my wont, I chose the 8oz fillet steak, a "from the grill" special paired with grilled mushrooms and a confit tomato and well deserving of the £12 supplement.

Swerving dessert, we instead elected for a lovely pairing of dessert wines. The muscat grape is one of the most ancient in wine production and seemed a fitting finale for a memorable meal in such historic surroundings.

Feeling well rested after a full eight hours sleep, we expunged some of the previous night's excess in the sauna before polishing off a fresh, cooked-to-order breakfast

Following breakfast, guided tours of the castle run daily, taking in the battlements and its rooftop chapel. These are conducted by a very knowledgeable member of staff and provide a great opportunity for those looking to really bask in some local history.

All in all, we returned from our visit relaxed, refreshed and even a little more knowledgeable.

Langley Castle is a class act.

For more information, visit www.langleycastle.co.uk





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## LOBSTER BALL CHARITY EVENING

Party-goers from across the region gathered at Sedgefield's Hardwick Hall Hotel recently for the venue's annual extravagant Lobster Ball.

The evening, held to raise funds for the Daisy Chain charity, featured live entertainment from The Bootleg Beatles, Rob Lamberti and Diane Shaw.





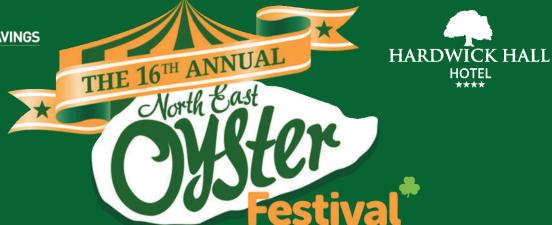












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## SUPERB SUNDAYS AT THE SHIP INN WYLAM

By Michael Grahamslaw

Hot on the heels of last month's review of the Ship Inn Wylam, we returned to sample their stellar Sunday lunch offering.

The charming railway village is the perfect place unwind at the end of a working week and is a popular spot for locals and out-of-towners.

At the heart of the village lies the Ship Inn, a traditional British pub with real culinary chops who serve a high quality two course Sunday Lunch for £18 and three for £22.

We arrived to find the dining area packed with a mix of couples, friends and families. Clearly this is very much a place for those "in the know".

After being seated in a cosy corner table, we soon settled in over a bottle of Pinot Grigio blush and a pint of Theakston's "Barista Stout" — a worthy Guinness substitute with outstanding flavour and character and a feint suggestion of coffee.

The Ship Inn serve wholesome, super-tasty pub food championing the best locally-sourced seasonal ingredients. Its Sunday menu offers plenty of variety, with a couple of quirky little touches alongside traditional Sunday roasts.

First up came a platter of wispy-fresh, beer cured salmon, stylishly paired with pickled cucumbers, treacle and walnut bread.

We also chose the potted rabbit, embellished with a smudge of wholegrain mustard and pickles. Served with sour dough toast — perfect for dunking — this was a rich, gamey treat.



Finally, we also opted for the smoked cod roe dip – a firm favourite from our last visit – presented with bacon, seaweed and pillow-y hunks of grilled flatbread.

Between courses, the service was slick as very friendly with our waitress happy to replenish our glasses in true Northumberland style.

During our visit, we were given the choice of the traditional topside of beef or the roast leg of lamb. Pescatarians are also well catered for with the North Sea cod fishcakes, whilst the pea & mint risotto also made for a delicious veggie

Both my wife Lisa and I chose the beef whilst

my son Jack tested the lamb. All were cooked perfectly to our "pink or well done" preferences. A grand settee of a Yorkshire pud sat alongside whilst a selection of seasonal greens were housed next to us in huge sharing tureens.

If all of this isn't enough, the Ship Inn also do a fine line in homemade desserts. Though somewhat replete, Jack and Lisa were egged on to try the chocolate fondant with pistachio ice cream. This certainly delivered and provided a memorable table-tapping finale.

It seems that the Ship Inn Wylam is a top gastropub with an awful lot going for it. In addition to Sunday Lunch, the pub often has a packed programme of events. See their upcoming "Waste Food" Night — an evening with a cause as their chefs will be cooking up creative dishes from ingredients which would otherwise have been thrown away. All proceeds will go to 'The Pickle Palace' — a social enterprise that uses as much fruit and vegetables from local farm shops which would otherwise go to landfill. What a fantastic, eco-conscious idea.

Where Sunday Lunch is concerned though, few come better than the Ship Inn Wylam. A superb choice for those looking for a change from the local carvery.

For more information, visit www.theshipinnwylam.co.uk



# birthday

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## THE BORDER MINSTREL RACES AHEAD

By Michael Grahamslaw



Now at the height of the flat racing season, the Border Minstrel Pub is a venue which really comes into its own. The pub is the perfect spot for lapping up the excitement of raceday, but also has much to offer non-racing punters on a daily basis.

The pub serves food from 12 o'clock daily and is a sage choice for a business meeting, pub lunch, family meal or Sunday dinner. Named after the winner of the 1927 Northumberland Plate, this Grade II listed building is situated at the heart of High Gosforth Park, an area encompassing Newcastle Racecourse, two golf courses and many acres of surrounding woodland. As a result, the area is very popular on the dog-walking circuit with the pub keen to accommodate dog-walkers.

We visited on a mid-week evening and found that the crowded raceday boozer had transformed into a contemporary gastropub serving freshly-cooked pub grub with a smile.

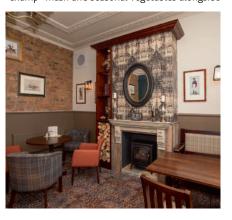
On a glorious Summer's evening we first sharpened our appetites in the beer garden before repairing inside to find a table and look over the menus.

Featuring a mix of main plates, steaks, burgers and salads, the Border Minstrel's menu is hearty and eclectic, offering something for all of the family. Their drinks selection is also worth noting with a range of traditional ales, craft beers and specially selected wines and spirits available.

We kicked off with a trio of tantalising starters.

Prawn cocktail arrived with plump king prawns, fat hunks of bread and a gloopy marie rose sauce. Chicken skewers were spiked with a racy sweet chilli salsa whilst the pea and broccoli soup was an aromatic healthy option.

Main courses followed shortly after and proved to be of a similar high standard. The chilli con carne was wholesome and hearty with thick cut chips proving a suitably stodgy accompaniment. We also enjoyed the minted lamb shank with Irish "champ" mash and seasonal vegetables alongside



a home-cooked lasagne with a garlic bread and side salad

Throughout our meal, we were waited on superbly by Nicola and Corrina who even coaxed us in to finishing off with a warm chocolate brownie sundae, which we all agreed was well worth the calories.

Our meal had been memorable for all the right reasons and at an extremely cost-effective price. If you do not have the time for the "full monty" at lunchtime, there's also a light bites/ sandwich menu along with a children's menu for those with young family.

The pub is also a popular Sunday lunch outpost, serving a weekly carvery from 12pm – 5pm. If the food is of the same high quality as our meal today, I shall be taking the family there shortly. With one course available for just £8.95, two courses at £12.95 and three for £16.95, it looks a bargain for such high quality fayre.

Once you add Sky Sports, weekly quiz nights and ample free parking to the mix, this is a place with a lot going for it.

"The Pub in the Park" has much to offer its visitors

– whether raceday or not.

For more information, visit www.borderminstrel.co.uk











## HOME OR AWAY?

White sandy beaches, turquoise seas, sun-kissed horizons all sounds utterly blissful and make the perfect backdrop for any wedding.

As I write this, I am sat layered up to keep the cold from my bones, the wind is howling around the garden and the rain is battering at the windows. It's British Summertime, it's mid-June and we live in an era of climate change which has done away with our seasons, forgotten are the long warm summers of generations gone by, you'd have brighter, warmer and sunnier memories if you had married on Christmas Day last year. The weather is the main reason many choose to pack up and take their vows in foreign lands.

Destination weddings certainly have many positives. The world is full of beautiful places and you can achieve the wedding of your dreams wherever you wish, however you wish and find it is legally binding too. But as with everything you need to be cautious, don't lose yourself to the excitement! Do your homework or even better still, use an independent travel advisor that guarantees a personal service but most importantly added protection. Here in the North East we have many fabulous travel experts, some are skilled in destination weddings and come highly recommended.

Now, I've listened to some horror stories and witnessed them too (none of my weddings I may add!). Package deals in exclusive exotic locations look beautiful in the brochure but the care and attention you are used to at home may not be present elsewhere. That secluded private beach in Mauritius you were promised for your ceremony is because it rains at 4pm everyday and whilst the sunbathers take cover in the all-inclusive pancake hut, they wheel the weddings out, more rain drenched than sun drenched. The private villa looked spectacular online with enough space for your guests positioned in a quaint little village with a chapel you can get married in turns out to be very much in need of TLC and a major health risk to boot, even the local wildlife dodges the pool. The wedding coordinator you are told will take care of everything, doesn't exist nor does the four-tiered cake or five course banquet. I could fill a book!

But I could also tell you many fabulous tales. Destination weddings open a world of choice from very intimate romantic elopements to thrillseeking wild celebrations to the indulgence of many amazing cultures. Destination weddings capture the most unbelievable memories, some food for thought; you can get married in a helicopter flying over the Grand Canyon or head to Kruger National Park in Africa for a safari wedding. For a truly white wedding head to Lapland and take your vows under the Northern Lights or if you are already blessed with children, have Mickey and Minnie as your witnesses for a magical Disney celebration where dreams really do come true. There are endless

opportunities to creating the most fantastic experience. Get it right, do your research, hire a wedding planner, use a travel counsellor and visit the location of choice (if you can) to make sure it's not a mirage, connect, engage, get insurance, check your protection, double check and check again. You have language barriers, cultural differences, time implications, health regulations and legal restrictions all to consider.

Michelle Jones

The other reason people opt to marry overseas is to escape the big bash dramas and the never-ending guest list. It is also an effective way of managing a budget. Once you commit to your decision please do remember that some family members or close friends will not share your joy of getting married in the Ice Hotel in Norway and will decline your invitation because they can't afford the time to jet away or simply can't afford it. Those tense emotions you hoped to dodge are now very much at your door.

Not everyone will be happy with your choice, but it is your choice, your wedding whether it's home



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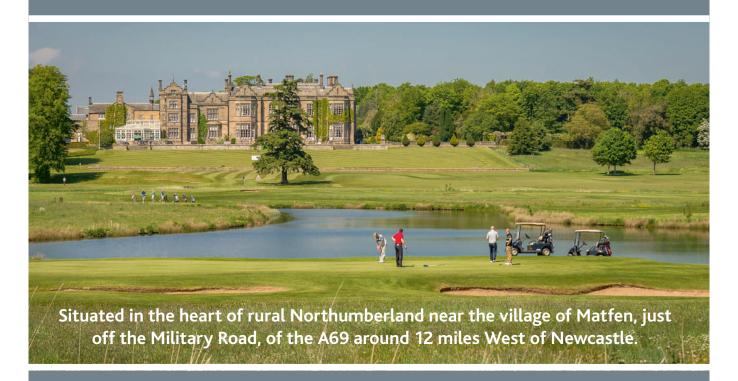
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**Length of course -** White Tees 6700, Yellow Tees 6355, Red Tees 5569

**Course type -** Matfen Hall is a well established 27 hole Championship Parkland course built in 1995. A good test for golfers of all abilities.

Facilities - 27 hole championship golf course with club shop, 10 bay covered driving range with coffee shop, putting green, practice nets, buggy hire, 9 hole par 3 course, purpose built restaurant and bar. The Matfen Golf Academy is headed up by European Seniors professional John Harrison. John and his team of professionals have created a hub of coaching to cater for all levels of the game with one to one tuition and various group offerings available on a weekly basis.

**Longest Drive -** Hole 7 on Standing Stone – Taking on the copse to the left of the dogleg fairway is risk and reward and will leave a birdie chance if you can get it right.

**Toughest Hole -** Hole 5 on Standing Stone — The toughest hole on the course where anything right is lost. You can't be greedy so lay up if necessary short of the stream. A bogey is not a disaster on this hole.

**Signature Hole** - Hole 8 on Standing Stone - A daunting Par 3 where the tee shot must be aimed to the right half of the tricky, sloping green. Anything lest will meet a watery grave.

Course Record - 63 Kenneth Ferrie

Competitions - The Club has a full range of members competitions including 9 hole and seniors on a weekly basis along with our visitor open competitions each year, in 2019 we are also hosting our own Pro Am in conjunction with the NENW PGA.

Prices - Swing into Summer July 1st - 31st

18 holes: £25.00 or 18 holes & 1 course meal: £35.00

Tee it Up - 18 holes & Keepers Tea: £25.00

The Full Monty - £50.00 per person Experience all of our golf facilities in one day - 50 Range balls, 27 Holes - Douglas, Standing Stone & Dewlaw courses, 9 holes on the Par 3 course. Coffee & Bacon Roll on arrival & Soup, Sandwich lunch

**Summer Twilight Offer** – Play up to 18 holes after 4pm for only £10.00 Valid Friday 21st June – Friday 19th July 2019

Swing & Spa – 18 holes, Keepers Tea & 40 min Spa Treatment – T&C's apply £65.00 Mon-Fri & £70.00 Sat-Sun

Visitor times available from 7am on Saturday and Sunday's

#### Membership

Adult Membership from £39.00 per month,
Child Membership from £8.33 per month
We offer many flexible membership packages, Monthly payment
plan available – Membership Benefits.

**Trial Golf Membership** - £199.00 per person – Enjoy a 3 month trial to experience our facilities T&C's apply – Valid to start Monday 10th June – Saturday 31st August 2019

# A word from the Club Manager

"You are always guaranteed a warm welcome at Matfen, and we pride ourselves in being able to offer a challenge for all golfing abilities, from beginner to scratch golfer, making golf an enjoyable experience for everyone."

Contact Tel: 01661 886 400 Email: golf@matfenhall.com Online at www.matfenhall.com/experience/golf/

### BEAUTIFUL BOUTIQUE BEADNELL TOWERS

Nestled at the heart of an unspoilt coastal village, Beadnell Towers is Northumberland's newest boutique hotel, where timeless Northumbrian hospitality meets unique contemporary design.





Our cosy rooms, each as individual as the rest, combine original historic features with home comforts, a touch of elegance and a splash of style.

Inspired by the seafaring heritage of Northumberland, you'll find all sorts of quirky features and cosy interiors that reflect the sea and shoreline of the glorious Northumbrian Coast.

Our stunning Towers Bar and Kitchen, open all day, offers a seasonal menu with the best of locally sourced produce.

The Wynding, Beadnell, Northumberland NE67 5AY, 01665 721211 - www.beadnelltowers.com facebook.com/beadnelltowers - Instagram @beadnell\_towers - Twitter @Beadnell\_Towers









#### " Natural

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#### Restoration

hanges to bring it back to the original classic Colt design.

#### Practice

## PGA Professional

Gary Vickers on hand to suppor and assist when ever needed.

## Quality

## Breathtaking Views of the River Tyne and Tyne

### Competitions

Strong and well supported weekend competitions for Senior, Ladies and Junior & Academy sections.

#### Historic

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# Wide range of memberships available

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## 5 Day membership only £500.00 Country only £395.00

If you like what you're reading and want to hear more please contact:

General Manager, Peter Smith on peter.smith@tynesidegolfclub.co.uk

0191 413 2742

# ENJOY THE RUGBY WORLD CUP FINAL AT KINGSTON PARK



Take in the biggest match of the year with fellow Falcons. Kingston Park Stadium will be the place to be for this November's Rugby World Cup final, with Newcastle Falcons hosting an exclusive breakfast screening of the biggest game of the year.

Hosted in aid of the Alex Tait testimonial season, the event will offer Falcons fans the opportunity

to gather together and hopefully cheer England on to victory, whilst supporting one of their own.

Priced at £10 for adults and £7.50 for under 18s, adult tickets will include a breakfast butty and either a bottle of beer or a soft drink, with junior tickets including a butty and a soft drink.

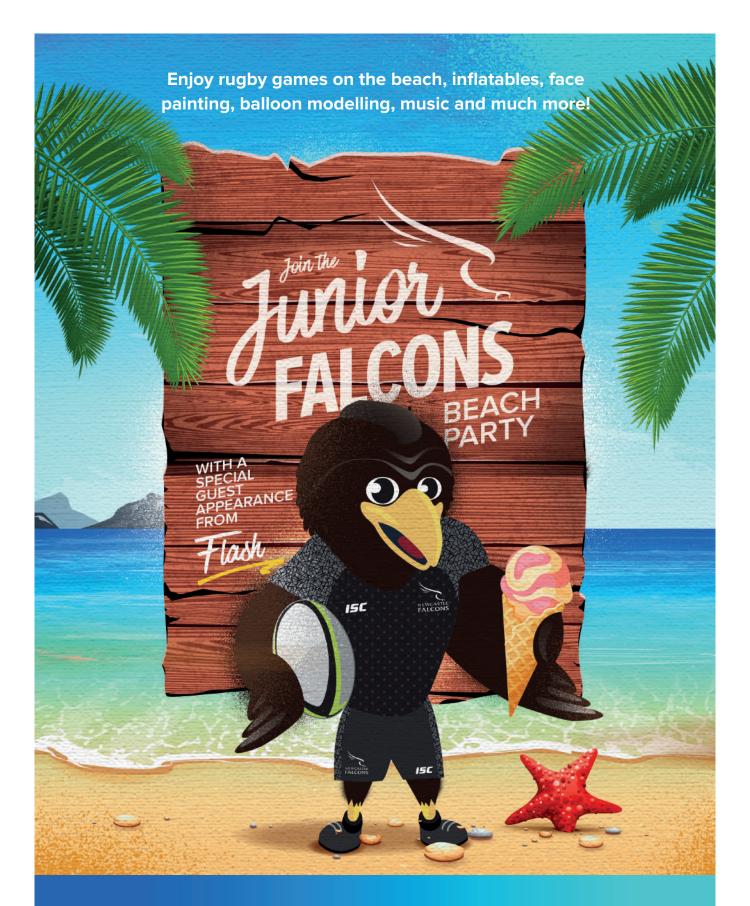
Players from the 2019/20 Newcastle Falcons

squad will be in attendance, with further entertainment and competitions running throughout the morning.

Kicking off at the Nissan Stadium in Yokohama at 09:00 GMT on November 2nd, Kingston Park will be open from 07:30 allowing fans plenty of time to enjoy the pre-match build-up and rugby club atmosphere.

Tickets for the event are available to book now by clicking here, calling 0871 2266060 or by visiting the Kingston Park Stadium box office.





## SATURDAY 3RD AUGUST, 11AM-1PM TYNEMOUTH LONGSANDS, NE30 4HH

For more information, please email gavin.beasley@newcastle-falcons.co.uk

OPEN TO ALL JUNIOR FALCONS & ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SIGN UP!



# CANCER CENTRE IN THE NORTH EAST AWARDED BUILDING PROJECT OF THE YEAR 2019

Northumberland, 25 June 2019: The Rutherford Cancer Centre North East in Northumberland has been awarded the Building Project of the Year at the Constructing Excellence in the North East Awards 2019.

The centre in Bomarsund offers highly advanced cancer treatments, including proton beam therapy, and is the first of its kind in the North East.

Rutherford Estates, the developer of the Rutherford Cancer Centres, was given the award jointly with its contractors Interserve, Pravida Bau, JDDK Architects, Boyden Group, Fairhurst, and Desco. The centre will now go forward as an entry for the national awards taking place in London in Autumn.

John McIntosh, general manager of Rutherford Estates, said: "We are thrilled that our hard work and the hard work of all our partners and contractors has been recognised with this award. Building an advanced cancer centre, especially one that offers proton beam therapy, presents monumental practical and engineering challenges but we were able to complete the facility in under two years thanks to the hard work of everyone involved."

At the heart of the centre's proton beam therapy facility is IBA's 55-ton cyclotron Proteus®ONE solution, which is installed into the core of the building with a large crane, and which is used to generate the protons used in proton beam therapy treatment. In addition to proton beam therapy, the centre also provides conventional cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and immunotherapy as well as a suite of advanced diagnostic services.



Rutherford Estates has now developed three state-of-the-art cancer treatment centres in four years, with a fourth centre under construction in Liverpool, which all operate as the Rutherford Cancer Centres. Central to Rutherford Estates' vision is providing the UK population with access to life saving cancer treatment, notably proton beam therapy, that was previously unavailable in the UK. All Rutherford Centres are operated by Proton Partners International.

All three Rutherford Cancer Centres offer world leading technology including Philips CT and MRI, Elekta Linac Radiotherapy, Infusion Therapy and

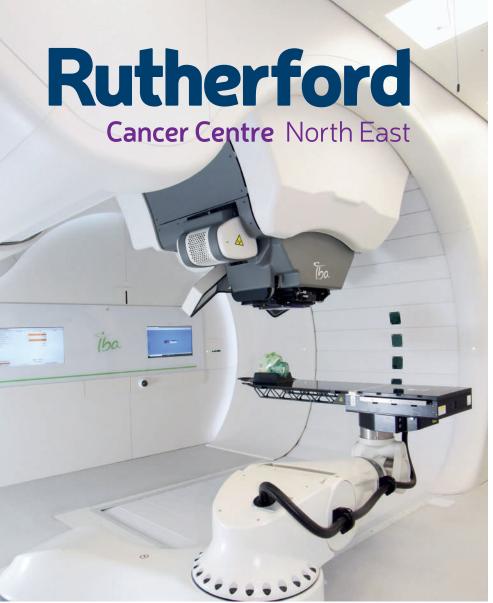
IBA's Proteus ONE solution, which is housed in huge concrete lined underground vaults.

JDDK Architects director Kevin Turnbull added: "We're delighted that the Rutherford Centre has been recognised by this prestigious award. Proton Partners are an extremely valued client who enable us to mix the design complexity of spaces for their cutting-edge technology with a patient-centric design for their facilities."

Mark Gardham, regional director of Interserve, said: "The Constructing Excellence Awards celebrate the best in UK construction, and we are thrilled that the hard work and dedication of the Interserve team has been recognised by the judges. We worked collaboratively with the client, designers and specialist supply chain to overcome a variety of technical challenges to deliver this world class facility, changing the face of cancer treatment for the North East. The team is now looking forward to taking the project forward to the national finals in London this November."

Chris Land, centre manager for the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East, said: "The award has come at a great time for us, as we are about to begin treating patients with proton beam therapy and have just announced a long-term partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to treat NHS patients in the region with chemotherapy so that cancer sufferers do not face any delays in receiving the treatment they need."

www.therutherford.com









## TRANSFORMING CANCER CARE.

The first high energy proton therapy centre in the North East, now open for referrals.

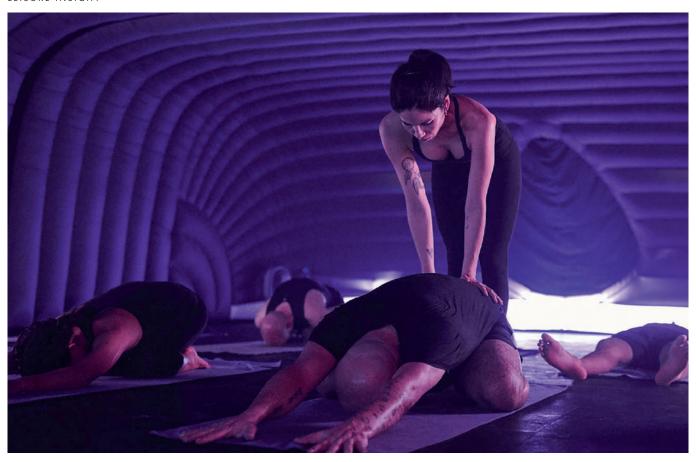
The Rutherford Cancer Centre North East, situated in the Earth Balance site in Northumberland provides a full range of oncology services, including high energy proton therapy.

proton therapy | radiotherapy | chemotherapy | immunotherapy | MRI diagnostic imaging | supportive care

For further information

0800 210 0402

therutherford.com



### HOTPOD YOGA - AN EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER

Lu O'Rourke heads to Jesmond for her first taste of hotpod yoga where heady aromas, ambient lighting and a challenging workout await.

The ancient practice has attracted a large following in recent times, with the active and passive flow of postures effective for toning the muscles, enhancing flexibility and relaxing the mind.

Having received an invitation, my friend Dianne and I arrived for our first taste of Hotpod Yoga in Jesmond on a cold but sunny spring evening. As we were shown into the large, cocoon-like inflatable pod, the 37 degree heat welcomed us. The pod glowed with a relaxing purple, quietening my mind and shutting out the outside world.

After checking in with our friendly, welcoming and knowledgeable instructor Rae for a 60 minute class, we were shown to our places and provided with a yoga mat each. Now both of us were Yoga Virgins, so being unfamiliar with any of the poses, Rae was extremely patient with us and guided us through the correct positions in a confident, hands-on manner. Within only seconds of the workout commencing, the sweat started dripping!

The real benefit of the beautifully scented space was that we felt we could better twist and stretch into unfamiliar body positions. Through Rae's gentle encouragement, we were happily sweating, stretching and twisting in no time at all.

Not knowing what to expect, it took me a while to properly relax into the session and I know that





next time I will be able to better exert myself earlier in the class. I was offered variations on a couple of poses, and was encouraged to rest during part of the class inside the pod and take on plenty of water. With the experience of this taster session, I now know that I'll be able to better manage my breathing and fully engage with the experience from the very beginning of the next session.

The heated atmosphere provided a unique, immersive experience and we both agreed that we felt fully invigorated and cleansed by the process. The darkness of the deep purple lighting within the enclosed pod and the soothing background music added to the sense of relaxation and calm. The music played was chilled and relaxed but with a modern edge.

As we moved through the session, we were encouraged to drink plenty of liquids and also supported in finding the level best matched to our degree of expertise. It is recommended to use your own towels so we may need to bring extras next time! Although the obvious newcomers to the class, we felt included from the very beginning and both felt far less self-conscious than we had feared

I must admit, I felt invigorated and energised for the rest of the evening after the session. Perhaps this would better suit me as part of a morning routine to improve my posture and help me attack the day in a positive and relaxed state of mind.

To book your place online, visit www.hotpodyoga.com

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Dr Miguel Montero-Garcia, Discover Laser, UK





Verjú laser treatments combined with lymphatic drainage. Photos taken 10 days post second treatment.



## STARTMEDUK LAUNCH FIRST NORTH EAST COURSE TO HELP NORTH EAST'S TEENAGERS MEDICAL FUTURE

An organisation that is investing in the future of the UK's ongoing health by launching its services to teenagers in the North East, has announced the details of its first course in the region.

StartMedUK is the brain child of Dr Michael Shenouda and Dr Ryan Dias, who studied his medical degree at Newcastle University. The company, who works with schools and individuals, has announced its first course that young people can sign up independently to, to attend.

Being held at the Gateshead Hilton on Saturday 20th July, the one day medical school application course is designed to help those applying pass the rigorous shortlisting process of medical schools.

Dr Dias, who is also responsible for a number of leadership programs delivered in the NHS following an illustrious medical career, said: "Last year The Guardian reported that there were six time more medical students from London as from the North East. In fact only 245 students from the North East started medical and dentistry degrees last year compared to 1585 from London. We want to increase those figures and as well as delivering in schools, we are holding our own courses so individuals can sign up themselves.

"This first course guides candidates on relevant work experience, personal statements, guidance on appropriate medical schools an detail on their requirements, exam advice and debating interview topics."

The students are supported on the course by a team of clinicians, recent graduates, current students and education experts increasing the chance of securing



a much fought after place in the medical school of choice.

The pair set up the company following their own experiences, both in trying to start their career, and then in what they understood as their careers progressed. Dr Ryan continued:

"This StartMedUK course is designed for individuals to enter with support from their parents and family. It will help the doctors of tomorrow in the North East start their successful career path as early as possible. Our specialised and enthusiastic team give the best preparation possible so offers are secured

from top choice medical schools.

"Many parents have started to access our service for their children direct, and schools in particular are keen to be part of the process now, as it gives the students extra motivation to work hard to get better grades, all of which impact positively on both the student's future and on a school's reputation or Ofsted reports."

The company offer three other learning options which can be undertaken separately or as a combined course covering interviews, personal statements and bespoke private tuition.

Any schools, parents or individuals interested in finding out more can visit www.startmeduk.com.

Any interested parties and schools receive a free consultation – to book yours visit www.startmeduk.com/services/app-prep/



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### TRANFORM YOUR SMILE WITH INVISALIGN

Dentist Gulshan Dhanoya from Honour Health, an aesthetic dental and skin centre with clinics in Jesmond, Ponteland and Stanley (and winner of Dental Team of The Year 2019 at The Dental Awards), explains the process of Invisalign treatment.

Typically, braces have been associated with teenage years, 'metal mouth' and that unattractive stage of life in secondary school. Well, not any more. Orthodontic braces have become much more accepted amongst both teenagers and adults in the UK. More and more adults are starting to enquire about 'invisible braces', with an increased demand for aesthetic dentistry. Invisalign is an increasingly popular treatment for patients looking for a discrete, comfortable way to straighten their teeth.

#### What is Invisalign?

Invisalign is a system made to straighten teeth using clear, plastic aligners, which are custom made to fit your teeth. These clear plastic aligners snap into place over your teeth, gripping onto tiny white 'attachments' made of white filling materials which are placed on the front surface of some of your teeth. These plastic aligners are changed weekly, gradually moving your teeth into position.

As the aligners are clear, they are almost invisible when worn, which appeals to many of our adult patients, especially if they have customer-facing jobs, or if they would be self-conscious about wearing traditional metal braces.

#### How do I start my Invisalign journey?

Invisalign is a completely digital service, used internationally. You will first need to find a local Invisalign provider. At Honour Health, we have a



wealth of experience in providing Invisalign at our Jesmond, Ponteland and Stanley clinics. An Invisalign dentist will carry out a full orthodontic assessment to see if you are suitable for Invisalign braces. Photos, x-rays and a digital scan will be carried out, along with a full clinical assessment, and all information will be sent to Invisalign. It is important that you are dentally fit for orthodontic treatment, so your dentist will carefully check that your teeth and gums are healthy and that you have enough bone. Your dentist will explain this in depth during your

#### What is a digital scan?

Using a state-of the-art machine called the iTero scanner, your dentist can scan your teeth digitally instead of taking a physical impression. This means you can see a detailed 3D simulation there and then on the screen, of what your teeth look like now, and what they could look like after Invisalign. It is completely pain free and easy, and it means there is no need for messy, gooey impression material! It's always a 'wow' moment for our patients when they see an instant simulation of how their smile can be transformed with Invisalign. At Honour Health, we provide a digital scan as part of your free smile consultation.

#### How long does the treatment take?

Invisalign has different treatment options, depending on the degree of alignment required. Invisalign Lite is a treatment of 14 aligners and can achieve minor movements in a short space of time. Invisalign Full is any treatment plan with unlimited number of aligners, meaning more severe crowding can be treated. Typically, Invisalign treatment can range from 6-12 months.

#### Can I remove my Invisalign aligners?

Unlike traditional fixed braces, Invisalign braces are removable. It is recommended that aligners should be worn for 22 hours a day, and should only removed for eating and drinking. Patients who don't wear their aligners won't see their teeth move!

Interested in finding out more about Invisalign? Book a free consultation at Honour Health by booking online at www.honourhealth.co.uk or call your chosen clinic - 0191 281 3913 (Jesmond), 01661 821 412 (Ponteland), or 01207 232 725 (Stanley).

### GRADUATE TO PEACE AND LOAF

Graduation time is nearly upon us and you're ready to start celebrating with family and friends; but where to go is the question? Peace and Loaf, Jesmond have the perfect dining area for you to celebrate one of the most special days of your life.



You've studied endlessly for three years, so of course you need something amazing to reward yourself for all of the hard work endured over countless nights in the library topping up on endless coffees.

At Peace and Loaf, Jesmond, we know just how special this day is, which is why our carefully-crafted food creates the ultimate dining experience.

Our locally sourced menus highlight the importance of using only the freshest produce and we offer exciting, seasonal menus to ensure a unique visit every time you dine with us. Our menus are crafted with Chef Patron, Dave Coulson's, own inventive flair ensuring dishes are sure to excite and intrigue even the most discerning of palates.

Over graduation fortnight, we have an exciting menu on offer with some delicious dishes to treat you and all the family. Our signature blend of all your British favourites combined with a Peace and Loaf twist, makes for a unique yet delicious taste which looks absolutely beautiful, too.

Enjoy your graduation surrounded by beautiful decor, wine and delicious dishes. To celebrate in style, book early to avoid disappointment at www.peaceandloaf.co.uk or by calling 0191 281 5 222.





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# PLANNING APPLICATION FOR INNOVATIVE WALLSEND DRIVING RANGE



Acting on behalf of their clients, Harrison Golf and Leisure, Newcastle Ltd, WYG have applied to North Tyneside Council for Planning Permission for a new £12.5m golf-based leisure facility at Wallsend Golf Club which will include the reconfiguration of the existing Golf Course and the development of an innovative new Driving Range, the first of its kind in the UK.

The 'BigShots' Golf concept, launched in Texas in 2017, is designed to deliver golf to a younger and more diverse market by combing the extensive outdoor facilities of a traditional driving range with state-of-the-art virtual reality digital technology. The advanced digital technology tracking equipment transposes players' shots onto digital screens which can show a number of virtual reality games or a selection of world-renowned golf courses.

The application is for the construction of a two storey building, designed by Newcastle-based Nicholson Nairn Architects, with golf bays fronting the driving range at Ground Floor and First Floor levels with additional facilities extending to the rear of the bays containing a new bar and restaurant, shop, changing facilities, golf academy, kitchen, function/meeting rooms and associated offices. The western end of the building contains the new Wallsend Golf Club locker rooms to provide

natural linkage with the course. The application also includes parking facilities, accessed from the adjacent West Street, and a new maintenance building for green keeping equipment.

Phil Harrison, Director of Harrison Golf and Leisure, Newcastle, commented, "It's a fantastic concept that is proving incredibly popular in the USA as it's attractive to not only experienced golfers who can use it as a traditional driving range to practice, a coaching aid or just the fun of playing different courses in a virtual reality mode, but also to complete novices who can learn to play golf here whilst still having fun playing different games."

"The present Wallsend Golf Club at Centurion Park is the perfect site for us to launch the new concept and, whilst there will be disruption to the course over the first year of construction, the end result will be a professionally designed 18 hole course with truly superb facility in the BigShots Driving Range."

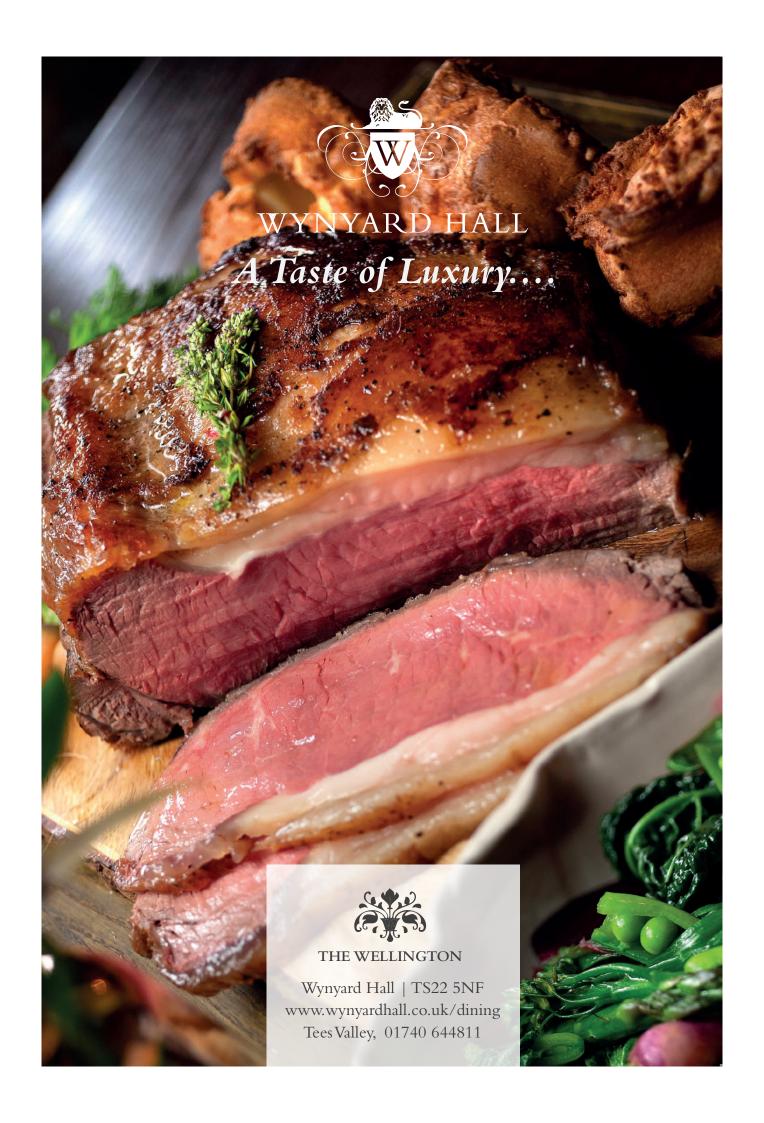
Chris Sanderson, Director of STR Enterprises Ltd, who will manage the facility added, "The BigShots facility will also be a major employer with around 47 full and part time direct posts created in an area of relatively high unemployment whilst both the construction and operating phases will seek to source local suppliers wherever possible, securing further employment opportunities. It's also a massive boom to the existing Wallsend Golf Club which will be radically reconfigured and improved to provide a first class golf facility that will rival any course in the region, with a superb club house."

The Wallsend facility will the first in the UK with the developers intending to launch further sites nationwide in the very near future.

Upon a successful application, the developers hope to commence construction later this Autumn with the BigShots Golf facility opening in Autumn 2020.







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Alternatively email us, info@davidfairlambfitness.co.uk

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### BE HOLIDAY READY

With the holiday season upon us, feeling confident in your own skin is hugely satisfying and can determine your mood for the whole summer, especially when on holiday.

Summer bodies are made in the winter, its only now those who made a consistent effort throughout the year can go away with a big smile and raised self esteem.

Here are a few tips in order to lighten the calories on holiday and hold on to your figure, without spoiling your fun:

**It starts at the airport** - A full English with extra bread and muffin is probably not the best start. These are unnecessary calories before you even step on the plane.

Try to eat before you go - avoid the tempting sandwiches, often laden with cheese and mayonnaise on the flight. Buy something more healthy in the airport and take it with you. Eating unhealthy food at the airport and on the flight will probably leave you bloated and sluggish, which isn't great when you hit the beach later in the day.

**Breakfast on holiday** - try to avoid stodgy food such as white bread, pancakes especially with syrup and sugary cereals. Look towards eggs, ham and fruit eg try melon and berries for a healthier start to the day

Go for a walk and raise your heart rate - this will help burn more calories, try to have a decent walk each day. Obviously, if you normally train and there is a gym available, a 45 minutes workout 2-3 times a week, to keep you ticking over, would be great. If you train throughout the year, a week off may do you good. We all need time out and you will come back refreshed and ready to restart.

If there isn't a gym why not train on the beach for 20 mins - focusing on big muscle groups including exercises such as squats, lunges, star jump, stomach exercises, press ups, the



plank and some short 20-30 metre sprints would be ideal. I'm sure anyone watching would only be impressed and inspired by your dedication and effort. My Tynemouth Longsands Beach Bootcamp incorporates all of this, why not join us and learn what to do?

I would suggest training in the morning before breakfast and away from the hottest part of the day, this also leaves the rest of the day free to relax

**Try some small stomach crunches on your sun bed** - repeating 10-30 crunches every few hours will soon take you to over 100 for the day.

Make sure you drink around 2-3 litres of water during the day - stay away from cans of fizzy soda or energy drinks, they may contain up to 20 teaspoons of sugar per bottle.

**Avoid rich creamy cocktails** - they are packed with calories. A spirit with slimline tonic or a glass wine is a better option. Beer or lager will probably leave you bloated.

**Snacking on nuts and crisps at the bar is too easy** - limit yourself to a few, then move them out of your reach.

**Choose grilled food rather than fried** - then make sensible choices such as vegetables or salad rather than chips.

**Eating from a buffet** - fish and lean meat are the best choices and will keep you fuller for longer.

Incorporating a few of my tips should help you continue to look and feel good throughout your summer break.

### DAVID'S SUMMING UP

Happiness is found when you stop comparing yourself to other people. Enjoy your holiday, make sensible food and alcohol choices if you are looking to limit your calorie intake and watch your waistline. But most of all feel good in your own skin.

www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk

# Need meeting space for a brainstorm?



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# Barry Speker@sintons.co.uk



66

...a recent poll
found it to be
the biggest sightseeing letdown
in Europe...





Plans announced by Facebook to launch a new digital currency called Libra next year have been called exciting and innovative by some, but megalomaniacal by others.

The social media giant claims the product will give billions of people more freedom with money and will 'right the many wrongs of the present system'.

There may be concerns as to security of identity and data (warnings about Cambridge Analytical) but Facebook say they will keep financial and social data strictly separate. Users will not be targeted with adverts based on spending habits.

The concept of putting Libra money on your phone, storing it in your Calibra wallet and spending it by text or WhatsApp has support from Über, PayPal, eBay, Spotify, Visa and Lyft. It is certainly consistent with our increasingly contactless world.

FB plan to peg Libra to well-known currencies to avoid wild swings in value, as with crypto currencies like Bitcoin with concerns at money laundering. Calibra are even promising to refund any Libra which is stolen.

US regulators have threatened to step in and have asked that Congress closely examine the project (if they can understand it).

I can not resist mention of Sintons' successes at the recent Northern Law Awards. Winning in 5 of the 6 categories nominated was quite an achievement, particularly Law Firm of the Year (6+ partners). It was an excellent dinner, with compère Alfie Joey being far more tactful than James Corden.

There are some must-see sights for every traveller. These include the Parthenon in Athens, Ponte Vecchio in Florence, Rembrandt's Night Watch in Amsterdam, the Rialto in Venice and Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa in the Louvre in Paris. Some 20,000 people a day visit da Vinci's most famous painting. However a recent poll found it to be the biggest sight-seeing letdown in Europe.

This may be due to the disappointing dimensions of the portrait, as well as it being protected by its gilded and bullet-proof glass case and the forest of flailing arms brandishing smartphones.

A new and more intimate view of the enigmatic smile will now be available as part of the 500th anniversary of the artist's death. In autumn the Louvre will allow audiences a close-up view by donning a virtual reality headset. This will reveal details hidden to the naked eye. It may make the viewing more special but it will also be available across the world via the HTC digital service Viveport.

Will this encourage more visitors 'in the flesh' or be yet another progression of the universal use of VT and the 4D environment.

Among the countless promises being cascaded during the Tory leadership debates was the BJ suggestion that HS2 be delayed and more money ploughed into the current rail system particularly in the north?

Definitely an attractive idea compared with catching an HS2 train from London arriving in Newcastle after stopping at Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds - arriving eventually in about 2045!

The Women's World Cup France 2019 continues to gather pace and attract large audiences. The fact that the Football Association banned female footballers from 1921 until 1971 now casts a shadow over our suggestion of having been modern, enlightened and equal. Quite why it has taken so long for women's football to be encouraged and appreciated (compared, for example with tennis) is difficult to understand.

The commentators and pundits concentrate on the game. No space for cheap jibes about not understanding the off-side rule or of not being a 'looker'. The comments about sartorial elegance are limited to England Coach Phil Neville's Southgate waistcoat. And no further mention of three Irons on the shirt!









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