

NORTHERN

INSIGHT

OCTOBER 2021

ISSUE 73

MICHAEL MORTIMER BUILDS SUCCESS AT HIVE ESTATES

business • technology • property • media • education • motors • fashion • arts • leisure



The North East's **Leading** Security Agency



SERVICES OFFERED

Tailor made protection for todays world...

- Security Guards
- Mobile Patrols
- CCTV
- Key Holding
- Alarm Response
- Door Supervision

**HIGHLY TRAINED &
QUALIFIED STAFF
& PERSONNEL**



For More Information Call:

 **0191 284 4730**

B6 Brenkley Way, Blezard Business Park
Seaton Burn, Newcastle, NE13 6DS

t3security.co.uk  info@t3security.co.uk 



*...the beginning
of a beautiful
friendship*

Rick Blaine, Casablanca

Agencies may come and go but we've been in business since 1999 and we still deal with some of the same clients and suppliers that we did back in 1999. We won't pretend it's been smooth sailing for everyone but we believe in long term relationships, and our clients seem to agree.

Silver Bullet: your truly integrated service

*Are you in need of a **marketing partner**? Talk to us*



@SilverBulletPR



Hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk

www.silverbulletmarketing.co.uk

t: 0191 261 7422

Silver Bullet:
marketing

Silver Bullet:
creative

Silver Bullet:
media

She knows Pythagoras' Theorem is not just for classrooms.

Education here is not just about getting the highest grades.

It's all about putting into practice what you learn.

To make better decisions for tackling life.

Visit us and experience what it's like for your child to be educated at a family-run independent school, in an environment without airs or graces but with deep rooted family values.

Visit us on Open Day 20th November

and know more about this 137-year old institution with a heritage in building generations.

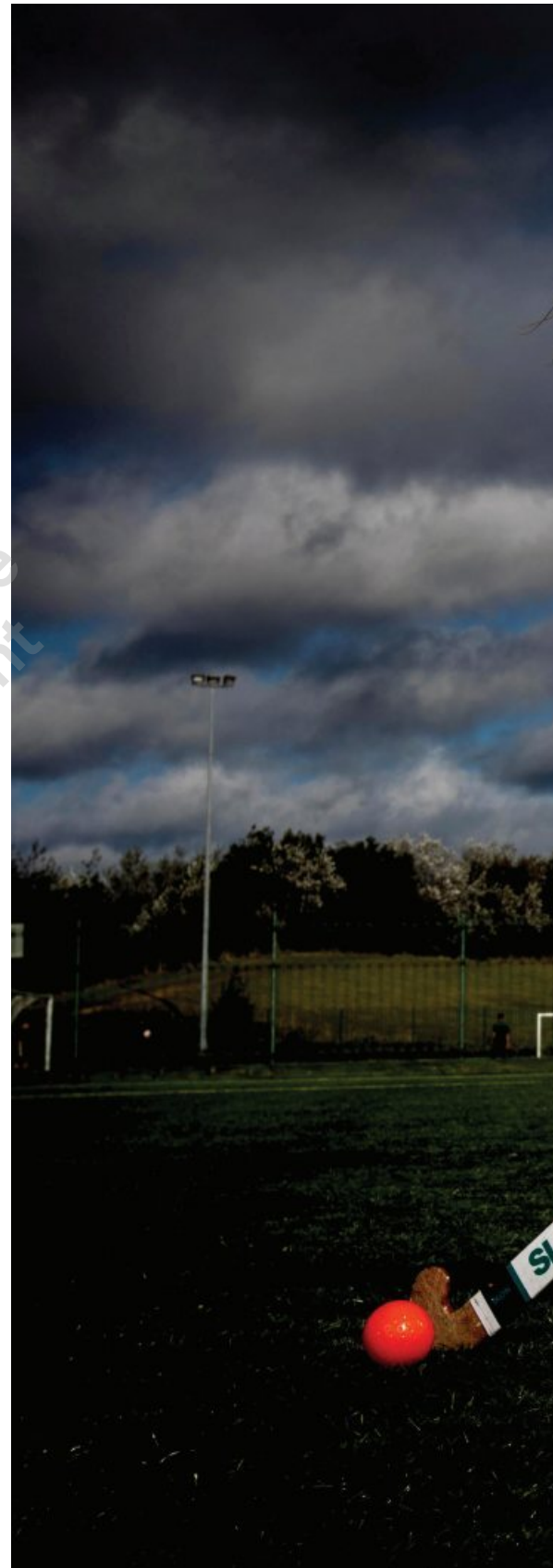
A heritage we are truly proud of. Since 1884.



ARGYLE
HOUSE
SCHOOL
SUNDERLAND

19 & 20 THORNHILL PARK, SUNDERLAND SR2 7LA | 0191 5100726

ARGYLEHOUSESCHOOL.CO.UK







a *range* of Kitchen Essentials

Make the most of your kitchen and make it the space and heart of your home.

Walter Dix & Co can help you make your home somewhere you truly feel safe and content by providing the best in quality range cookers, refrigeration products, extraction hoods, accessories and cookware. Leading brands of range cooker include those from AGA, Falcon, Mercury, Rangemaster, Stoves, Lacanche, Wolf, Ilve and Steel.

The extensive showroom at Walter Dix & Co is open six days a week and their informative website provides all information of the product ranges too. Their expert and knowledgeable staff can provide all the assistance and unbiased advice and guide you around each brand of appliance. As the AGA, Everhot, ESSE and Rayburn dealer for the North East and North Yorkshire, Walter Dix & Co have dedicated displays and specific guidance on heat store range cookers can be found under one roof. Regular events and offers are provided on all their products.

**Walter Dix & Co, 1 Stirling Court, Eleventh Avenue North, Team Valley, Gateshead,
Tyne & Wear, NE11 0JF
0191 4820033
wdix.co.uk
sales@wdix.co.uk**

CREDITS

Managing Director

Michael Grahamslaw

Design

Lu O'Rourke

Accounts Manager

Lisa Grahamslaw

Lead Photography

Simon Williams (Crest Photography)

Additional Photography

Laurence Sweeney,

The Bigger Picture

Front Cover Photography

Dan Aziz

Editorial Contributors

Jack Grahamslaw, Holly Grahamslaw,

Graham Courtney, Barry Speker, David Fairlamb,

Alex Nelson, Stuart Forster

Social Media

Sophie Hannah (JAM Prints & Marketing Limited)



24

All photos are copyright MJG Publishing Ltd and are taken solely for use in Northern Insight. If you wish to purchase a photograph please contact Michael Grahamslaw on mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com

Photo charges £50 for a single image, £295 for full buy out of a photo shoot. Advertising charges: There is a £25 charge for every set of amendments, following the first initial set of amendments, which are free of charge, for adverts designed by Northern Insight (MJG Publishing Ltd). Cancellations: If an advert is cancelled by the booker within a seven day period prior to our print deadline, the advert will be charged in full, plus VAT.

Editorial

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

Advertisements

Although every care is taken to ensure accuracy the Publishers regret that they cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage caused by an error in the printing or damage to, a loss of artwork, transparencies or photographs. Complaints will only be considered for up to a week after publication. Advertising must be received by the 20th of the month. No responsibility is accepted for errors.

FOREWORD

Welcome to the October edition of Northern Insight.

This is our 73rd issue and one to enjoy as the nights draw in and Winter approaches. Our cover stars are Hive Estates who are challenging tradition to break the house selling mould. In a plethora of fantastic business features look out for a fascinating article from CSI Teambuilding who are helping to reengage employees who have been remote working with their unique team building events.

Its also great to fully reintroduce our popular social pages including the Central Employment Race Day and Synergi Golf Day.

In an enhanced Travel section we preview the return of Emirates flights to Dubai from Newcastle and also showcase a trip to Riga in Latvia.

We also make a first visit to the lovely Bar and Block steakhouse and a welcome return to the lovely Ship Inn at Wylam.

A mega edition! We hope everyone finds something to enjoy. Many thanks as ever to all our loyal clients, contributors and readers.

Stay safe and well. Till next month...

M.J. Grahamslaw

Michael Grahamslaw, Publisher
mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com



102



136

CONTENTS

8-9 • Business News

10-11 • Cover Story

Michael Mortimer builds success at Hive Estates

26-28 • Deals and Investments News

72 • Manufacturing News

78 • Charity and Community News

86 • Legal and Financial News

100 • Technology News

116 • Property and Construction News

138-140 • Marketing and Media News

174 • Arts News

182 • Leisure News

210 • Comment



LEARNING CURVE'S AMBITION TO BE THE BEST EMPLOYER

Celebrating 'good' has never been more important, and one regional organisation that supports countless other businesses across the country jumped at the chance to sign up to the Good Work Pledge – an initiative by the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) which recognises 'good work' that boosts the region's economy.

Although being based outside of the North of Tyne, the Learning Curve Group is eligible to be part of the scheme due to its significant operations delivering education and training opportunities via fully funded courses and apprenticeships in the region. The Spennymoor-based company offers services both directly to individual learners and employers, as well as through Further Education (FE) providers, and is one of many to sign the pledge, putting people at the heart of their business.

The pledge has allowed organisations including Your Print Specialists, Sage, Newcastle University, Haines Watts, Robson Laidler and Karbon Homes, to gain recognition for providing or working towards providing 'good work'.

SUNDERLAND BUSINESS CAN BENEFIT FROM RELAUNCHED PARTNERSHIP

The opportunity for Sunderland city centre businesses to save money across a whole host of areas is now available, thanks to a renewed partnership between Sunderland BID and Great Annual Savings Group.

Both organisations are building on their existing relationship to encourage companies to sign up with GAS, which can help them save money in everything from utilities to payment services and insurance.

Great Annual Savings Group (GAS) has more than 11,000 business customers across the UK and Ireland and can offer procurement and efficiency consultancy for free to any business in Sunderland.

The company has been a sponsor of a

number of Sunderland BID initiatives, including of the 100 Quick Wins clean-up campaign run in conjunction with Sunderland College and Sunderland Council.

The company is heavily invested in the city and is Principal Partner and front of shirt sponsor for SAFC.



DURHAM HAIRDRESSING SITE LOCKS IN NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARD

A one-of-a-kind hairdressing directory that launched during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic has been named a UK Small Business of 2021.

Stylebook Directory is an online directory that allows customers to find a stylist based on their preferred hairstyle. Launched last November by Sarah Yorke, the business matches customers with local stylists and is the only directory specific to the hairdressing industry.

Barbers, trainees and hairdressers can sign-up to the directory for free to promote their salon, build a portfolio to attract clientele or hire new staff. Future development of the website is set to include an online shop where users can buy haircare products.

Now Stylebook Directory has been named a winner in the Lloyds Bank Small Business of 2021 awards, which celebrates firms across the UK. The business was selected in recognition of its innovation and determination to launch during challenging conditions.



PACIFICA GROUP RECRUITS DOZENS OF YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH GOVERNMENT KICKSTART SCHEME

Pacifica Group, the leading County Durham-based UK domestic energy and appliance services provider, has recruited 10 young people and has plans to take on another 59 staff aged 16-24 through the Government's £2bn Kickstart Scheme.

The national home services company, which undertakes 310,000 appliance repair home visits every year, is welcoming the new recruits with the support of MINT Business Club, a government-approved gateway provider for the scheme.

Pacifica, which has its head office in Houghton Le Spring, has taken on Kickstarters for roles including administrator, eco agent, engineer van stock assistant, trainee admin assistant, service desk office juniors, site maintenance operative, trainee sales agent and labourer.

Fifty further roles are being sanctioned and approved for advertising with Pacifica, one of a number of North East businesses to benefit from MINT Business Club's access to high-quality fully funded six-month work placements for young people aged 16-24.



NEWCASTLE COLLEGE WELCOMES STUDENTS TO NEW £180,000 DIGITAL HUB

Newcastle College is welcoming students into its newly opened Digital Hub where students can thrive on digitally focused courses. The College has welcomed 400 students on digital courses across all provision and has recently launched Go Reboot Plus in partnership with Sunderland Software City, a free-to-access digital training programme for unemployed adults living in North Tyneside.

The College has invested £180,000 in the specially built Digital Hub at the College's main Rye Hill Campus, which offers a state-of-the-art teaching facility for Higher Education, upskilling and reskilling.

Andy Nicholson, Head of Digital Technologies at Newcastle College said: "Newcastle is the seventh fastest growing UK tech hub, and digital innovation increasingly cuts across all sectors and job roles. The Digital Hub will give our University Centre students the opportunity to advance their learning through the state-of-the-art facilities meaning they will be well equipped with the skills and knowledge to go out into tech related job roles."



MIRTHY BAGS £800,000 TO BUILD THE LARGEST COMMUNITY PLATFORM FOR OVER 60S

Mirthy, a community and activities platform for over-60s, has raised an £800,000 pre-seed investment, a year after launching during the pandemic and racking up over 30k users.

The pre-seed round led by Ascension's Fair By Design fund is more than double their initial target, with participation from Ada Ventures, Redrice Ventures and True. Mirthy Ltd and its co-Founders, Alex Ramamurthy and Dhruv Haria, received legal advice from Mincoffs Solicitors' corporate team throughout the investment process.

With technology adoption increasing rapidly among older demographics, Mirthy's aim is to provide a platform to allow over 60s to host or participate in activities and socialising both online and eventually offline too.

Daniel Bell, a solicitor in Mincoffs' corporate team, led the advice to Mirthy Ltd on the investment. Dan commented: "I am thrilled that Alex and Dhruv have been able to exceed their initial investment target, a credit to their vision and the valuable work they do. Both Alex and Dhruv were a pleasure to work with and I look forward to seeing how they use the investment to grow the Mirthy platform in the future."

CLIENT CARE IS TOP PRIORITY AS NEW APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED

Financial services specialist, Northern Spire Limited, has announced two new appointments, Matthew Allmond as financial advisor and Tom Harvey as marketing executive.

Matthew, 29, qualified as a financial advisor in April 2019 and brings with him a wealth of knowledge, having previously worked as an occupational pension analyst and paraplanner, gaining extensive insight into the technical side of financial planning.

Tom, 22, who has a background in business and finance, has been brought in to develop marketing leads and co-ordinate events. With the support of Northern Spire, he is also training to become a financial advisor and is currently undertaking his diploma in Regulated Financial Planning.



Northern Spire, which has offices at Defender Court, Sunderland, and provides a wide range of financial services for clients throughout the North East, that are looking to build, grow, protect or preserve wealth, is a senior partner practice of St James's Place Wealth Management.

**BRADLEY
O'MAHONEY**
Public Relations

**DON'T KEEP YOUR GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. LET US UNLOCK YOUR
BRAND AND SHOW YOU OFF TO THE WORLD.**

www.bradleyomahoney.co.uk

COVER STORY

HIVE ESTATES CHALLENGES TRADITION TO BREAK THE HOUSE SELLING MOULD

"The housing market has boomed but old attitudes to copy-and-pasting bad and outdated practices continue," laments our ambitious cover star, Michael Mortimer.

Michael is managing director of Newcastle estate agency, Hive Estates. He set-up the firm in 2016 with the aim - he says - of offering an alternative to his 'salesy' counterparts who overpromise, inflate valuations and under deliver.

Michael, 32, talks to us about shaking up the 'we've always done it this way' estate agency model, the Gucci-clad glamorous letting agent that changed the path of his future and why not fitting-in has eventually paid dividends for him.

"I suppose I could be described as a disruptor," says Michael. "But I'd say, I'm an improver. I'm not afraid to question why things are done that way and change things up."

It's an approach that has led to the business announcing a 62% increase in turnover last year, and its team doubling in size to 12, from 6, over the past twelve months.

A square peg in a round hole

Michael grew up in High Heaton, Newcastle. He did well at school, but by the time he reached A-Levels, he started to feel as though he didn't fit in. Not at home, nor at school. He left home at 17 – searching for some place, some path, someone where he could find happiness. With no A-Levels. No Degree. And no plan.

He got a dinky house-share in Heaton and a part-time job in Newcastle's John Lewis as a sales assistant. He didn't fit in here, either. After regularly butting heads with management, Michael's individual approach eventually led to disputes and him leaving.

One day in 2008, a fractious encounter with the letting agent in charge of his house turned out to be a catalyst for change and his career in property was ignited.

"I was young and naïve. I had no clue that you couldn't withhold your rent because you weren't happy with your accommodation. And that's how I ended up on the wrong side of my letting agent, June Anderson-Talbot.

"Long story short, she turned up looking for the rent in a fabulous little black dress, Gucci sunglasses and Louboutin heels with beautiful blonde hair swishing. We hit it off. After a heated back and forth, we managed to resolve the rent issue.

"Ultimately, she saw some potential in a feisty, sometimes misguided, 18-year-old me. She offered me a part-time job doing some web design for her letting agency one morning a week and that's when I fell in love with the business. The meeting with June really did change my life, in that single moment."

After eight years progressing through the ranks at several North East estate agents, Michael began to build a concept for his own estate agency – where things could be done better.

"I just thought, we've lost our purpose here, our reason for being. We're too busy carrying out practices that don't deliver for our clients, instead of making them happy through fair ways of working, effective marketing of their property and achieving the best prices possible for them."

Michael took his vision for a transparent and more modern approach to selling and renting homes to landlords he worked with, George Jenkins and Alastair Adams. With George and Ali as investors, Hive Estates was born.

The agency, based in Newcastle's fringe suburb of Sandyford, says its rapid growth is down to a number of things: "It's our accurate house price valuations and gaining our customers 105% of the asking price on average, when the national average is 95.8%, according to GetAgent. We do this in market-leading time. And, because we use state-of-the-art videography and new, modern ways of marketing homes, including Tik Tok and Instagram.

"We don't lock house sellers into long unfair contracts and don't charge extortionate withdrawal fees either. My fabulous team work with them every step of their home moving journey. Above all, we care about making our customers happy. That's it. That's our special formula."

www.hiveestates.com

“
...I'm not afraid to
question why things
are done that way and
change things up...
”





THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST CALLING FOR MORE WOMEN IN TECH

From a law degree to helping grow a wedding decoration business, Louise Gilbey is keen to encourage more women to get into tech as she spreads her wings in her latest role at a leading managed service provider with offices across the UK.

Having joined razorblue in May 2021, Louise is tasked with identifying new business opportunities and talking to businesses who would benefit from using razorblue's services. Her role is mostly focused on being out and about, keeping in touch with local businesses and getting involved in networking events to help raise awareness of the company's vast portfolio of award-winning managed IT services.

razorblue has recently announced its most successful financial year to date, its second acquisition in as many years, and has been shortlisted in not one but two categories in the North East Business Awards.

Louise said: "Every business needs a reliable IT partner, and our products and services provide end-to-end, unified solutions. Our fantastic reputation makes my job a lot easier! I have been in business development roles for 10 years now and over this time I have developed a large and strong network, which is integral to helping the business to grow."

After initially completing a law degree at Newcastle University, Louise unintentionally fell into business development and found that she had a natural talent for it. With a career that has spanned various industries including technology, weddings, legal and the housing sectors, she's grateful to be back in the tech sector, which she describes as a fast-paced, growing and exciting industry to be a part of.

Louise continued: "Working for razorblue is brilliant! I've never worked for such a large business before, and I was nervous I wouldn't feel connected to anyone outside my immediate team, but this has not been the case. The company culture is remarkable, there is such a team spirit throughout, and everyone is super nice."

"There is an open culture, directors are easily accessible are keen to know your opinion, it really is a team effort, and we have lots of exciting plans for the future."

The technology sector is largely male oriented,



Louise Gilbey

with women making up just 16 per cent of the workforce, whereas the razorblue culture focuses on being far more inclusive, with over 20 per cent of its employees being female and the majority of those in leadership roles.

Louise is keen to see a greater uptake of roles for females in the technology industry, encouraging women to ignore perceived obstacles and follow their passion.

She continued: "If you are at the very beginning of your tech journey, get experience and utilise contacts. It's a great sector and one that is only going to continue to grow. Put yourself out there, work hard, ask for help when you need it. Remember that anything is possible!"

Louise intends to remain with the business long term, thanks to the wealth of opportunities and scope for personal development. The company focuses on investing in and encouraging its staff and boasts an array of remarkable career journeys as employees are given ample occasions to maximise on their potential.

Five minutes with Louise Gilbey:

How did you get into Business Development?

By accident. My sister-in-law ran a wedding décor business, she used to attend wedding fairs and wanted some company one day, as they could be quite long days.

It seemed daft to be there and not try to help so I started to chat to couples about their big day and made four large sales, and that was my introduction into the world of sales and I haven't looked back since!

Best part of your job?

People, my job is all about people. I'm a very social person and I'm passionate about people, their businesses and the local community, and I love to help where and when I can. This career allows me to do this, it's very fulfilling work.

Describe a typical day at razorblue?

One of the great things about the role is that every day is different. I usually start the day doing my admin tasks mainly emails and writing proposals. But the majority of my time is spent with people.

Whether that be in a team meeting, working on strategies, meeting prospects, or building my network and fostering relationships at a networking event.

I'm rarely in the office, you can usually find me visiting companies' offices, or in a coffee shop. It's not a bad life!

If you could do something else in business, what would it be?

I would love to buy an old barn and convert it into a farm shop and café, might be a semi-retirement plan – but that's a while off yet.

How would you describe yourself in four words?

Enthusiastic, conscientious, caring and clumsy.

[razorblue.com](https://www.razorblue.com)

Over 500 CEOs trust us with their company's IT You should too.

We're a trusted technology partner, delivering Managed IT Services to businesses across the UK, 24 hours a day.

Whether you're looking for a full outsource solution, or a partnership to bolster your internal team – we've got a solution that fits, and is guaranteed to save you money.

Book a no obligation, 15 minute chat with our friendly team:

t: 0333 344 6 344 e: sales@razorblue.com

razorblue.com




razorblue
IT Solutions for Business



Gold
Microsoft Partner






THE POWER OF AUTOMATION

Jonathan Anderson, Managing Director of razorblue Business Software discussing why and how businesses can benefit from automation.

Most companies have already made great strides in improving customer experience, maximising profitability and increasing efficiencies.

But many are still missing out on huge opportunities even with direct access to the most valuable asset available to them; data.

For organisations to recover and succeed in 2021 and beyond, business leaders must seriously consider integrating automation into their business operations and supply chains.

Neither are possible without first putting data at the centre of everything.

How to become data driven?

To be data driven, it is important to "tune out the noise", no easy feat given the sheer volume of data available to you.

After years of collecting, storing, analysing, and reconfiguring troves of information, it's hard to know where to start with cleansing, managing, maintaining and analysing.

As a priority, you need to recognise what is business-critical data, identifying and separating financial, marketing, consumer, and master data.

Then look at how this data can help you, what trends you can identify, what forecasts you can create, what success looks like and where the gaps are.

Why automate?

Digitising mundane, manual tasks means that resource and time can be reallocated and remain focused on the important and human-centric roles such as relationship-building or creative tasks.

Automation is not about cutting jobs, it's about



getting the most out of your workforce, increasing productivity and reliability.

Automating operations ensures that essential tasks are not forgotten or run out of sequence, that data input is correct, and that risk of human-error is eliminated, improving efficiency and streamlining processes.

How to get started?

1. Start small – if you're still at or near the starting line, looking at your entire pipeline is inevitably daunting.

So, begin with the low-skilled tasks that gobble up time and resource. Mundane, repetitive administrative tasks are a great early candidate for automation.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is the easiest and cheapest cognitive technology to implement and can bring quick and high ROI. Examples include help with updating customer files with address changes or service additions.

Products such as Microsoft's Power Automate are particularly useful for automating simpler tasks, such as document approvals, timesheets, and holiday requests.

Starting small also gives you and your workforce time to adjust and grow trust in automation.

2. Look at the bigger picture – it's vital to have a long-term strategy in place with the intention of driving sustainable change.

Embedding automation into your processes and

supply chains is a journey, you must identify priorities and create a detailed roadmap before taking the plunge.

Misconstrued automation creates as much new manual work as it eliminates and often this comes from unrealistic expectations.

It's vital that you treat automation as a long-term investment, target tasks that add significant value to the business.

3. Don't waste money – automation can play an instrumental role in your business growth, but only if used and implemented correctly and with purpose.

The marketplace is saturated with off-the-shelf automation tools, but many are flawed with poor error handling capabilities and fragility.

If you are looking to automate critical tasks or processes with several components, bespoke ERP solutions would be better suited.

Regardless, it's always best to get expert advice and guidance from software experts. They will work with you to identify a long-term strategy with realistic goals and offer options to suit your organisation's specific needs and budgets.

Get in touch with razorblue's business software team today to find out how we have supported businesses like yours in adopting automation to drive growth and productivity, improve efficiency and enhance customer experience and trust.

razorblue.com



TORRO

iPhone 13

LUXURY LEATHER ACCESSORIES

TORRO.CO.UK



Fern Rivett

UNW PROMOTES FERN RIVETT TO PARTNER IN ITS AUDIT AND ASSURANCE TEAM

Newcastle-based chartered accountancy and business advisory firm UNW has announced the promotion of Fern Rivett to audit and assurance partner, bringing the total number of partners at the firm to thirteen.

Fern began her career training with KPMG in Newcastle before joining UNW in 2012 and was promoted to Senior Manager in the firm's audit and assurance department in 2017.

Acting for a wide range of clients, from start-up businesses to international groups, Fern works extensively with businesses across a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing, property, and construction. Some of her current clients include Leeds-based property investment and development company Evans Group; Gateshead subsea manufacturing specialist Express Engineering; and Thompsons of Prudhoe, the family-owned specialist demolition firm based in Northumberland.

Reflecting on Fern's progression, UNW's managing partner Andrew Wilson said: "We are delighted to recognise Fern's success and contribution to the team with her promotion to partner. She is an outstanding professional who can not only draw on a considerable breadth of experience and expertise, but who has a genuine passion for providing the highest standards of service and advice to her clients.

"She is highly respected by those clients and her colleagues and has already made a significant contribution to what we are achieving as a business. Fern's promotion demonstrates that

there are some fantastic opportunities here at UNW for those with ambition, ability and an appetite for constant development."

Fern said: "I'm thrilled to be promoted to partner at such a progressive firm. The audit department and firm as a whole has grown consistently since I joined nine years ago and I'm excited about the opportunities we have to expand our impressive client base and ensure we maintain the highest standards of client service.

"We have some fantastic people here that I'm fortunate to work with and, as well as recruiting people with 'Big 4' experience, we're now very much focused on training our own talent. This is proven by the prize-winning students we have in the team who began their career with UNW straight out of university and school. We have further new graduates and school leavers joining us in September as we continue to grow, and I'm looking forward to supporting them in achieving their career goals."

The firm has also announced a series of further promotions across its various service lines.

Peter Sym, who joined UNW's graduate programme in 2014, has been promoted to Senior Audit Manager, while Laura Kendal, who joined the firm in 2014 after spending three years in a broad accountancy role, has been

promoted to Audit Manager.

Hayley Deeming and Sarah Smart, who joined the firm in 2015 and 2014 respectively, have been promoted to Senior Tax Manager, while Gillian Smith and Cathy Howe have been promoted to Tax Manager.

Elsewhere, Andrew Wimshurst, who joined UNW in October 2014 after spending almost 10 years in practice, has been promoted to Senior Accounting Services Manager, and Mohammed Miah has been promoted to Manager in the firm's Corporate Finance team. Jacalyn Rivett has been promoted to Project Manager in UNW's central support team.

Andrew Wilson added: "Behind each of these promotions is a story, different in some respects, but common in being characterised by a commitment and an aspiration to being the best at what they do. We firmly believe in investing in our team's development and recognising both individual and collective success. This is reflected in the commitment the firm has to continuing to hire, develop, and retain the best people, enabling us to go above and beyond in the provision of the best advice and service to our clients."

www.unw.co.uk

BOUCHON

BISTROT FRANÇAIS
Est. depuis 2007

Classically French...

OPENING HOURS
- Tuesday to Saturday -
Lunch 12.00-14.00
Dinner 18.00-21.00

4-6 GILESGATE, HEXHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND NE46 3NJ
Tel 01434 609 943
www.bouchonbistrot.co.uk

[@bouchonbistrot](#) [@bouchonhexham](#) [@bouchonhexham](#)

ANNA REAY

ANNAGRAMS

As seen on the
BBC, ITV and in
The Times

- Virtual Greetings Songs
- Surprise Doorstep Performances
- Singergram

07904 68 59 08
www.annagramsgift.com

Great British Entrepreneur Awards Finalist 2021.

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Twitter](#)



Grand Hotel
TYNEMOUTH

*When It has to be,
It has to be the
Grand Hotel*

We are the ideal venue for
every occasion including
weddings, dining, afternoon
teas, business meetings and
conferences.

For further information contact:
Grand Hotel, 14 Grand Parade,
Tynemouth, NE30 4ER
Tel: 0191 293 6666
www.grandhoteltynemouth.co.uk
events@grandhoteltynemouth.co.uk



Your Wedding

Joanne Evans and Michael Gibson were recently married at the Church of the Holy Saviour in Tynemouth. Following a lovely service, 130 guests enjoyed a sumptuous reception at the nearby Grand Hotel.







CSI TEAMBUILDING EVENTS WILL HELP EMPLOYEES' BOND AFTER LOCKDOWN

A Tees Valley company which specialises in Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation, is helping businesses re-engage employees who have been remote working, with their unique team building events.

As more people return to their offices and workplaces, CSI Training and Events Ltd is offering its crime scene-themed activities, to help strengthen team cohesiveness and re-build working relationships.

PPE is an integral part of the CSI Training and Events experience, so not only do the events provide a fun and informative way to develop teams and break the ice after a period of social isolation, they also offer an ideal way for companies to safely take part in a group activity which reduces the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

CSI Training and Events is run by Teesside University graduates Angela Davies and Dionne Watson, who founded the company in 2012, after previously working as Crime Scene Investigators (CSI's) for Northumbria Police.

As well as offering Educational workshops, Training and Consultancy in Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation, the pair also run corporate events and team-building exercises based on true to life crime scenarios.

Angela said: "Obviously, we have not been able to run our corporate events throughout the lockdown, but as people are beginning to go back to work, they are the perfect way to help colleagues re-acquaint themselves.

"The exercises are designed to help build communication and understanding between participants, so are ideal for teams who have not met face-to-face for some time.

"We have had to adapt the exercises slightly to maintain social distancing, but they are perfectly designed to minimise transmission.

"We try and keep the scenarios as realistic as possible so PPE, which the participants get to take home with them, is provided as standard."

CSI Training and Events Ltd was founded with the support of Launchpad, Teesside University business incubator. In 2019, it announced the launch of a new digital sister company, Crime Scene Assist Ltd, which has launched a new App, Crime Scene Assistant, designed to help first responders preserve vital evidence when they arrive at an incident.

Steve Dougan, Head of Enterprise at Teesside University, said: "Angela and Dionne have constantly

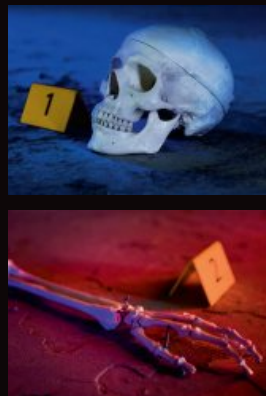


shown new ways of innovating and adapting their business, and we are delighted to see their company continue to grow.

"For many employees, the only contact they will have had with their colleagues over the past few months will have been over Zoom or Teams, so an opportunity to re-build those working relationships in a more informal manner will be much-needed.

"The teambuilding events offered by Angela and Dionne have been immensely popular and I am sure will prove to be extremely useful to companies in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic."

**For more information visit
www.csitrainingandevents.com or email
info@csitrainingandevents.com**





DEALING WITH ANXIETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Steve Black, also known as Blackie, is well known in the sporting world for his positive mind, fit body approach. More recently he has been using that knowledge to help businesses, individuals and community groups through his latest venture Protean Solutions.

Here he looks at dealing with anxiety in the workplace, particularly pertinent as many return to office-based positions after working from home.

"To deal with anxiety in any workplace you must acknowledge it as something that exists in the workforce. It is important staff know it is okay to not be okay, and that as an employer you have support in place. Often just that reassurance can be enough to hold back a bubbling anxiety inside some.

"The second most important way to stem anxiety in the workplace, reducing sickness levels, is to be able to spot the signs early in employees, and yourself.

"Many organisations are bringing in experts to work with teams on motivation, reduction of stress and better productiveness, and to actually spot where anxiety is likely to occur, in who and why. They then put strategies together to reduce risk and to support sufferers.

"Anxiety in the workplace shows itself in many guises. Most will look for those not coping, signs of depression, calling in sick regularly and not performing to their usual standard. However, there are other signs which are just as important and if not spotted, can lead to serious damage on mental health.

"Over the years of working with high profile achievers, I have come to realise that one of the most dangerous forms and signs of anxiety are from those who are hiding it, pushing through, working harder than ever and are actually performing amazingly.

"Surprised? So was I.

"This anxiety positively creates performance under pressure, but is a form of hypomania or mania. The sufferer uses it as an endorphin, as a prop to keep going and as a driver to achieve. Sounds like this is positive. But this kind of behaviour isn't healthy, is short lived and can lead to a crash that is more detrimental, taking longer to recover from.

"Signs of hypomania / mania are talking faster than usual, over the top reactions / friendliness, over brightness, working long / strange hours, excess energy beyond the norm and shortness of breath / shallow breathing. It resembles a form a panic. They are probably first at their desk, last to leave, and sending messages or emails at strange times of night.

"These people are working on adrenaline caused by anxiety. They probably shake occasionally, their stomach is probably knotted tight, and they may also be thirsty due to irregular breathing.

"If this only lasts a few days whilst there is an immediate issue causing the anxiety then this mania can help performance. But if it's a longer-term issue, as an employer you need to help.

"Another sign is OCD behaviour. Is someone displaying signs of repetitive behaviour that isn't normal? OCD is triggered

by anxiety so if someone appears to be acting out of character then there could be an issue. Other physical signs of anxiety is a change in appearance/dress sense, sweating, tiredness, not engaging and trouble concentrating.

"Make sure your HR department is prepared or bring in a consultant who can spot signs and deliver courses of action. The investment is worth it if you stem sick leave and have healthy staff who can enjoy their jobs.

"Anxiety, if lived with for too long, can cause social anxiety and can result in team members on long-term sick. Offer solutions such as a phased return to the office, or longer to work from home as they adjust to the changes. And of course, always be mindful that anxiety can lead to burn out.

"Once you have spotted it, acknowledged it and put processes in place, there are further actions you can do.

- Ensure team members have someone other than their line manager to talk to.
- Enforce good time management –to arrive on time and to leave on time (a time structure helps with anxiety).
- Give access to support activities such as yoga, mindfulness and calming exercises.
- Set honest deadlines for work and talk openly about the impact of those deadlines.
- Reassure where you can.
- Set out the office to offer lots of space. Anxiety is exacerbated by too many people in close confines (especially after a pandemic where we have been physically remote).
- Have access to things like hand sanitisers, wipes, cleaning products.
- Invest in an expert coming in to lift the mood and re-engage your team.
- Ask sufferers how else you can help.

"Most of all, be kind to each other. Support and care and we will all thrive better. God bless you all!"

Blackie's portfolio is impressive, with big names including Kevin Keegan, Rob Andrew, Jonny Wilkinson, Jonathan Edwards and Glen McCrory endorsing the former Newcastle Falcons and British Lions rugby coach. He now works with companies including Cascade Cash Management, The John McEnroe Academy and Fairstone to name a few.

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



“

...Most of all, be kind
to each other...

”



Georgia Boddy

RISING STAR

GEORGIA BODDY

Cascade's new Head of Business Operations, supporting business from the inside out.

Georgia Boddy has been appointed as the new head of business operations at Cascade Cash Management. The newly created role will ensure that the inhouse administration and management team have someone focusing on the business internally, whilst they concentrate on customer care and service delivery.

Georgia, who is 24 and from South Shields, has been with Cascade for three years and she is delighted to have been promoted. The move away from her previous customer service role will now see Georgia running the administration team, supporting the client facing team and ensuring that the office runs smoothly. She will also support the managing director, Dr Emma Black, and the marketing team with campaigns, events, assets and ideas.

Named for the second year in a row as the Most Innovative FinTech Company 2021, Cascade is the leading, award-winning, professional cash management company delivering an independent and transparent savings service designed to generate enhanced cash returns and increased depositor protection.

The Cascade team help clients complete onboarding paperwork for each bank and building society selected for savers over £100,000. Savers can then use the online portal to view their savings in one convenient place, with the dedicated support of Cascade personnel. Clients include individuals, companies and charities. Partners of the service include IFA's, solicitors, attorneys and accountants, many who self-brand the product for presentation to their own clients.

Having been working from home this last 18 months, Georgia says the promotion comes at the ideal time as the team move back into face-to-face operations in the office.

She said: "I am feeling really positive about this new role and am confident I have a lot to give. The position comes at a time when it is exciting to all be moving back into the office as a team, and that internal team support is now very much needed.

"It is a great opportunity for me to become a professional supporting a financial team and I am relishing the training that comes with the role, which could take me up to Level six in Investment Operations with the CISI."

Prior to Cascade, Georgia had no experience in the financial world, having finished a qualification in customer care. Dr Emma Black spotted her potential though and welcomed her to the team. She said:

"As soon as I met Georgia, I knew she had a special future ahead of her and I'm absolutely thrilled that she continues to commit her time to us here in Cascade. Georgia is a natural leader and this has shone through during the pandemic, with Georgia leading the way on wellbeing initiatives to keep us together as a team while we were physically kept apart.

Georgia's much deserved promotion to Head of Business Operations is a reflection of both her quality and potential, complementing our focus on delivering outstanding customer service. She has started superbly and we are already reaping the benefits of her new role."

Having recently announced an important expansion of its service, opening up the company's proprietary portal and its savings data to millions of savers in the UK, the team are restructuring in a bid to create a more sustainable approach and attitude. Previously the service had been available to high-net-worth individuals with more than £250,000, but the company is now open to balances of over £100,000, with new services launched for those with less than £100,000 too.

Along with the new positioning in the marketplace, opportunities to work on exciting concepts for clients and potential clients is becoming a company focus, especially in a bid to do well, to do good.

Establishing themselves as a business with purpose, the Cascade team will be working hard to enable people to 'Do Something Good' with cash, including raising funds for local charities and causes.

A new series of events is also on the horizon for subscribing members and visitors including Rapid Networking and Full Flow speaker events. A full day Deep Dive conference is also planned for 2022, with details to be released soon.

Georgia, whose partner is in the Royal Marines and own a boxer dog which she walks regularly, concluded: "I will be seizing this opportunity to be a bigger part of the organisation with both hands. The more knowledge I can get, the more I can support the team and the bigger a difference I can make. A big focus for me will also include the wellbeing of our team, which is so important in the current climate. Cascade cares about its team, so we will be looking for many ways to make them continue to feel valued and enjoy their roles.

"The new events are a really pro-active way for us to help more people, and the new campaigns coming on board are not only a solid opportunity for new customers but are a new dynamic to what we can achieve as a team to give charity or community support. It is such exciting times and I have so much enthusiasm to be part of this ever-growing team for a long time to come!"

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



GROWING DEMAND FOR FAIR AND INCLUSIVE WORKING CULTURES SEES EQS ACQUIRE EW GROUP IN SEVEN-FIGURE DEAL

Leading technology specialist in cognitive disability and mental wellness, eQuality Solutions Group (eQS), has acquired diversity and inclusion consultancy Equality Works Group (EW Group) in a seven-figure deal that will see eQS on track to achieve its target of £30m turnover by 2023.

This is the second acquisition for the North East headquartered firm as part of its ambitious 'buy and build' growth strategy to become the leading global provider of equality, diversity, inclusivity and mental wellbeing (EDI&MW) solutions as workplace demand for fair and inclusive working cultures continues to grow.

London-based EW Group will add complementary skills, products and services to eQS's existing offering, which provides specialist EDI&MW equipment, software, training and mentoring in education, workplace and government sectors.

eQS CEO Andy Gough sees the acquisition of EW Group as a pivotal step in consolidating the fragmented equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) market. He said: "This acquisition is a critical step for eQS in the workplace market and our plan is to make further strategic acquisitions as we continue on our pathway to become the global leading provider in this specialist space across various sectors and geographies."



NEW MANUFACTURING BUSINESS, SE-TEK LIMITED, ESTABLISHED AFTER MBO AT KOMATSU MINING

A team of industrial manufacturing specialists have established a new business, SE-TEK Ltd, after completing a Management Buy Out (MBO) of Komatsu Mining's UK conveyor manufacturing operation.

SE-TEK will continue to operate from a 200,000 sq ft manufacturing facility in Sunderland, which the business has operated out of for the past 13 years, with an existing workforce of around 100, with plans to increase headcount as the business expands into new geographical markets and product areas.

The business manufactures and supplies conveyor components and spare parts to Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for the on-site transportation and processing of products in the aggregates, mining, tunnelling and construction sectors.

Also providing fabrication services, SE-TEK will continue the business' considerable domestic and export activity working with an established customer base.

Supported by a significant seven-figure funding package and working capital facilities from Close Brothers Invoice Finance, the MBO has been triggered by Komatsu's strategy to exit from the conveying segment and divest its UK conveying business.

Advising the management team on this complex MBO was Newcastle-based RG Corporate Finance (RGCF), led by Partner and Head of CF, Carl Swansbury, CF Senior Manager Alex Simpson and CF Executive Tom Cosby.

CLEAR EDGE SETS SIGHTS ON THE FUTURE AFTER CO-FOUNDERS COMPLETE MBO

The co-founders of Clear Edge Search & Selection Ltd have completed a Management Buyout of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), iGaming and technology sectors specialist staffing business.

Terry Batty and Tom Fox, who established the Leeds-based business in 2011 have acquired the shareholding of corporate shareholder CSG and now own 100% of the company.

CSG, which is an international staffing and executive search business with more than 200 employees across seven offices on four continents, supported the establishment of Clear Edge by providing the co-founders with capital investment, along with training, IT, accountancy, finance and back-office services.

This enabled the business to build its presence in the consumer goods and digital sectors placing candidates in roles from middle management to board



level. Clear Edge has developed particular market expertise in the food, drinks, consumer durables and health, beauty & household product sectors.

Corporate finance advice for the founding shareholders was provided by Newcastle-based RG Corporate Finance (RGCF), led by Partner and Head of Corporate Finance, Carl Swansbury and Corporate Finance Assistant Ben Kain.

Tax advice was provided by RG Business Tax Director Liz Rothery with legal advice from Gordons. Legal advice for CSG was provided by Shoosmiths.



RG Corporate Finance
OPINION DRIVEN STRATEGIC ADVICE

0191 281 1292
Clear advice
Creative thinking



The
one stop
shop for all your
Accountancy
needs!

"The Coastal Accountants"

ReadMilburn

& COMPANY

71 Howard Street,
North Shields, NE30 1AF
tel: 0191 257 0355
mob: 07736 548 228
info@readmilburn.co.uk



A NORTH EAST EQUESTRIAN FIRM IS RIDING HIGH AFTER SECURING FUNDING FOR NEW PREMISES

Foley's Equestrian Surfaces, which is based in Redcar, uses carpet from cut-offs at car factories and recycles it into horse surfaces such as arenas, menages and gallops.

The firm, which was set up in early 2020, has won funding worth nearly £50,000 to refurbish a former schoolhouse in Warrenby, Redcar,

transforming it into a purpose-built processing site.

Company director Keith Rutherford said: "Larger premises means we can significantly increase our production, which in turn means we can continue to grow the business and take on more staff – at least five over the next 12 months.

"We currently sell nationally throughout the UK, but now we have more capacity to process more material, we aim to be the best supplier of quality automotive fibres across Europe."

The grant, worth £47,251, was accessed through the Tees Valley growth hub at TVCA and it is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Foley's was supported in its funding application by Nudl, a Middlesbrough-based business support consultancy.

Chief Nudl Shak Asghar said: "It's been great to work with Foley's on the funding application and ensure they get just what they need to grow.

"Like us, they're passionate about Teesside, so we're all delighted we've been able to help them build their business while staying close to their roots."

Keith added: "The team at Nudl have been brilliant and we couldn't have done it without them.

"They're all so professional and friendly, with a real can-do attitude – I wouldn't hesitate to recommend them to other companies."

MHA TAIT WALKER ADVISE MERCIA ON EXPANSION OF THE CLIMBING HANGAR

MHA Tait Walker Data Insight and Corporate Finance Teams recently advised Mercia Asset Management ahead of their equity investment into The Climbing Hangar, which saw the firm secure £4m growth capital.

The Climbing Hangar is a Liverpool-based leisure company whose facilities allow for people of all ages to get into shape via indoor climbing. The £4m investment will help to further develop its facilities and accelerate its expansion to new

venues across the UK in the future.

The company was founded by current CEO Ged MacDomhnaill, whose aim was to create a leisure centre that was the first to lower the price barrier for a sport that connects people across age, gender, race, education, and income.

Graham Dotchin, Associate Partner and Head of Data Insight at MHA Tait Walker said: "Being climbers ourselves, it was great to do a deep dive into the data of an industry we are passionate about. The Climbing Hangar demonstrated strong historic customer retention and a strong return of members post pandemic, indicating the quality of their gyms and the sustainability of their business model, which will ultimately help them to continue to grow and flourish."



CCBS Group
Business & Funding Solutions

To see a range of our recently transacted deals, visit us at www.ccbseg.co.uk/deals



Peter Cromarty

E: peter@ccbsg.co.uk
M: 07715 409 386



Graeme Harrison

E: graeme@ccbsg.co.uk
M: 07719 560 356



Matt Lister

E: matt@ccbsg.co.uk
M: 07572 854 284



"WHAT IF WE DON'T CHANGE AT ALL...
AND SOMETHING MAGICAL JUST HAPPENS?"

Business Distress and Insolvency is no joke.

Those in control of distressed businesses must proceed carefully.

Seeking good early professional advice usually means more options, and always means that a concerned director is much better informed.

Northpoint is an established local firm with a personable, pragmatic approach to best assist in business distress situations.

We advise on and act in most situations, including advisory and formal instructions, with fixed fees in many cases.

Call Greg Whitehead or Linda Farish for an initial confidential discussion with no obligation.

- Rescue/Restructure
- Voluntary Arrangement
- Administration
- Liquidation
- HMRC negotiation
- Law of Property Act
- Bankruptcy
- Partnerships



Northpoint.

Licensed Insolvency Practitioners

Greg Whitehead

Tel: 07900 241 464

greg@northpoint.co.uk

Linda Farish

Tel: 07308 662 252

linda@northpoint.co.uk



IS ONLINE MORTGAGE ADVICE A REALITY?

As with most other industries the mortgage world has seen many technology driven changes over recent years. It is something that we constantly monitor to improve our own proposition.

Up until now there has been no real "Uber" moment which has turned the market on its head, with so called disruptive technologies finding it difficult to account for the many weird and wonderful requirements of lenders across the market.

A couple of recent launches have sought to provide "advice" by way of a decision tree system, but in reality each individual's circumstances vary hugely, so matching these to a disparate lending market is a huge task. Consequently, most of these new offerings require some kind of human touch to complete the process.

We can foresee a position in the near term where certain segments of the mortgage market with very straight forward circumstances and requirements (do they really exist?) may be able to utilise an online portal.

However, having delivered a mortgage in principle through this route what happens when something changes or goes wrong, who speaks with the lender, estate agent, solicitor, the valuer, accountant, damp proof, wall tie or electricians specialist to ensure that the purchase actually completes?

Can a remote presence with whom you have no personal relationship provide a calming influence or shoulder to cry on to get one of the most important purchases anyone ever experiences over the line?

As ever a one size fits all policy can cause issues and a human intervention, negotiation or even a shoulder to cry on/sounding board for possible solutions will often be required.

All of that said, we would certainly promote



Paul Hardingham, Director of Innovate Mortgages and Loans

carrying out some form of initial research online in order to determine which mortgage broker to use. Online tools, such as reading google reviews of previous client experiences can be very useful in narrowing down the options so that the person you engage with is the right person for you.

Technology certainly has its place and makes all of our day to day lives easier - in our own business we are constantly seeking to use new tools to publicise our services up front via our website, seeking out client testimonials and reviews to demonstrate our competency and overall user experience, whilst also streamlining our back office services. However, with an in-depth knowledge of each lenders' "quirks" a professional mortgage advisor can help you avoid the disappointment and stress of a rejected application.

We feel that you will be stuck with the greying mortgage geeks for some time yet!

If you would like to see what our clients have to say about us we have in excess of 240 Google 5* reviews on-line and on our website from satisfied clients.

www.innovatempl.co.uk

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

Your home is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loan secured on it.



Chris Hird

FIVE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF BECOMING MORE SUSTAINABLE

Chris Hird, Associate Partner at Haines Watts, discusses the business benefits of going green.

The shift to more environmentally conscious and sustainable business has skyrocketed over the past few years, and it's not hard to understand why. The benefits of 'going green' are far reaching and they make good business sense.

Beyond playing your part to reduce CO₂ emissions and meet the Government's net-zero target, there are long-term savings and significant tax benefits on offer to those who choose to become more eco-friendly.

With consumers increasingly focusing on the environmental practices of businesses, those who fail to embrace it risk falling behind and losing their competitive edge. If you haven't done so already, now is the time to start considering what you can do.

Lowering your overheads

Whether it's your heating systems, insulation or lighting, taking the time to look at your energy costs can significantly lower your costs as well as your carbon footprint.

Some energy providers and organisations (such as BEST) provide free energy audits. By identifying ways in which your business can save energy in your day-to-day operations, these audits are a great starting point to understand how you can cut down your energy costs whilst also becoming more sustainable as a business.

Tax incentives and reliefs

When you've reviewed your businesses energy audit, you might start to consider whether you need to invest in new machinery and systems to help your business become more energy efficient.

This is where Capital Allowances provide an invaluable opportunity for your business, by offering significant tax relief on qualifying costs including solar panels, energy-efficient lighting and AC systems, and in some cases even electric company vehicles and their charging points. The relief stretches up to 100%, and certain assets may qualify for the newly introduced Capital Allowance Super Deduction which creates tax savings of 25p for every £1 spent.

Meanwhile, if you're looking at innovative ways of improving or creating new processes and products to become more eco-friendly, Research and Development Tax Relief can help to bring new ideas to life.

Access to grants and funding

If your business doesn't qualify for tax reliefs, there are a number of funding opportunities and support packages on offer, to help give businesses a head start in the race to net zero.

Applications and competitions for funding are constantly opening and closing, so it's worth researching and regularly checking on all of your available options through your local authorities and on the Government's website.

But for now, some of the main opportunities include:

Net Zero Innovation Portfolio: This £1bn fund will fund low carbon technologies and systems, whilst also decreasing the costs of decarbonisation in specific industries. Competitions for funding have already launched, and will continue to launch throughout the year - all of which can be accessed on the Government's website.

One Carbon World grant funding: SMEs can apply for a 50% grant up to the value of £1500 for lowering their carbon footprint. Round eight of the One Carbon World Carbon Footprint Grant Fund will open later in the year, but you can apply for the grant now, through their online application form.

Technology Developer Accelerator Programme:

If your SME has technology or a product which could potentially lower the environmental impact of transport, you could be eligible for grant funding, support and mentoring worth up to £135,000. All of the details on eligibility and applying are available online.

Becoming a more socially responsible business

Recent stats show that over 75% of millennials consider a business's environmental commitments before deciding where to work, and one third of consumers have stopped purchasing from businesses because they weren't eco-conscious.

Taking a proactive approach to your environmental policies and practices, and leading the way for your suppliers and clients alike can have a hugely positive impact on your brand image and reputation – both of which will go a long way when it comes to turnover.

In order to truly make a positive impact on the environment and your business, any changes need to be implemented across your entire company and engrained in the way you work rather than being checklist driven.

www.hwca.com



“
...strong leaders will
acknowledge emerging
leaders...”

”

SPOTTING POTENTIAL IN YOUR TEAM

Andrew Marsh, chair of Vistage for the North East and Northumberland, NED for numerous businesses and charities; and successful entrepreneur, has committed to imparting his knowledge throughout 2021 to help business leaders come out of the last year with a solid view for the future.

A theme that has been currently recurring, especially with many people returning to the office, is how as a leader you can spot and nurture talent in your company. Here Andrew talks through some indicators on how to spot those who are emerging leaders and options on how to invest in them to benefit your entire team's performance.

"We never seem to have a problem spotting dead weight in a team, do we? Lack of interest, lack of performance, a high sick leave, poor timekeeping Easy indicators that tell you this person's contribution isn't the best.

"Spotting real talent though is harder, as not only does that talent have to be able to perform, they also have to be interested in their own growth, development and have ambition for you and themselves.

"To discover that potential in people we have to dedicate time to get to know them. To understand what makes them tick, what their commitment is and what their long-term career goals are. If you have a company that is in growth mode, time may be limited, but investment in this is always time well spent.

"So, is there someone in your team, at any level, that always manages to bring the best out in their teammates? Do they come up with ideas that increase productivity? Are they always focused on what returns their actions will bring? There are countless qualities that good leaders should display but there are some that are essential. They should:

- Display intellectual understanding.
- Display emotional empathy.
- Be a clear communicator.
- Work with other people's strengths.
- Be able to stimulate conversations.
- Be inspiring and motivating to others.
- Display well-rounded skills.
- Be grounded in loyalty and commitment to the company vision.

They shouldn't be:

- Overbearing, bossy or manipulative.
- Quick to blame others.
- Display controlling behaviour.
- Or more interested in their own personal gain than that of the company.

"If there is truly no one in your team to change into a leader, then you need some of your people! You must get the most out of talent on offer, and the more opportunities you give talent, the more you will attract.

"Once these future leadership stars are identified in your midst, first of all you need to listen to them. Ask them the right questions, book regular check in's with them and co-create a plan for their future. If they feel they own it, they will live it. When creating that plan, what options do you have to grow them into the managing capabilities you need from your senior leadership team in the future?

"You can home grow them within the company. Dedicate time between your existing leadership team to train, coach and mentor

them. I agree it is a great way of keeping consistency in the messaging of leaders during succession planning, but actually if this way is the only steppingstones provided, it can stifle the future growth, expansion and development of the organisation in the future.

"With that in mind, external courses and training should be appealing too. But how to choose, when so many industry trade bodies offer them, and every college, online courses and training companies?

"It's really quite simple. Ask around. Ask leaders you admire and get recommendations. Ask local funding bodies (as you may also get something towards the cost of course). Look for word of mouth recommendation and endorsement. Find young stars in your area and enquire what is helping them. Put a post on LinkedIn asking for ideas and introductions.

"Through Vistage, I am currently delivering an emerging leaders cohort. And it is full of the most amazing young professionals, who not only learn from me and guest presenters but also share and teach each other. They are garnering board room skills without realising and increasing their capability with every session we hold.

"The companies who support these cohorts have heard by word of mouth about the successes enjoyed from our Emerging Leaders offering and have chosen to put faith in their young staff member and in me. That brings both great joy and great responsibility.

"Other options are to look at university courses, at mentoring schemes, at retreats for young managers and to also consider taking out a membership for young professionals that fits your industry and includes a CPD element.

"Development should always be grounded in leadership skills, never be rushed and should be part of your succession planning long before it is needed. And always remember to reward the emerging leader along the way – this doesn't always have to be with a title or remuneration. Often acknowledgement of their hard work is just as appreciated, including being nominated for awards, being given an extra day off, or being given extra responsibility showing you trust them.

"Just to close off, it is always worth remembering that poor leadership will equal a company that loses the talent they have right under their nose, and sometimes never even know it. Or they will choose a managerial team not suited for the role as they have judged on the wrong qualities such as similarities to the current leadership team. Don't fear the talents of a potential leader, just because they are not like you! Good teams are a collection of different strengths and characteristics.

"Strong leaders will acknowledge emerging leaders, be brave in looking for diversity and embrace the change those people can bring if guided right and invested in from an early stage."

If you have a question or think Andrew could help you identify or support your emerging leaders, then contact him on andrew@marshbusinesstransformation.co.uk



HOW TO BEAT FEAR

Wow. That's quite a claim. 'How to Beat Fear'. It's quite a claim because, I think, fear is the biggest enemy of your potential – bar none. Fear keeps most people sub-optimal for almost their entire lives.

So how do we beat fear? Quickly and completely, I mean. So that you, me and everybody else can address the achievement of their potential unhindered? Try this.

First, let's have a clear set of chronological milestones to internalise and work through. Maybe they'll keep us focussed.

1. Remove fear.
2. Replace fear with confidence.
3. Be 'unashamedly you'. The most curious, wide eyed, enthusiastic and energetic version of you possible.
4. Live an endlessly fearless and happy life, clearly identifying then staring hungrily at your own unique potential squarely in the face, maybe for the very first time ever. Because this time, fear isn't going to get in your way.
5. Fearlessly develop ways to become that very best version of you.

Good plan! But how do you actually do it? Here are some insights to help you on your way.

The Story of You

Let's take a look at the role fear plays in our lives, over four phases.

PHASE 1: You aged zero to two – The Age of Fearlessness

You're little. You don't understand fear. You don't really know what it is. Apart from your early fear of loud noises and falling over. But that's just basic self-preservation. So most of the time you explore and you adventure. Pretty much anything goes.

PHASE 2: You aged three to five – The Age of Natural Fears

In this phase, you start to recognise bumps and scrapes. Needs and wants. Friends and enemies. Sharing and selfishness. Togetherness and loneliness. You start to fear, naturally, getting physically hurt and not having what you want when you want it. This starts to change you. You may have the odd tantrum. But nothing should be too big a deal because nothing feels permanent and nothing cuts too deep in this phase. So, largely, you're OK.

PHASE 3: You aged six to (you choose an age here) – The Age of Learned Fears

You now begin to shape and make learned fears. Fears that contain you. Fears that hold you back. Fears that actually make you pause. Others ridicule your quirks. They point out and make you feel uneasy about your uniqueness – the things that make you different. They tell others about your mistakes, too. So everything gets muddled. You question things. You worry. You fear what people think of you. And these learned fears breed more fears. So you stop going with your gut. Creativity suffers. Paralysis sets in. And you shrink.

PHASE 4: You aged (the 'to' age you chose in PHASE 3) to the age you die – The Age of Fearlessness (again)

You – somehow – wake up to the fact what others think of you matters only as much as you allow it to. Your thinking clears. Your confidence rises. Fear disappears. And you start to do things for you.

Next, keeping these four stages in mind as insights, here are three more things to notice in order to live a more confident, fearless and happy life:

1. Anything learned can be unlearned.
2. Confidence and fearlessness feed into and from each other because confidence erodes fear and fear erodes confidence. (You are clearly most confident in stages one and four above).
3. You choose your 'you choose an age here' age. No one else.

Why Beating Fear is Worth It

There's this great big chunk of time in any person's life, including yours, normally between (about) seven years old and (about) 60 years old – so that's about two thirds of your entire life (!) – where fear erodes confidence, and this lack of confidence results in less happy and fulfilled days. And potential falls by the wayside.

You know it's true. Because kids are bonkers. Older people, once they wake up to the fact what others think of them matters only as much as they allow, are bonkers too. You've seen younger and older people like this. And bonkers is great!

Pick an Age

So all you have to do now, to be more confident, fearless and happy – is to choose when to start phase four. (I have a suggestion about that. And it's a good one). My suggestion is, now we've opened our eyes to the four phases, how about choosing to start phase four at the age you are now?

Over to you.

www.harlandsaccountants.co.uk



Darren Wingfield



MAVEN PROVIDES SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING PACKAGE FOR DIFFERENTOLOGY

Award winning market research and insight provider has secured regional debt funding package to fuel expansion plans.

Maven Capital Partners, one of the UK's most active SME finance providers, has provided a substantial debt funding package to Differentology via the North East Development Capital Fund, supported by the European Regional Development Fund. The funding will enable the company to deliver on its ambitious expansion plans and embark on a management buyout to exploit opportunities in new markets.

Differentology provides market research and consumer insight services, working at the intersection of data, human behaviour, technology and creativity. The business already boasts an impressive client list including HSBC, Disney, Sky, Viacom, Tik Tok, and Bloomberg and it is well-positioned to cross-sell its growing range of services to its expanding customer base. The global revenue of the market research

industry exceeded \$73.4bn in 2019, growing more than twofold since 2008, and is expected to reach \$82.87bn by 2023. Differentology has seen insight revenue increase 107% in the past 12 months, and has experienced double digit growth, year on year, since its inception in 2013.

Led by a highly experienced and respected management team across the industry. CEO Mark James, has almost 20 years industry experience working with large brands such as P&G, Sony and Lonely Planet. Mark is supported by Managing Director, Lizzie Gilthorpe, who has over 10 years industry experience in strategy and communications for organisations such as HSBC and Debenhams. The team is also supported by James Dickie, Head of Research, who has over 15 years' experience in the sector.

Michael Dickens, Investment Director at Maven, said: "We are delighted to support Differentology

as it launches its exciting growth strategy. The business is truly a full-service operation for market research and consumer insight, run by a very impressive team. We look forward to working with Mark and the company to support the execution of its expansion plans."

Mark James, CEO of Differentology, said: "It's been an incredible journey as Differentology has transitioned from a one-person team with a challenger mindset, into a multi award winning, global agency. With the help of Maven, we are now firmly focused on the future, further pushing the boundaries of the research industry, and our next phase of exciting growth."

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.

MAVEN**North East
Fund**
Development
Capital Fund
Supported by the European Regional
Development Fund

North East Development Capital Fund

Debt and equity finance available between
£400,000 and £2 million.

Growth funding for established businesses

A simple alternative to bank finance, the North East Development Capital Fund is transforming the financial landscape for businesses across the North East.

We can back companies across most sizes and sectors which contribute to business growth and job creation within the region.



Purchasing new
machinery



Capital
expenditure



Exporting
abroad



Investing in
new products



Hiring a
new team



Filling gaps in
working capital

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

E: northeast-enquiries@mavencp.com | T: 0191 731 8590 | funds.mavencp.com/nedcf

**North East
Fund**
Supported by the European Regional
Development Fund**European
Investment
Bank**
The EIB bank **European Union**
European Structural
and Investment Funds



Lesley Stabler, Associate
and Andrew Moorby,
Managing Partner

RECRUITMENT DRIVE HELPS TO STRENGTHEN FIRM

Leading North East accountancy and advisory firm MHA Tait Walker has welcomed 40 new recruits during the pandemic, in a move that is set to strengthen the firm ahead of a surge in new business wins.

From graduates and apprentices to executives and managers, the firm has appointed staff in a range of roles across its key services including accounts, tax, corporate finance and wealth management.

Lesley Stabler is the latest member of the senior team and has joined the firm as an Associate from Azets. Lesley will be supporting clients and revenue growth particularly in Teesside, with a focus on nurturing the company's reputation for talent retention by mentoring new staff in the Stockton office.

Having worked in the North East throughout her career, Lesley has gained her experience working with a wide range of clients, including those in agriculture and pharmaceutical sectors. Her role at MHA Tait Walker focusses on building the firm's portfolio across the region, overseeing the Stockton office to make sure all new staff are

reaching their full potential.

Lesley said: "I joined MHA Tait Walker as their guiding principles are in line with my own. I always strive to offer the best service and cherish my relationships with clients and colleagues alike."

The expansion of the Stockton office is also a key strategic focus for the firm, solidifying MHA Tait Walker's investment in the area's future. Lesley said: "The Stockton office has some really exciting times ahead and I am looking forward to being a part of the expansion. The new appointments are also important to that growth, as a dynamic and ambitious team and investment into their training and development will maintain that level of expertise for years to come."

Andrew Moorby, managing partner of Tait Walker said: "The growth of the Stockton office



is integral to the firm's plans for expansion and will support the already evolving business community in the region. The area has a bright future, and we are focused on supporting the region's business owners and the community with an increased locally based, highly skilled team."

Lesley joins Mike Williams, who was recently appointed as Corporate Finance Manager within the Stockton office. The Corporate Finance team celebrated a record year in 2020, completing over £100m in deals for North East businesses. Now the team is nominated for multiple awards at the Insider North East Dealmakers Awards 2021.

www.taitwalker.co.uk

IS ALL EQUITY INVESTMENT EQUAL? WILL PATIENT CAPITAL BECOME A KEY ELEMENT IN UK SME RECOVERY?

Private Equity has been a key source of funding for some time, and with record levels of capital ready for deployment and major institutions continuing to allocate funds into such vehicles, the supply of investment continues to grow and is outstripping supply in the current market.

Such an imbalance can work in the favour of businesses seeking investment, and valuation data infers valuation enhancement as a result. The problem is, however, not all equity is equal and the numerous equity investors in the market often operate in different ways and with different objectives.

Patient Capital is a phrase which may not be that common, but it refers to a vital class of capital which is offered by a subset of the Equity Investment market. Put simply, the fundamental difference between Private Equity Funding for a business and Patient Capital boils down to timescales and the funder's desired level of return on their investment.

For those businesses which hold out the promise of transformational change (and a resultant growth in the value of the business) over a relatively brief period (say 3 to 5 years) then Private Equity, in some form or another, could well be the best source of funding, advice and support for a business.

But conventional Private Equity isn't right for every business owner. In these cases, Patient Capital could be a preferable and appropriate source of funding permitting a longer investment term and allowing more traditional or mature businesses with slower and steadier growth potential to recapitalise and deliver that further growth.



Lee Humble

Across the MHA and Baker Tilly International network we have seen the huge benefits that clients can realise following third-party equity investment. But the alignment, or misalignment of a business and a funder (especially one with a degree of business control and ultimately decision-making influence) will have huge implications for all parties. Any management team exploring this funding route should seek advice and understand who they are talking to and what their horizons and objectives really are.

Our client base, like the national economy, is firmly planted in the SME heartlands of the UK. That gives MHA Tait Walker privileged insight into the factors which impact UK SMEs. These are the kind of businesses which often need a 'Patient Capital' funding provider. Patient Capital, as the name suggests, is often a preferable and appropriate form of investment permitting a longer investment term and allowing businesses with lower growth rates to recapitalise and hence allow their ongoing development.

Many family office funds have been set up with

one eye on this gap in the funding market and some are longer term value investors willing to support management teams for 10 years and beyond. But these are still all too rare and whilst being an important part of any solution to this challenge will only ever be a part.

We believe that Patient Capital has a great opportunity to help rebalance the UK funding market in a way which better serves the needs of UK SMEs - and in doing so, holds out the promise of making a significant contribution to a more robust and vital UK economy. The key is knowing who to speak to and ensuring all parties are as aligned as possible ahead of any investment.

This article was written by Lee Humble, Associate Partner, MHA Tait Walker

If any of the issues we have touched upon have resonated with you or if you would like to take part in one of our future discussion groups please contact lee.humble@taitwalker.co.uk

CMYK & THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

CMYK, a leading Business Technology provider, who recently opened a regional office in Newcastle, headed up by Directors Craig Pratt and Sarah Wharrier are helping clients go 'Green'.



Whilst establishing their operations in the North East earlier this year, CMYK wanted to offer a differentiator to their clients to make sure they were carrying out business sustainably and ethically whilst also helping their clients hit their CSR objectives.

After discussions with Ian and Lorna Adamson, owners of Woodlands Park Farm in Knitsley near Consett, they formed a partnership to launch the CMYK Community Tree Planting Project. The Tree Plantation Project is exclusively and freely available to all CMYK Clients. As part of CMYK's drive to be socially responsible, to give back to the local community and to help create an Environmentally Sustainable future for their business and their clients, they automatically enroll all clients into the Tree Plantation Project. This means trees are planted for every one of CMYK's new clients which helps to protect our environment for generations to come.

However, the great work doesn't stop there... also occupying the same site at Woodlands Park Farm is Haystax Inclusive Farm Experience. After recently receiving planning approval, Haystax, designed by Lorna and Ian on their site at Woodlands Park Farm will be a specially designed complex to accommodate families who have a family member with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Farm experience centre will provide facilities such as animal therapy opportunities, sensory rooms, quiet rooms, arts and crafts facilities, a classroom for educational information sessions, an indoor play area, pedal tractor fun, woodland watch & walks, insect hotels, beehives and so many more exciting outdoor activities for the whole family to enjoy. The site will also provide much needed respite for parents and carers to socialise and enjoy a refreshment from the Café. As the site develops holiday lodges will be introduced to open up this amazing site to families who live further afield.

With a commitment of over twelve thousand trees to plant at the site it would be impossible to achieve such a task without some additional help. Working alongside Lorna, Ian and the team from CMYK are the inspirational learners from Learning for Life, a specialist education provider for young individuals with special educational needs in our region.

Marie Matthewson, Principal of Learning for Life commented; "We are delighted and so excited to be a part of the Platinum Plantation and Haystax. This is a wonderful opportunity for our learners and staff to be involved in such a special event. I am confident this will certainly be an experience to remember!"

The idea of a dedicated plantation of 70 trees to mark The Queens Platinum jubilee was planned early this year to go ahead in the 2021/2022 planting season. What the team at Haystax and CMYK hadn't realised is that The Royal Household were also planning their very own initiative to mark the Jubilee celebrations. The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people and organisations across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

As plans started to develop, the team involved recognised the similarities of the QGC with their very own Platinum Plantation which sparked conversations with the QGC and then contact with Mrs Sue Snowdon, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for County Durham to share their idea of the project at Haystax.

Mrs Snowdon was delighted to hear about the plans and a site visit was arranged for Sue to come to site. Sue spent a few hours onsite, taking time to speak with the team to understand the plans for the project, finding out more about Haystax, the Platinum Plantation and how it will positively impact the local community.

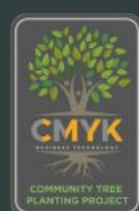
Sue also walked around the site to see the trees that have already been planted, over 3000 so far and visited the planned location for the Platinum Plantation.

Sue commented after visiting the site; "I was delighted to visit Woodlands Farm and hear about their plans for tree planting and their involvement with the charity Learning for Life. They are going to Plant 70 Trees to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Project, which is aimed at encouraging people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". I am very much looking forward to helping with the planting with the young people from the charity"

Lorna Adamson, owner of Woodlands Park Farm and Director of Haystax Inclusive Farm Experience also added; "Everyone at Haystax are delighted to be given the opportunity to be a part of the Queens Green Canopy. CMYK have kindly agreed to sponsor our Platinum Plantation of 70 trees to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee. We also have a wonderful team of helpers from Learning for Life to assist with the actual tree planting which we plan to do in November."

Everyone involved at Haystax, CMYK and Learning for Life are very excited to see the site develop as building work commences and tree planting resumes later this month with plans to start the Platinum Plantation in November.

If you want to find out how your business can be involved to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' at Haystax with CMYK, contact s.wharrier@cmky-digital.co.uk or call 0191 389 7752





Front from the left: Mrs Sue Snowden, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Lorna Adamson.
Back row from left: Sarah Wharrier, Ian Adamson, Kingsley Smith, Craig Pratt.

LOWES APPOINTS SPECIALIST TO SPEARHEAD GROWTH



Leading North-East independent financial advice firm, Lowes Financial Management - celebrating 50 years of servicing clients – has appointed a business development specialist as the firm continues to grow.

Douglas Montgomerie joins the award-winning IFA from national wealth managers Brewin Dolphin where he worked in investment management for more than three years. Prior to that, Douglas was a private banking relationship manager at Yorkshire Bank for over 11 years.

Douglas commented: "What attracted me to Lowes was their outstanding commitment to client servicing, professionalism and integrity. Lowes has a wide range of excellent financial planning services. Along with this, they also have a team of highly qualified, experienced advisers who are supported by a large back-office.

"It's all about relationships and building connections with individuals. My role is to get out and meet people, develop links with organisations across the region and facilitate introductions to our advisers.

"Not everyone welcomes or likes the big corporate approach of some wealth managers. Lowes remains a family business, providing

a highly personalised service to their clients-backed up by knowledge and financial expertise."

Ian Lowes, MD of Lowes, said: "We pride ourselves on our client service, depth of knowledge, professionalism, integrity, and approachability. I am confident Douglas will add value to the team and strengthen our links across the North-East helping to raise our profile and reputation."

Douglas, a father of two, lives with his wife in Gosforth, Newcastle. He joins Lowes at a time the firm is celebrating 50 years of business from its headquarters in Newcastle.

Lowes advises clients across a wide range of financial aspects such as investment management, pensions, inheritance tax planning, tax mitigation, long term care and other general financial planning issues.

More specifically, Lowes is a recognised national authority in the profession on structured retail products and in efforts to achieve the best for Lowes' clients and the wider advice community



have helped to shape the structured investment sector for better investor outcomes.

Lowes have been finalists in over 50 professional awards in recent years, having been named 'Best Investment Adviser' by national industry title Money Marketing in 2020. This year, Lowes are hoping to build upon these accolades - having already been shortlisted for awards from Money Marketing, MoneyAge, ILP MoneyFacts - as well as the Personal Finance Society.

For more details about the firm visit www.Lowes.co.uk



ROBSON / LAIDLER
BUSINESS ADVISORS

We know /

...that solid advice can help you and
your business to open many more doors.

Here to help keep your business moving.

"Before getting accurate business planning from the guys at Robson Laidler, I may not have dared to expand so soon, for fear of it going wrong. This is the power you have when you know your numbers. Having the ongoing support made me confident that I could move in a forward direction, with the financial data and know-how to back me up. Knowing the advisors are there to coach and steer means business decisions aren't just a fleeting thought and action points are achieved."

Martin Trinder, Owner, Lennon Properties, Northumberland

e: ba@robson-laidler.co.uk | w: www.robson-laidler.co.uk/estateagents

What's your plan?

WilliamsAli offers a tailored and intelligent service to help businesses and their shareholders realise their ambitions. With many years of experience and success in business sales, MBOs, acquisitions, private equity and fund raising, we build close, long term and rewarding relationships with our clients.



WilliamsAli
CORPORATE FINANCE

Tel: 0191 249 1736

Email: info@wacf.co.uk



L-R: Peter Rutherford, Denise Graham and David Hughes

LIFE INSURANCE CAN BE A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT

Most people would not consider life insurance as an “investment.” In the true sense it is not, at least for the life assured. However, the returns for the beneficiaries can be quite extraordinary.

Let us consider a couple of scenarios.

Firstly, Mr and Mrs Jones are 67 and 65 respectively. It has been calculated that they have an Inheritance Tax liability of £500,000 but are not able to give away assets. However, they want to ensure that their children receive the full value of their estate and life's work and so have decided to insure against the potential tax liability, so their children have the funds available to pay the tax as and when it arises.

Both are healthy for their ages and are quoted £915 per month. The policy pays out when the second of two die and the money is paid into a trust for the benefit of the children. The policy is affordable for the Jones, but the children decide to contribute too. After all, it is for their benefit.

Mr Jones dies at the age of 83 but Mrs Jones makes 85. The policy pays out the £500,000. The cost over the 20 years has been £219,600 so the family has more than doubled its money. The money is tax free. It equates to an annual return of 6.6% net.

Remember that the policy can pay-out at any time. So, if for some reason the couple only survived ten years, the £500,000 pay-out would equate to a staggering return of almost 29% per annum on the premiums.

In addition to the financial value, there is also the peace of mind that the family is well catered for, and the children will have the money for the tax bill. That is difficult to value.

A second scenario is a business which is profitable, netting £400,000 per annum for the two shareholding directors. However, one of them dies and they have no structure or finance in place to buy out the deceased individual's spouse. The spouse wants to be involved in the business, but the two cannot work together. The business goes into decline and is wound up. However, if the two directors had put in place shareholder agreements and insured each other so that the survivor had funds available to buy out the spouse, it might have cost them a few hundred pounds a month. But it would have saved the business and the surviving director would still be reaping the rewards. In addition,

the deceased's spouse would have received fair value for the shares tax free. Instead, they both must start again after considerable cost and disruption to their lives and finances.

So, life insurance can be a very good investment as well as providing the benefit of peace of mind and the satisfaction of knowing matters are taken care of.

If you would like more information, or would like to discuss your own position, then please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleagues, David Hughes and Denise Graham. Peter Rutherford is a director at Rutherford Hughes Ltd. He can be contacted on 0191 229 9600 or peter.rutherford@rutherfordhughes.com

www.rutherfordhughes.com

Tax advice is not regulated by the FCA and legislation is subject to change. Rutherford Hughes Ltd. is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Rutherford Hughes Ltd company registration no: 10431722. Country of registration: England. Office & Registered Office address: Collingwood Buildings, 38 Collingwood Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1JF.

WHY HAVING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE SYSTEMS IN PLACE IS CRITICAL FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY

After more than 18 months of hybrid working, most people are now back in the office.

But as the colder months loom, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed switching to home working could once again be a possibility.

And as Mullen Stoker director Gary Stoker explains, that's why it's more important than ever that businesses are prepared if Covid-19 cases surge and the Government is forced to act.

After more than a year and a half of home and flexible working, most people are now back in the office in some capacity.

And whilst right now life seems to be back to normal, the Prime Minister and his medical and scientific advisers have made it clear that Covid-19 is very much still with us.

If the surge in cases over the winter months that caused lockdowns to be announced in November and January does happen, robust restrictions will once again be introduced.

That would most certainly include a work from home order for those that can.

Gary Stoker, founding director of Durham-based accountancy and IT firm Mullen Stoker, has worked with dozens of clients to improve their IT capabilities, enabling them to introduce flexible working to keep their businesses going.

Gary says it is essential employers are switched on



to the benefits of having systems in place which mean should they have to, they are able to make the transition to remote working smoothly.

"During the first lockdown in particular, so many businesses were caught out by clunky and dated IT infrastructure and software which meant they couldn't easily switch to home working.

"It resulted in many calling on our services to upgrade their systems so that their staff could safely and securely continue operating in exactly the same way as they would if they were in the office.

"Having this flexibility is essential for businesses that cannot afford unnecessary downtime.

"As the winter months loom, I'd urge any company that hasn't put in place software which allows for off-site working to do so.

"The Prime Minister recently made it clear in his Plan-B strategy that if needed, businesses will be asked to once again work from home. Be prepared for this – this step is a far better option than a full lockdown so don't be caught out."

mullenstoker.co.uk



City Quadrant, 11 Waterloo Square,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4DP
Tel: 0191 2557772 • www.cavucf.com

Local Advice, International Reach

Our Services include...

Private Equity • Development Capital • Company Sales • Company Acquisitions
Buy Outs/Buy Ins • M&A Support • Debt Advisory • Exit Planning and Strategy


cavū
corporate finance



CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT RACE DAY

On Friday 24th September Central Employment hosted their annual Client Race afternoon/night in the newly refurbished Park View Suite at Newcastle Racecourse.

Having, like many other events last year, been cancelled this years was the most popular to date with 115 guests in attendance. A wide range of clients from various companies and industries across the North East and further afield enjoyed the all-inclusive hospitality and a great night of racing.







A RETURN TO EVENTS

Head of Marketing and Events for NE1 Ltd, Ben Whitfield considers the importance of events for the prosperity of the city and the wider region as large-scale events return to Newcastle.

What a summer and what a magnificent few weekends we have had here in Newcastle. The city has been buzzing, first with Rugby League's inimitable Magic Weekend, a festival of rugby at St James' Park, followed by the 40th Great North Run celebrations, and then the This is Tomorrow festival in Exhibition Park, two major sporting events and four days of live music that have truly kickstarted the city's events calendar.

After 18 months of cancelled events and postponements, it is fabulous to see large-scale events returning to Newcastle. They have given the city and the region real optimism as well as delivering a major boost to the local economy. And, what's more, they have given us all a taste of what's to come. The calendar is already filling up for the next few months and into next year with so much to look forward to.

September always feels like a new beginning, a fresh start, and, this year in particular, it has been a busy month for milestone events. These events have brought Newcastle to life with well over 100,000 visitors, money in the tills and the city looking resplendent on TV, images that are beamed to a worldwide audience.

As well as the sporting fixtures which took prominence early in September, Newcastle also hosted the This is Tomorrow Festival, the North East's largest musical festival, and the amazing UK Festival of Rescue, all in quick succession. 70 teams from Fire Services across the UK competed in a series of intense and specialist challenges on the Quayside watched by hundreds of awe-struck spectators. Now we're into October we'll hardly have time to catch our breath before we start the run of festive events that will take us to Christmas.

As we bask in the reflective glory and recover from the Great North Run, Magic Weekend, and the other events, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the importance of attracting and hosting major events such as these in Newcastle and how they help shape the city and enhance its offer. As we know, city-centre events are hugely significant and important, not simply for the enjoyment or the activity they bring, but for the valuable contribution they make to the economic fortunes of a city. The Great North Run alone is estimated to be worth at least £30 million to Newcastle, as well as raising international awareness about the city and the wider North-East region.

Creating, promoting, and attracting these events is also an important and highly successful tool in the city's economic, social and developmental strategy. Events help keep a place fresh and give reasons and a timeframe for people to visit, as well as delivering an immediate economic boost by filling hotels, restaurants, bars and shops. The benefits are also felt long after the last visitor has left and the stage dismantled. Major events like the Great North Run take Newcastle into the homes of TV viewers across the UK and the world and in turn attract new visitors to the city. People who come here once for an event often return to see more of the city and the wider region.

Locals too often feel a renewed interest in their hometown, or a magnetic pull into the city-centre, thanks to events, attending or taking part themselves or coming into the city to soak up the atmosphere or to cheer on the participants.

Newcastle, like all cities, needs to stay fresh and evolve to keep being attractive for existing residents and bringing in new events and visitors are great ways of helping do this. Covid may have temporarily stalled the events calendar, but Newcastle has been quick to bounce back with its events programme and the city is well placed to continue to carve a niche for itself on both the national and international stage.

NE1 has high hopes and ambitious plans for city centre events in the future. We want to fill the calendar with more national and international events and are confident that we have what it takes to attract them.

Part of the success of Newcastle-based events is the strength of our city centre offer and the collaborative effort that works to bring these events to the city. We can rally a formidable team amongst our major city-centre stakeholders to secure events and when they are here, we know how to put on a good show.

This formidable team includes ourselves at NE1, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle United, and NGL, as well as other stakeholders, and the public plays its part in providing a famous Geordie welcome when visitors do come.

As a city we are also naturally set up to host events. Having St James' Park, one of the largest football stadiums in the UK, in the heart of the city is a huge advantage, so too is the fact that the city centre is compact and walkable, or runnable, as the Great North Run recently demonstrated. Our natural assets including our stunning architecture, a beautiful and iconic waterfront, and an internationally renowned hospitality scene also offer lots to see and do as an accompaniment to the main event. All are crucial to creating a successful host venue.

We can't be complacent though. As a city, we must not rest on our laurels – competition to host events is fierce, with cities across the globe vying for them and the attention they bring. We must compete as they're so valuable and we must always strive for more.

Our aim is for Newcastle to stage at least one major event in the heart of the city each month, and we are not a million miles away from achieving this, with next year already shaping up nicely. January will see the welcome return of NE1's Newcastle Restaurant Week after an enforced Covid hiatus, Pride will be back in person in July after two years on-line, and Northern Pride will host UK Pride; we are also hosting the Rugby League World Cup opening games and opening ceremony, scheduled at St James' Park in October, together with the Great North Run returning to its traditional route next year. The challenge now is to build on this existing platform and create a spectacular year-round calendar.

As a city we have an appetite and an ambition to attract major events and we will continue to work hard to populate the calendar and the city with new events and visitors. We are excited for the future, and are keen to enjoy a return to greater normality through the Autumn.

www.newcastlene1ltd.com



Ben Whitfield

USE YOUR NUDL - NORTH EAST FIRM CAN HELP YOU TAP INTO SUPPORT

Shak Asghar knew from experience that accessing funding could be difficult and, at times, even unpleasant – and he wanted to make a change.

When Shak launched Nudl in March 2021 with colleague Zara Ford, his intention was clear – to put the fun into helping firms secure financial support.

And known for its quirky branding and approach to breaking down barriers when it comes to growth plans, the North East funding consultancy has gone above and beyond in its first six months.

After investing in its own future and expanding to a team of eight, Nudl has continued to work with clients from a range of sectors to secure somewhere in the region of £15-20m of investment to the UK economy.

The company, which has offices in Newcastle, Hull and Middlesbrough, offers a variety of services centred around business growth; consultancy, investment decks, funding application support, in-depth financial planning, cashflow forecasting and more.

Chief operations officer Annmarie Antunes, who joined the team in May, says: "We are a helping hand, there to provide one-to-one support for local people and the local area.

"It's the human approach that we add. You end up with a portfolio of business reports, and we highlight why it is important. You won't get very far seeking funding if you haven't got a plan."

Nudl's expertise and unique approach has ensured massive steps have been taken already, while also making clients comfortable along the way.

CEO Shak says: "Most people are setting up a business because they are good at it. But I might be a good electrician, it doesn't make me a good



Shak Asghar

businessperson. We apply business knowledge and the supportive landscape.

"If you need to raise investment for your company, we will put the documentation together to help you unlock that, and help you get those thoughts you need to get where you want to be.

Nudl has recently been working with a Middlesbrough construction company, trading nationally, on a project that is at the cutting edge of research and development.

Shak explains: "We have previously helped this business to secure funding, and we're now utilising our networks and expertise to help them set up a research and development programme, in collaboration with various other organisations and international investors.

"We have regular discussions with contacts in the United States, Middle East, Europe – we have conversations going on all over. We are working with strategic consultancy, funding and some of those we are working to bring to the Tees Valley. As well as working with private companies, Nudl

has also developed strong links with the public sector through its consultancy work.

Shak says: "We've worked with local authorities and combined authorities to help design different support mechanisms. Ultimately, we hope to shape and influence how grant funding is distributed."

While his 15 years' experience in the sector have taken him to various places, Shak's Teesside roots mean this is an area he is keen to develop as much as he can.

"We are North Easterners ourselves, so we like to promote the region as a potential destination to invest in.

"It has economic benefits to the wider region and helps us in general if we get more businesses in this area.

"The North has a place in our heart, which is why we'll always fly the flag."

For more information about Nudl and its range of services, visit nudl.co.uk

TIMELESS TAILORING

Specialising in timeless tailoring, Walton and Sutherland's made-to-measure menswear can take you from season to season, work to wedding.

Make an appointment at the Durham-based boutique to create your bespoke wardrobe.



www.waltonsutherland.com



ESSENTIAL INTERVIEW TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Bryony Gibson, managing director of Bryony Gibson Consulting, offers advice to help you improve your interview technique and reduce hiring mistakes.

A company is only as good as the people it keeps and they will ultimately determine its success. In my mind, that makes recruitment the single most important business decision you will ever make and yet I regularly see firms leaving the entire process down to human interpretation.

As an interviewer, your goal is to match the candidate's ambition, personality, and experience to the requirements of the job and business. The key is being able to tell the great people from the great talkers.

Every interviewer goes into a meeting with the best intentions, hoping to find the ideal person, but, in my experience, the most common mistakes are made when there is a lack of structure and consistency in the process.

One way to avoid this is to plan interviews so all candidates receive the same questions. Eliminating the likelihood of the conversation straying too far from the agenda is a proven way to increase reliability and compare candidates evenly. This will help you to be more accurate in your prediction of future job success.

When interviewing, the best candidates will be well prepared and trying to make a good impression. With their guard up, it's your job to get under their skin and find out what they're like. Build a strong rapport from the start. If candidates trust you, they'll relax and that will make it easier for you to dig into the detail of their answers and flow into topics they haven't previously rehearsed.



Bryony Gibson

This not only helps you to get a feel for their communication skills, but it uncovers potentially unseen aspects of their personality and behaviour, which is crucial to making sure they are the right fit for your business.

Try opening with a request for their personal and professional goals; and how they see the role fitting in with these.

Ask them to tell you about a situation that has brought out the best in them; giving examples and sharing the experience they feel makes them ideal for your company. Other behavioural questions could be: What attracted you to this role? What are your motivations? What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Whatever you opt for, make sure you ask for details within the answers, as this is the best way to separate people who like to embellish the truth. Liars don't like to get into specifics as they know they are more likely to get caught out. People telling the truth will be happy to drill deep as they are answering the questions honestly.

Once you're happy that someone can do the job, move into uncharted waters. Ask about any

mistakes they've made. This is a great test of self-awareness and will show the scope of which someone is willing to take ownership of their actions; and whether they learn from their errors.

I like to ask who the smartest person they know is (and why). By getting people to explain this you'll not only find out about their networks, but also the values and personality traits they aspire towards.

Find out what it is that gets them out of bed on a weekend. People's passions outside of work are critical to fitting in well to any team environment.

Are they entrepreneurial? Examples of innovative ideas they've put into practice will help you measure whether they're a self-starter, commercially-minded, or have a healthy attitude towards calculated risk.

Of course, these are just a few examples to try and help you, but whatever you discuss, don't forget that interviews are a chance to find out more for both parties. While you aim to work out what makes someone tick, they will most likely be doing the same to you, so make sure you give a good impression of your business.

For public practice advice and expertise, get in touch:
bryony@bryonygibson.com | (0191) 375 9983.

www.bryonygibson.com

BRYONY
GIBSON
CONSULTING
Jobs. Advice. Expertise.

BRYONY GIBSON CONSULTING

JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC PRACTICE...

ACCOUNTANT

Home-Based, £35,000pa plus benefits

A niche accounting practice is looking to appoint a year end Accountant to their team. Based in Newcastle but with the option to be permanently based from home or work flexibly, this presents as an excellent progressive role for a part or newly qualified Accountant.

With plenty of variety in your work, this will require the successful applicant to take accountability for planning and delivering year end statutory accounts including corporation tax, grant claim audits and other ad-hoc activities. Delivering to your clients in a timely fashion this will at times be demanding and require someone who is organised, able to plan and adaptable to change.

We are looking for a professional who has technical experience with FRS1021A and 105. Audit experience would be helpful but this may also suit someone looking to move out of audit into an accounting focused position.

With strong communication skills both verbal, oral and written we are keen to find someone who is confident and able to bring their character to the team. Applicants must be comfortable with the use of cloud based software such as Quickbooks, Xero or similar.

The position carries not only a competitive salary and benefits package it also gives you the commitment that your professional development will be nurtured within the firm whilst working remotely if that suits.

HEAD OF TAX

Newcastle, £45-60,000pa plus benefits

As part of my clients continued vision to grow, the opportunity for a Head of Tax at their Newcastle office plays a major part in the firms expansion. We are looking for an experienced individual with the ability to manage change, whilst reshaping strategically the current tax department.

This is suited to a qualified tax professional (CTA/ACA/CA) ready for a new challenge and to try something different with this small yet growing firm. As Head of Tax you will demonstrate your experience and expertise to drive further systemisation of efficiency, both to the output of the team, report management and high growth of the services delivered and income generated.

Collaboration is key, and you'll have plenty of help to achieve this. We are keen to find a professional who is able to drive the quality, delivery and expertise, streamline efficiencies within the team processes, particularly the self-assessment. The delivery of agreed client service levels is at the forefront as is the desire to be consistent for every client.

You will be responsible for the people in your team, both technically, commercially and in their personal development. Planning and prioritising to ensure client workloads are managed across personal and corporate tax services, including self-assessment, capital gains tax, (S)EIS services and share option schemes. You will have a small portfolio of clients, working with them closely to build relationships. With the use of technology and embracing core apps you will get to identify further related chargeable services within the team in line with strategic business objectives.

The successful applicant will have leadership and client facing experience with enthusiasm to expand their management, communication and collaboration skills. You will possess a good knowledge of personal and corporate tax legislation and processes, and how these services fit into the overall service portfolio for clients. This is a great opportunity to make something your own.

CORPORATE TAX & STATUTORY REPORTING MANAGER

Newcastle, £40-50,000pa plus car allowance, bonus, private health

An In-house tax opportunity with a large global business open to those working in either tax, statutory accounting or audit.

Supporting the Head of Tax you will take responsibility for a lead on all UK corporate tax matters which will include the preparation, review and submission of corporate tax returns, R&D tax claims and assisting with the preparation of year end corporate tax figures for Group accounts alongside managing the preparation, review and audit of the Groups subsidiary statutory accounts.

You will be responsible for line managing a more junior member within the team as well as graduate placements, supporting them in their training and development.

As a Chartered Accountant or Tax practitioner (ACA/ACCA/CTA) you will bring 2 or more years post qualification experience from an accounting firm or large In-house tax team and demonstrate a good working knowledge of corporate tax matters.

Strong communication skills are essential as you will liaise internally and with external advisors including HMRC, responding to queries. Whilst very much a team, the ability to work independently is required and without supervision.

This position offers a great amount of technical variety alongside flexible working hours. You can choose your start time enabling a great work life balance. You are provided with a hybrid model, working your week across the office and home. It would be well suited to those looking to move away from an accounting firm and experience in-house tax, whether from a tax, accounting or audit background, all would be considered and any small gaps in experience supported.

CORPORATE TAX MANAGER

Newcastle, c£50,000pa plus benefits/bonus

We are excited to be working with this Big 4 accounting firm as they look to recruit a Corporate Tax Manager into their growing team of tax professionals in Newcastle. With the opportunity to work flexible hours and location, you will help businesses meet complex demands for tax compliance, reporting, and associated tax advisory, strategy and controversy.

The team is experiencing growth following a number of new high-profile household named clients to their portfolio. By integrating deep technical and industry knowledge with established methodologies and the use of cutting edge technology they work with a wide range of large and complex regional, national and multinational businesses to help them navigate through the increasingly complex tax compliance environment to develop and implement effective, practical and sustainable tax strategies in an increasingly global world.

As part of a team of 20 the role offers the opportunity to work with some of the largest and most exciting clients in the market to help support them as they navigate an ever increasingly complex tax and regulatory environment.

We are looking for a confident individual with corporate tax experience possessing strong client relationship and stakeholder management skills. You will be able to comfortably voice opinion and identify through client conversations opportunities to help them succeed. We require an organised professional who can prioritise their time and manage expectations.

As a qualified ACA/CA/ACCA/CTA you will enjoy a competitive remuneration package rewarding you for your individual and team performance as well as an accessible career path.

To express an interest in any of the above vacancies, or for a confidential discussion about your career in professional practice, please contact Bryony Gibson, Bryony Gibson Consulting, on 0191 375 9983 or bryony@bryonygibson.com



GOOD WORK PLEDGE URGES COMPANIES TO BE A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

It's no secret that good business makes good sense, not just for organisations themselves, but for our economy as a whole. But what do we mean by 'good'?

Sure, healthy profits are good for business but not at any cost. A successful business knows that it takes a number of things to build a truly good business, and at the top of the list is its people.

The North of Tyne Combined Authority has launched the Good Work Pledge, a scheme that allows organisations of every type and size to be recognised for providing, or working towards providing, 'good work'. The pledge consists of two levels, standard and advanced, and businesses can apply for an award at either level. The criteria that sits behind each level maps out what 'good' is and how businesses can achieve it.

From supporting the community and reducing their carbon footprint to looking after the wellbeing of workers, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to providing good jobs, jobs that provide security, development opportunities and a decent standard of living. By committing to the Good Work Pledge, businesses can help build a thriving workforce, and a thriving economy.

One business that has recently signed up to the Good Work Pledge is Your Print Specialists (YPS) in Killingworth, Newcastle upon Tyne. Georgia Brown, YPS' Managing Director, said: "As a small independent company, our staff are our strongest

asset, so our ethos has always been to provide the correct environment and support for employees to develop the right skills and learning opportunities, as well as have the right work/life balance to be the best they can. Signing up to the pledge was a straightforward process, so we'd encourage any organisation, large or small, to do the same."

Created in partnership with industry, community experts and the business community from the North of Tyne region and beyond, the pledge is already embedded into many of the region's leading brands, including Sage, Learning Curve Group, Newcastle University, Haines Watts, Robson Laidler and Karbon Homes. The VCSE sector has championed the roll out of the scheme with several sign-ups from this sector alone. All of these organisations have one thing in common, they recognise that celebrating and highlighting good practice is good for the region.

The pledge's five key pillars of good practice are: valuing and rewarding the workforce, promoting health and wellbeing, effective communications and representation, developing a balanced workforce, and a social responsibility. Applicants must demonstrate that they either meet or are actively progressing towards all of the key criteria in at least two of these pillars for a standard

award, and five pillars for the advanced.

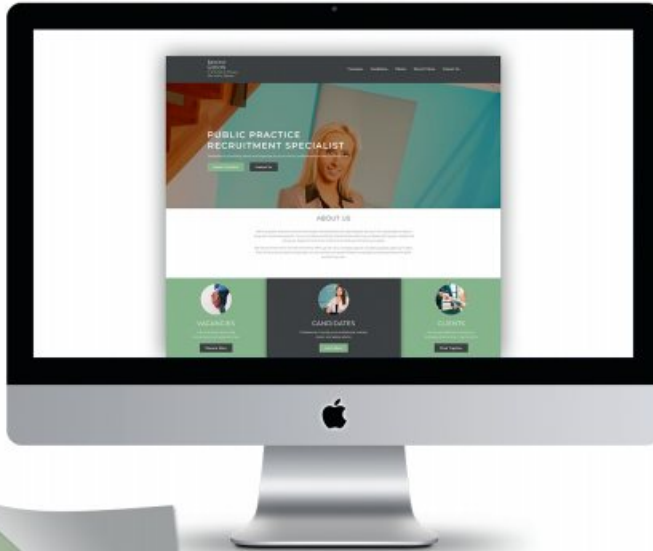
Councillor Karen Kilgour, North of Tyne Cabinet Member for Employability and Inclusion, said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented changes to our economy and has changed the way we do business. And good work is a key part of the North of Tyne's economic recovery plan so we can all build back better. As part of that, this pledge gives us a way to recognise all of the good work being done by businesses of all types, inspiring others to follow suit."

North of Tyne Mayor, Jamie Driscoll, added: "We have 30,000 businesses in the North of Tyne area, and we know how much good is being done by that community to create new ways of working and collectively reimagine opportunities for work.

"We want every one of these businesses to be able to showcase the fact they're a good business, and a good employer, providing and delivering consistently good work. We want everyone to sign up to our Good Work Pledge."

Apply to join the pledge and be part of the change for good, for a dynamic, sustainable and more inclusive economy. Visit northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/projects/good-work-pledge/

INTRODUCING BRYONYGIBSON.COM



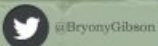
Your destination for more than 45
North East vacancies in:

Public Practice - Corporate, Personal
& Indirect Tax - Management &
Statutory Accounting - Bookkeeping,
Outsourcing & Payroll - Audit & Assurance -
Corporate Finance - Forensic Accounting -
Practice Management & PA Services -
Private Sector Accounting.

**BRYONY
GIBSON**
CONSULTING
Jobs. Advice. Expertise.

0191 375 9983

bryony@bryonygibson.com



Decades of experience...
Decades of building trust
with customers...

ONCE YOU GO BRACK, YOU NEVER GO BACK!

Choosing Brack Office means that you will receive one of
the most reliable and cost effective supply solutions in the country.

Make us your one stop shop for all your office supplies, workwear,
janitorial equipment, corporate/promotional gifts and print products.

Unit 21, North East BIC, Wearfield Enterprise Park East, Tyne and Wear
Call us: 0845 2222456 • Email us: sales@brackoffice.com • www.brackoffice.com





Lemberona Co-Founder Elmira Bertagnoli at a smallholder farm.

A GREEN AND FAIR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

This year, Good Money Week (2nd - 8th October) will focus on how we can 'build back better' as we continue to navigate the pandemic. Here, Shared Interest Managing Director Patricia Alexander explains how UK consumer choices can have a global impact.



Patricia Alexander

Designed to raise awareness of sustainable, responsible and ethical finance – Good Money Week is an annual campaign run by the UK Social Investment Forum (UKSIF). This year, we are being asked to consider how we can support a green and fair recovery following the impact of Covid-19.

This may seem like an overwhelming challenge, with people wondering what changes they can make in their own lives and businesses. However, what we do know is that for any recovery to be durable and resilient, the crisis needs a global response.

As Shared Interest supports over 200 fair trade businesses in 51 countries, we have seen firsthand the impact of the pandemic across a wide range of sectors, particularly agriculture and handcrafted goods. In rural parts of Africa and Latin America, communities have been hit even harder as there is no support infrastructure in place. Fortunately, those within the fair trade sector have been able to support their communities using what is referred to as their Fairtrade Premium.

Primarily, Fairtrade is a system of certification that aims to ensure a set of standards are met in the production and supply of a product or ingredient. For farmers and workers, Fairtrade means workers' rights, safer working conditions and fairer pay, including a Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade

Premium. It is the highest fixed Premium of any independent certification scheme, which goes directly to the producers' co-operatives on top of market price. Furthermore, in direct response to Covid-19, Fairtrade International announced increased flexibility to its Standards. This means that many of our customers are able to spend their Fairtrade Premium funds to safeguard the health and livelihoods of farmers, workers and their communities.

We surveyed our 11,500 UK investors earlier this year and when asked about their motivations for investing in Shared Interest, 70% of respondents stated 'as a way to support fair trade'. Thanks to our supporters, we have continued to provide finance to producers and buyers throughout the pandemic. We believe that access to finance is one of the most powerful tools businesses can have right now, so that they can keep supply chains moving and make sound decisions for the future.

We recently spoke to Elmira Bertagnoli Co-Founder of one of our buyer customers based in Austria. Elmira grew up in Uzbekistan and wanted to work with small-scale farmers to bring their high quality produce to Europe.

Lemberona works with over 10,000 farmers to supply a wide range of organic, Fairtrade and gluten free products, including nuts, dried fruits, and vegetables to Europe. A Shared Interest

customer since 2014, they have since expanded their product range and become members of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO).

Elmira pointed out just how vital access to finance is in enabling businesses to plan ahead. She said: "The finance we receive from Shared Interest allows the farmers to work in the best way and not have to worry what to eat tomorrow – which can cause people to have to make economically bad but lifesaving decisions.

"Through support from Shared Interest the small producers can maximise production, which results in more Fairtrade Premiums, which in turn impacts the lives of thousands of people in rural Uzbekistan."

As we approach this year's Good Money Week, it is with the belief that trade justice should be a reality for all communities. Smallholder farmers produce around a third of the world's food, according to new research by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). By making a few small changes to how we spend our money in the UK, we can help ensure that the people who grow a large proportion of our food, receive the price they have earned in return.

shared-interest.com

PEOPLE POWER

Better People, Better Business.

Join us

16th November 2021

Hilton Newcastle Gateshead

Get your tickets at
www.peoplepowerevents.co.uk

NEW £50 MILLION NETPARK EXTENSION GETS THE GREEN LIGHT

A flagship County Durham technology park is set to expand significantly following a £50 million investment by Durham County Council, which will create over 1,200 jobs.

Plans to expand the North East Technology Park (NETPark) in Sedgefield, County Durham, have been given the go ahead by the Council's Cabinet, which has agreed to £49.6m to finance the first phase of the expansion providing up to 270,000 sq ft of new laboratory, office, production and storage space.

Since opening in 2004, NETPark has become a collaborative community of growing science, engineering and technology businesses and is home to over 40 companies and 600 people employed on-site, delivering high value jobs in County Durham.

The success of NETPark is such that expansion space is needed so that companies can reach their full potential. NETPark Phase Three will be developed on council owned land to accommodate the growing demand, both from businesses already established in the park and from companies looking to relocate or expand their operations.

The initial phase of NETPark Phase Three is part of larger expansion plans to the park, which include a Masterplan for up to 433,800 sq ft across a 26-acre site. The new development will offer design and build opportunities from 5,000 – 80,000 sq ft as well as speculative units of various sizes.

Cllr James Rowlandson, Cabinet Member for resources, investment and assets at Durham County Council, said: "It's exciting to see NETPark's Phase Three expansion going ahead.

"This investment reaffirms the Council's original vision for NETPark and our commitment to the ongoing creation of a world class centre for businesses developing the next generation of advanced technologies.

"The plans to expand NETPark demonstrate the importance of NETPark to the region's economy, not only is it the go to place for people and companies with great ideas and ambition, but it plays a key role in creating more and better jobs for our workforce. The expansion will create 1,250 direct jobs and a further 2,200 in the supply chain in thriving industries which will help deliver a strong and competitive economy."



L-R: Sarah Slaven, interim Managing Director of Business Durham; Jenny Taylor, Durham University; Arun Harish, Director of Strategy, CPI; Atif Syed, Wootzono; Gary Gibson, Dyman; Councillor James Rowlandson, Durham County Council's Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets and Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth at Durham County Council

NETPark is managed by Business Durham, the business support service of Durham County Council, and it will also oversee the new development.

Sarah Slaven, interim Managing Director of Business Durham, said: "We are delighted to confirm the expansion of NETPark, which will enable even more companies to take space within the science park. Since opening in 2004, the ambition has been for NETPark to become one of the UK's leading science parks and it is well on its way to achieving that goal.

"NETPark Phase 3 is a unique opportunity for high growth science, engineering and technology companies to design and build bespoke premises to grow, scale-up and commercialise their operations. We are seeing a real demand for specialist facilities on-site, and this exciting next phase in NETPark's expansion will open up possibilities for growing companies wanting more space, be they existing businesses on the park or companies who want a presence here."

Dr Gary Gibson, founder of Dyman Advanced Materials, said: "I have worked for various companies at NETPark for the last 15 years and in that time have seen the science park grow from an initial incubator housing young innovative companies to a fully-fledged science park. As a business owner, in addition to the quality of the accommodation, the support provided by the team from Business Durham, have made the difficult journey of growing a business so much easier.

"I've had a chance to look at the ideas for the Phase Three development and the design and type of buildings will be a massively exciting enhancement to

the park, providing accommodation that I believe will be hugely attractive to companies."

Atif Syed, Chairman, CEO & Founder at NETPark based Wootzono Ltd said:

"Wootzono is on a trajectory to build dexterous robotic systems for fruit packaging which has already started at NETPark within Explorer 2 office space. Following the £300 million deal Wootzono signed earlier this year, Wootzono is aiming to expand its manufacturing capabilities and is intending to take up over 80,000 sq ft space in NETPark Phase 3. We hope to continue our business expansion and places like NETPark are instrumental in our expansion."

NELEP provided a £5m grant as part of the Government's North East Growth Deal for infrastructure work including a new road, creating a junction onto the strategically important A177, opening up critical development land.

NETPark is also home to three national innovation centres operated by CPI (National Formulations Centre, National Centre for Healthcare Photonics & National Centre for Printable Electronics) as well as Durham University's Centre for Advanced Instrumentation and Orbit, the new University Enterprise Zone.

To find out about locating your business at NETPark or to request a viewing, please contact Janet Todd, NETPark Manager on 01740 625 250 or e-mail enquiries@northeasttechnologypark.com



MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CELEBRATES LAUNCH OF FOUR NEW SCHOOLS

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust (NCEAT) has celebrated the start of the new academic year with the launch of four new primary schools.

The multi academy trust has successfully demerged its 1,500 pupil primary academy to create five separate primary schools in their own right.

The project, which has been completed in close collaboration with the Department for Education, local authorities and the local community, will see the schools become more firmly embedded in the local communities they serve, while continuing to benefit from being a part of a wider academy trust.

Each new school will have its own, simplified admissions system and its own Headteacher. In line with current Government funding allowances, it is expected that the demerger will also bring an additional £250,000 to the schools this academic year to support investment in teaching and learning resources, such as IT equipment and books.

Alan Hardie, Chief Executive Officer at NCEAT,

commented: "At NCEAT we are dedicated to providing the highest quality learning experiences for our pupils and we felt that this would be best achieved through the creation of a family of primary schools which would sit firmly at the heart of their local communities while retaining all of the benefits of working together as part of our Trust.

"This has been a huge project for NCEAT staff, in consultation with parents and carers, local authorities and members of our community so we're absolutely delighted that the demerger has gone ahead successfully and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Grace Darling C of E Primary, James Knott C of E Primary, Thomas Bewick C of E Primary and William Leech C of E Primary into the Trust."

The successful demerger has doubled NCEAT's portfolio of schools in the Northumberland area. The Trust, which was founded in 2009, also



Alan Hardie

comprises Warkworth C of E Primary School, Duke's Secondary School and Castle School, a speciality school for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

To find out more about Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, visit www.ncea.org.uk

The continued adventures of...

Ziggy!

Hi everyone,

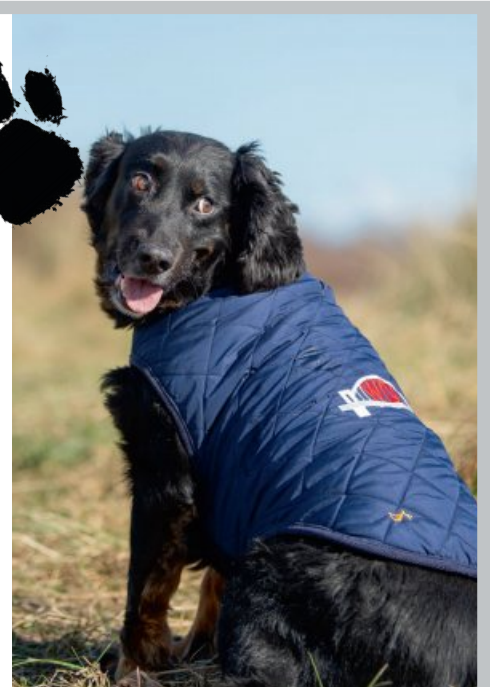
My sister Cally had her first birthday party recently. My best friend Emily organised it and cousin Dexter came for a sleepover. Emily bought a delicious tripe cake which we all enjoyed – yummy!

Daddy bought her a new bed but it only lasted one night as she proceeded to eat it and distribute it all around the kitchen – she is back in the doghouse again – excuse the pun. More next month.

Percy from Wallsend asks:

Q. Can you suggest any safe woodworm fluid for an attic which has worm holes? We would be concerned for our children's health particularly. We have installed modern Velux windows and need to protect these from any live woodworm. What would you suggest?

A. I cannot recommend any woodworm fluids. They are all nerve poisons. Your worm holes are probably many years old. They are actually 'flight holes' of the adult beetles leaving the wood. There is no justification for using insecticides unless you have definitive evidence that there is a continuing active infestation, and that this cannot be dealt with by normal construction methods, i.e. central heating and ventilation. Your new Velux windows are unlikely to be affected by wood-boring insects – the timber in them is kiln-dried and sealed with a water-based varnish.



Please send me your building queries through facebook - @WDLne, website: wdlnortheast.co.uk or through my Dad's good pal Michael Grahamslaw at Northern Insight on mjgrahamslaw@outlook.com



Eothen Homes

• *A Different Concept in Dementia Care* •



At Eothen Homes we are committed to providing excellent care with Christian values. Our home in Wallsend is different to other residential homes offering dementia care.

Space and room for residents to move around and enjoy life freely has played a central part of the building's design and daily life is not made up of routine and tasks but allows people to get up and eat and drink when and where they want. In other words it is just like home.

As well as our specialist dementia care facility, we have homes in Whitley Bay and Gosforth which offer 24 hour permanent residential care as well as short term respite and day care.

Please call any of our homes to find out more.

Wallsend
Miller Way, NE28 8EL **0191 259 8000**

Whitley Bay
Park Gardens, NE26 2TX **0191 297 0707**

Gosforth
Elmfield Road, NE3 4BB **0191 213 0707**

Head Office
0191 281 9100

www.eothenhomes.org.uk



EOTHEN HOMES LIMITED

Christian Care for the Elderly



Ammar Mirza CBE

BROTHERS (AND SISTERS) IN ARMS

"Who's going to make me, you and whose army?" was a standard response at school when arguing with someone, and telling them to start or stop doing something. And how we all wished we really did have an Army.

I regularly talk about my passion for, and appreciation of, being a Royal Artillery Cadet when I was 15. The joy of fitting in, wearing a uniform like everyone else around me, and being given equal opportunity.

The majority of us simply want to fit in and be accepted by our peers. The sense of belonging and inclusion when wearing a uniform is an incredibly unique and powerful experience. There is no better illustration of experiencing a true sense of community than within our Armed Forces. Of course, I am not saying that everyone has found it perfect, but the Forces has always offered a place for brother and sisterhood across the world.

When I finished the Cadets, I was desperate to join the Army and even remember going to the Careers Office on Ridley Place in Newcastle a couple of times to have a chat and then complete an aptitude test. Even looking at Sandhurst as a pathway. But a combination of external factors,

including my late mother having none of it, prevented me from getting involved.

Other than my nephew joining the Marines, I didn't give another thought to the Armed Forces until I became a School Governor at Tyneview Primary School in 2003. The Chair of Governors was Captain Neil Gardiner from the Territorial Army Centre next door to the school. We would regularly attend parades and activities, which all rekindled my own positive personal experiences.

Over the past 10 years I have had the honour and privilege to meaningfully connect with and support our Armed Forces attending various events and parades. All of these have reinforced what a wonderful opportunity is provided to every single member, who can join and grow personally and professionally. Whether you want to cook or clean, drive or dive, engineer or explore, innovate or invent there are thousands of careers available.

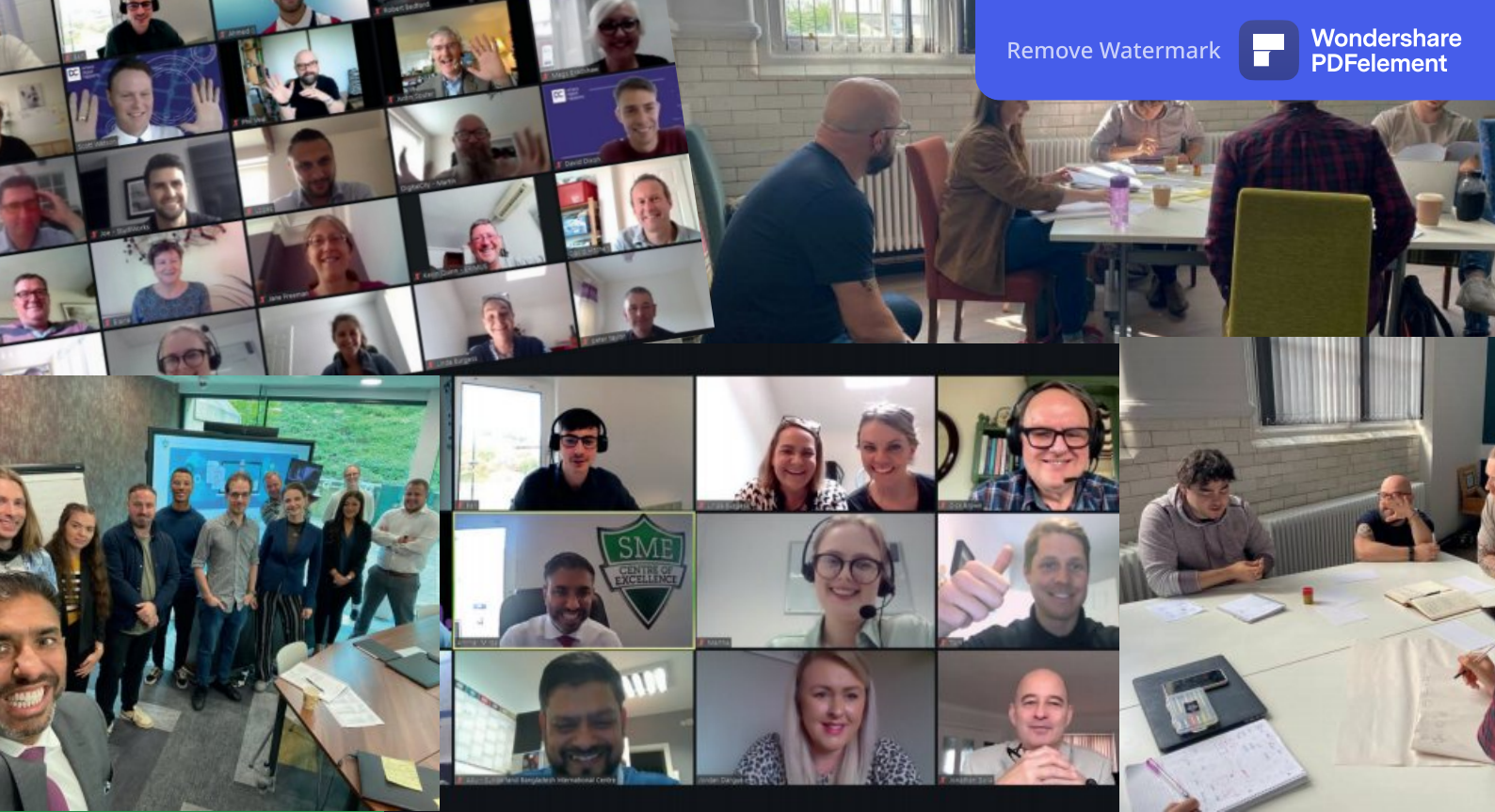
Earlier this year I was appointed the Honorary

Colonel of the 101st Regiment Royal Artillery by Our Majesty the Queen. This is the first time a non-military officer has been invited to take up this position. **Being a proud and passionate Geordie, this was one of the greatest accolades I could ever consider, and the easiest decision I had ever made.** In fact, I remember saying yes, and then asking what it meant afterwards.

Since joining, I have been surprised at the variety of members of the regiment, who are all reservists with day jobs. **Being on exercise in Catterick, I saw first-hand the excitement and desire to learn, the sense of friendship. How, regardless of colour or background, every single member of the regiment was supported and encouraged to grow.** Gaining incredible experiences alongside being a member of one of the greatest communities in the world.

If you are interested in exploring or having a conversation on how you too can develop yourself personally and professionally and getting paid, then please reach out. **You will be welcomed with open arms and a wonderful life long opportunity to feel part of something very special. A true sister and brother hood!**

Ammar Mirza CBE is Chair & Founder of Asian Business Connexions, Chair of the NELEP Business Growth Board, Chair of the IoD North East (North) and holds various positions across the public and private sectors.



Having helped over 10,000 businesses succeed, we are delighted to announce that our Level 6 Accelerator Programme is the first in the world to be accredited by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (IOEE).

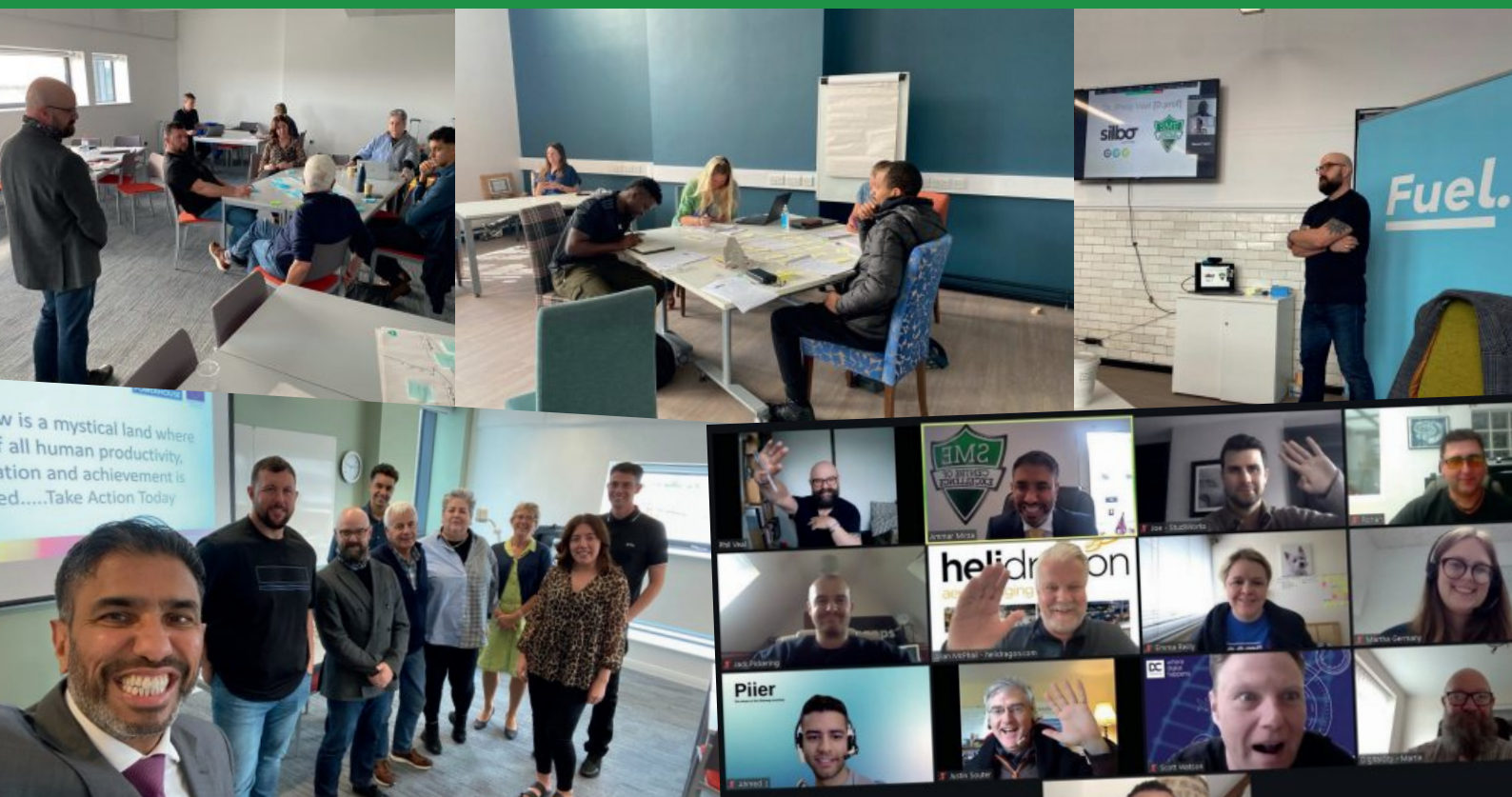


If you want to start or scale your business then get in touch to see how our world class expertise can help:

Email: hello@smecofe.com

Tel. 01661 823234

ioee® CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE





**GREAT
ANNUAL SAVINGS**
GROUP

presents...

in association with...

Opus
Motor Group



ASIAN BUSINESS CONNEXIONS

12th ANNUAL ABC AWARDS DINNER CEREMONY 2021

The Asian Business Connexions Anniversary Dinner event is, without doubt, the largest celebration of Asian businesses and individuals in the North, attracting significant VIP's and celebrity speakers. The last 18 months has been a challenge with all Business and Personal areas adapting to the impact of Covid. In 2021 we have more of a reason and need to come together and celebrate the significant and sustained contribution of the Asian community from across the North East.

This year's award categories include:

**Professional • Business • Lifetime Achievement
Independent • 3rd Sector • Public Sector • Spice FM People's Choice**

The winners will be announced on Thursday 14th October 2021 at the Grand Hotel, Gosforth Park when the celebrations commence for the ABC 12th Anniversary Dinner & Awards Ceremony.

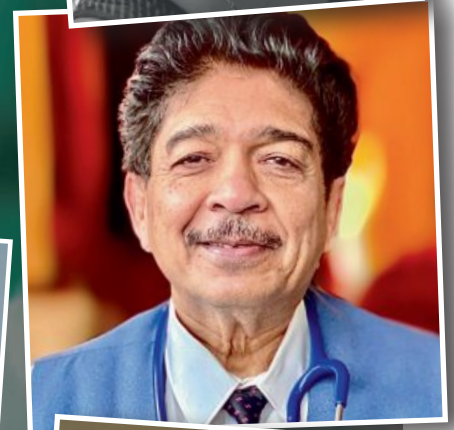
To read the full biographies of our 12th Anniversary finalists, please visit: www.abconnexions.org/finalists-2021



Meet the Finalists...

Over 100 nominations were received from which the following were chosen as this years worthy finalists.

- Imran Khaliq
- Shahi Foods
- Shab Mehdi
- Raj Sehgal
- Aran and Arvan Handa
- Michael Ladhar
- Raj Singh
- Kamran Ali
- Zarin Sharif
- Abu Shama & Kamal Hussain
- Tariq
- Shweta Sharma
- Ranjeet Khanda
- Sanjee Ratnatunga
- Khalid Bhatti
- Subhash Choudhary, MBE, FICHEM
- Aman Sehgal
- Dr Az Hayder
- Wajid Ayaz
- Ponchi Kantt-neaz
- Dr Saeed Ahmed
- Andrew Misra
- Vasant Oswal
- Dr Malasree Home
- Mehrban Sadiq
- Cllr Mohammed Javed
- Sahida Hassen
- Doc Anand
- Veena Soni
- My Delhi
- The Road to Recovery Trust
- Fareeha Usman



Sponsors...





BEST IN CLASS RECRUITS TO HELP SCALE GLOBALLY

The SME Centre of Excellence has hired a new Operations Director and Chair of Strategic Programmes. Chris Beevers will be joining as Operations Director to support the organisation's ongoing expansion, while Professor John Wilson will become the chair of its Strategic Programmes to provide strategic leadership for future development.

This is part of an effort from the company to expand its reach and support more organisations by providing world-class business support services and programmes.

Chris Beevers is an experienced executive with a varied background, including senior roles in financial services, recruitment and supply chain management. John Wilson currently serves as Professor of Business History at the University of Northumbria. He is recognised globally for his expertise in business strategy and was previously Director of Newcastle Business School for over four years.

Founded by Ammar Mirza CBE in 2016, the SME Centre of Excellence recently became the first enterprise agency accredited as a centre of excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (IOEE), which Chris says is one of the reasons that he saw it as the right time to get involved. "This reflects the commitment to quality and the desire to provide a truly excellent service to all of the businesses that we work with, and very much reflects my own ambitions to be the best at what I do".

John adds that the SME Centre of Excellence is already "the best place for any business to come, whether they are just starting up or have been trading for ten years". It has a strong



John Wilson



Chris Beevers

track record in supporting businesses through their various stages.

"We offer everything from advice on finance and funding opportunities right through to practical support with creating and maintaining a website and marketing strategy. We want to take that journey with businesses from the very beginning, all the way through to raising investment and growing nationally and internationally", Chris says.

"We see our place as being akin to a modern-day business school for entrepreneurs", he continues. "The services we provide are built around their needs, whether that is in improving their business plan or helping them to overcome a specific challenge. We want our clients to grow and become stronger businesses".

John adds: "The SME Centre of Excellence has been growing really quickly since it opened and both Chris and I are looking forward to supporting this growth". The organisation is also looking to expand its reach and support more organisations. This is part of a wider plan by the business as it looks to increase its profile across the UK by developing new ways of delivering its service offering leveraging digital channels.

"The pandemic drove a massive increase in digital adoption, which allows us to reach even more businesses who need the support that we provide more than ever".

Let us help you start, survive and thrive.
Tel. 01661 823234 or
E: customer.care@smecofe.co.uk



L_R: Ammar Mirza CBE, Muhammad Akhtar, H.E. Tariq Wazir, Mark Hunt and Mike Clark.

NORTH EAST INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE ESTABLISHES TRADE LINKS WITH PAKISTAN

The North East's global trade, inward investment and export potential have been showcased as part of an international delegation that welcomed Pakistan's Consulate General, H E Tariq Wazir, to the region.

Along with Commercial Secretary, Muhammad Akhtar, from the Pakistan High Commission, Mr Wazir toured key commercial development sites including AirView Park with business leaders Ammar Mirza CBE, Mohammed Khaliq (Gainford Group) and Mark Hunt (Newcastle International Airport), as part of ongoing discussions to enhance and shape bi-lateral opportunities as well as strategic collaborations moving forward.

Championing North East businesses across a diverse range of sectors, the reception discussed potential inward investment, jobs creation and emerging markets and industries whilst visiting the proposed, multi-million pound 'International Space Station', a dedicated, centre of excellence 'trade hub' soon to be constructed at AirView Park.

The new 10,200 sq ft office development, next to Newcastle International Airport, will help SMEs launch, scale-up and take advantage of export routes whilst also supporting in-bound trade from overseas.

Ammar Mirza CBE, explained, "We are very much

looking ahead with great positivity and optimism, and delegation visits such as this one with the Consulate General present a fantastic opportunity to cement those working relationships further and build back stronger together.

"By opening up new collaborative opportunities between the North East, Pakistan and other overseas nations, we can take huge advantage of the export links right here on our doorstep and proactively drive forward our region's recovery.

"It was an honour to welcome Consulate General Wazir to the North East, and this came on the back of signing a North East and Pakistan-focused, bi-lateral trade agreement with the SME Centre of Excellence. I'm certain this will become the foundation for more mutually-beneficial discussions and new trade partnerships with local and overseas businesses in the future."

Consulate General of Pakistan, Tariq Wazir, added, "On visiting the SME Centre of Excellence (CoE), I was mesmerized to see the quality of work being done as a leading enterprise support hub in the North East of England. I learned about the

impactful initiatives to support and connect SMEs locally and globally to realise their full potential, and also got the opportunity to visit its most current and substantive project at AirView Park.

"Pakistan would like to benefit from Ammar's experiences and contributions as Executive Chair of the CoE, supporting and uplifting businesses in across the UK in the best interests of the excellent relations of our two countries. I wish him the best of luck in this venture and offer my full support to this end."

Mark Hunt, Chief Financial Director of Newcastle International Airport, a key stakeholder of the AirView Park development, added, "Global trade relations are key to the continued growth of the North East, and as we begin to see a way out of the economic downturn, our export links with countries like Pakistan are very important. Collaborations and strategic partnerships linking local companies with those overseas can help deliver a stronger recovery so Newcastle International Airport, as a gateway to international markets, very much supports discussions like this with potential trade partners."

WHO TEACHES US TO CHALLENGE AT WORK?



We go through school, college and university learning how to adapt to those in authority. We get a vast understanding of how to please our teachers, work in the way that they want us to work and 'be' how they want us to 'be'. We work hard, prepare well and do what we need to get good grades.

So when we get our first jobs it's not a huge surprise that we don't really understand the 'rules' of work. We tend to just assume that we have to do what we're asked to do. No questions asked.

When I started my first 'corporate' job, my manager asked me to do a task a certain way. I remember thinking that their method wasn't particularly efficient and I could clearly see a better way... but I did what I was told. This happened again and again in those first few years of my career. I could see a better way, a more effective way, a more 'budget friendly' way of doing things, but I kept quiet. I trusted that they knew what they were doing and thought that I didn't have a say in how things were done.

Looking back it seems ludicrous that I didn't feel like I had "permission" to ask questions, to make suggestions and challenge decisions. It was such a waste. I might have added some more real value to the organisations I worked in. I knew I had good ideas. But I didn't always share them as I wasn't asked.

I was never 'taught' how to challenge constructively. I didn't know how to influence people in authority. I was still adapting. It took me a while (and a whole lot of frustration) before I figured out how I could start putting my ideas forward, and how I could question my manager.

I decided to bring a little bit of my natural curiosity and a touch of mischief into my work. I started asking more questions on a one-to-one basis, seeking to understand more about what my boss was thinking and what was important to them. This gave me an understanding of what my 'wiggle room' was.

Then I got round the permission thing by seeking forgiveness, rather than asking for permission. I did feel I was constantly 'grassing' myself up. "This 'thing' happened... so this is how I solved the problem....". Then I would hope that I wouldn't get into trouble. 99 times out of 100 I was fine - getting the result was seen as more important.

It turned out well for me. I was seen as someone who had initiative and could get things done. Often this meant going a little outside the existing

process (but that's a story for another time).

So, who teaches us how to challenge authority? This is something that we have to learn ourselves, often through trial and error! We've been talking about this in our community recently and it really shouldn't be this difficult. Wouldn't it be lovely if we all worked in organisations where challenging was the norm and having constructive conversations wasn't so terrifying!

About Work Pirates

The way we've always done things is no longer working. We created Work Pirates, to help you rewrite the rules of work. We help leaders gain the confidence, courage and tools to do things differently. So they can better solve their problems, feel less stressed and have a happier, more innovative workplace with more empowered employees.

Find out more at workpirates.com or get in touch with Michelle at michelle@workpirates.com



Catherine Wilmot

BRINGING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY TO THE WORKPLACE

Northern Housing Consortium is a membership body representing the views of around 96% of housing providers across the North of England, with events and procurement services extending beyond the North, to over 400 members, nationally.

Catherine Wilmot, Executive Director (Operations & Finance), Northern Housing Consortium discusses how the organisation is redesigning the workplace in favour of a collaborative hub space and agile working, after state-of-the art diagnostic tools revealed a new approach to staff wellbeing would enhance psychological safety in the workplace.

Employee wellbeing is a main priority for the Consortium and a decision was taken pre-Covid, in May 2019, that, although the team of 34 were motivated and engaged, more could be done to support them.

Wellbeing Works, a performance, engagement and wellbeing consultancy, was appointed and CEO, Hamish Moore recommended we utilise Team Works, a diagnostic tool used to measure psychological safety, to discover what drives the team, threatens the team and soothes or calms the team.

Hamish explained that a psychologically safe culture is one where it is safe to be in a minority of one in decision-making or discussions, safe to speak out about feeling at risk or vulnerable in the workplace, safe to respectfully challenge the status quo, safe to ask for help, safe to admit to an error or

mistake and where people feel valued by their line manager and colleagues.

Senior management was particularly attracted to the categorising of how well a company was performing in terms of staff wellbeing, with companies receiving a score of thriving, surviving and hiving, following completion of a survey by employees. Thriving, whereby a team is deemed to be likely psychologically safe, is the goal all organisations should be aiming for. Hiving means a team has impaired levels of psychological safety and surviving indicates a team is at risk of avoidable psychological harm.

Overall, the report confirmed the Consortium was performing well, with a result of 50% thriving and exceptionally good scores for soothing and trust in management. Areas such as concentration and workload showed room for improvement and we have been working to address this.

A lack of quiet areas due to poor acoustics in our Sunderland office, was revealed as a key issue affecting concentration and the building was amended by way of installation of absorption materials. However, the advent of truly agile working during the pandemic, meant it was the ideal time to start looking to relocate to a

smaller, collaborative office space that will reduce traditional desk space by an estimated two-thirds and facilitate better creative thinking and meeting space.

Relocating is a massive undertaking and many would think it unwarranted to add extra stress during a pandemic. However, the results provided to us by Team Works and the clear recommendation we should address the lack of concentration and focus displayed by many of our team, meant we felt reassured and justified that our decision to move was the right one and fits alongside our member value strategic objectives as we transition to a hybrid-working model.

As is the case for many organisations, Covid-19 created many challenges for the housing sector, putting increased pressure and workload at the feet of frontline employees.

Communicating with the team has been a key priority throughout the pandemic, as employees settled into home working. Management committed to increasing check-ins and team meetings, CEO, Tracy Harrison, recorded a daily video and informal Friday meetings were introduced to boost morale. A Consultant Clinical Psychologist was brought in to talk about how to look after individual mental health and indicators that might suggest colleagues were struggling and accredited Staff Mental Health First Aiders have been put in place. We also encouraged employees to flexibly manage their work structure, using lunch breaks for physical activity to encourage relaxation.

We are just at the start of our diagnostic-led employee wellbeing journey, enabling focus on specific areas of risk identified and we have already seen significant results.

www.northern-consortium.org.uk

THE BLAME GAME

Don't blame it on the sunshine
Don't blame it on the moonlight
Don't blame it on good times
Blame it on the Covid....

(With apologies to the Jackson 5)!

The notion of false attribution is well known in psychological circles. Basically, it involves error or oversimplification in finding the cause that would account for a set of feelings or circumstances. This is often accompanied with the opportunity to psychologically distance or project away from any notion of personal accountability. In short, we seek something to blame which eases any failures on our part and gives us some sense of understanding rather than confusion.

Covid has had a major impact and is a serious issue for all, but there is a real danger it becomes a rhetorical attribution point for just about every failing, masking more fundamental issues in need of attention.

The last few weeks have seen an increase in national insurance, involving the breach of a manifesto promise as the price of tackling the social care issue. The global pandemic was cited by the Premier as the reason for this. Lost in the detail of this of course, was the primacy of priorities towards easing the burden on the NHS to deal with backlogs. Given the fiscal absorbency of the NHS will these funds ever be freed to be redirected to social care further down the line?

Anyone involved in production management, logistics or even plain engineering mechanics would know that if you run systems be they human, fiscal, mechanical or otherwise at capacities exceeding 95% all of the time or something has to give. These demands have palpably been with the NHS for many years now. So, are we protecting the NHS because of Covid demands, or systemic underinvestment and poor planning spanning decades?

Much of businesses' inability to respond well during lockdown was often attributed to home working or disruption of supply chains. Whilst true in part, the stark reality is so many of these companies failed to have any form of developed disaster management approach that would ensure their survival in truly hard times. When businesses are dependent upon complex supply chains, simple contractual penalties for non-performance won't work when your own operation grinds to a halt. The tendency to keep inventory down, for example, is a given in ordinary times and benefits the bottom line, but what happens to the cost benefits of such a strategy in extra-ordinary times? That inventory position works both directions too - remember the outdated stockpile of PPE! Covid may have occurred, but many organisations lack true disaster planning. Failure to actually plan for the worst means that when things happen any disruption is attributed to the event, rather than the lack of planning for the stark reality that 'stuff' happens. Climate change brings a further dimension to this. Disaster plans include real disasters, not just a server breaking down or a hack, however disruptive.

Covid has become a very convenient area of common human experience, with which the poor, inefficient or unplanned organisation can garner a certain amount of plausible deniability and consumer tolerance over the next year or so. In many boardrooms, centres of legislation or public administration, this factor will be traded upon as we all groupthink together about the adversity we have faced. Even now, many businesses are taking the stance of coming to the end of the tunnel but will they sigh with relief and then fail anticipate future plunges into the dark?

Those who practice Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) understand the axiom that if you don't get results you have to have reasons. Those reasons require a detailed analysis of what went on, not simply attributing every failure in public service, business or elsewhere to a pandemic that had been predicted for years, whilst failing to fully understand the nature of global relationships that created interdependencies whilst vectoring disease. Indeed, in this respect, the constant reference to the global pandemic is tantamount to the old adages of 'getting around to it', or 'a funny thing happened to me on the way to...', or perhaps, simply blaming it on the Covid! It could never be a lack of planning!

I just can't, I just can't, I just can't control my feet (I can, the lyrics imply false attribution to an external force (the boogie) and a denial of my self-control, insight and planning)!

Contact me direct for more information, david@gedanken.co.uk

“

...it becomes a rhetorical attribution point for just about every failing, masking more fundamental issues in need of attention...

”



Dr. David Cliff



NECIT SERVICES STRENGTHENS ITS GLOBAL REACH

NECIT Services has further strengthened its global credentials after securing a master service agreement with US-based Murphy Oil Corporation and its successful completion of a project in New Zealand.

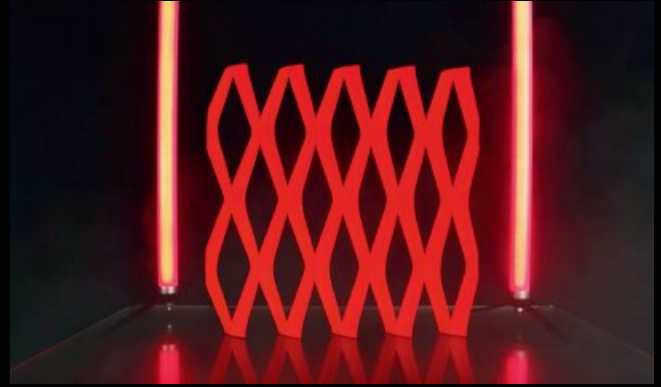
The announcement comes just months after the South Shields firm – which provides inspection, audit, and expediting services for the major engineering sectors – was recognised with a Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade.

NECIT Services also provided an inspector on behalf of an unnamed client involved in a project in New Zealand, tasked with verifying the effectiveness of equipment being installed in sand screens used in underground drilling.

As a result, several defects were identified, including porosity, cracks, and misalignments in welds, which prevented the equipment – destined for use in the oil and gas sector – being sent out into the field, saving the client time and money.

Cherelle Lyons, managing director of NECIT Services, said: "It is a tremendous vote of confidence in our capabilities to secure a master service agreement with Murphy Oil.

"We hope this signals the start of a long and fruitful relationship, and it serves to highlight the extent of NECIT's global involvement across multiple engineering sectors and operations.



REGIONAL FIRMS COMBINE TO PUT HARTLEPOOL-MADE PRODUCTS IN THE LIMELIGHT

A range of innovative architectural and industrial products have been brought to life on screen, thanks to a collaboration between two pioneering Tees Valley companies.

Hartlepool-based metal mesh manufacturer, The Expanded Metal Company, commissioned award-winning Middlesbrough-based film company, Ithica Films to create two films highlighting the strengths and visual impact of its architectural meshes and Experf products.

The films will be used to promote The Expanded Metal Company's products and capabilities to markets in the UK and overseas, and will support the firm's business development strategy in 2021.

The Expanded Metal Company designs and manufactures a range of specialist architectural meshes, which are used in building cladding, façades and screening applications.

Ithica Films was launched in 2014 and recently moved to an 8,000 sq ft new premises at Marsh Street in Cannon Park in Middlesbrough, to support increased demand for its services.

Philip Astley, managing director of The Expanded Metal Company, said: "We have worked with Ithica Films on several projects in the past and we were confident that their team could deliver an exceptional visual showcase for our architectural and Experf ranges. We certainly weren't disappointed with the outcome... and the results speak for themselves.

NORTH EAST'S SEAWARD INVESTMENT IN UNIVERSITY TALENT DRIVES INNOVATION

Investment in academic engineering excellence is helping to drive new product development at a North East electrical test and measurement company.

Peterlee-based Seaward has linked up with Durham University's Engineering Department in a partnership that sees undergraduate students as part of a project team to develop new processing technology, which could eventually be incorporated in future designs of the firm's electronic test and measurement instruments.

The initiative, designed to enhance the high-performance electrical testers provided to national and international customers, comes as part of Seaward's ongoing commitment to boosting engineering skills and new product development to drive growth and expansion.

The move has seen Durham University final year Mechanical and Electronics (Meng) students Haydn Lisk and Sam Sutcliffe working in the engineering department on a project that has led to the development of a new proof-



of-concept platform that is currently being assessed by Seaward for its commercial and manufacturing viability.

This is all part of an innovation-led strategy linked to a partnership with the university that sees a number of student internships at the company annually, where they play a key role in product development and gain experience in industrial processes and engineering management.

The **B2B** Marketing Specialists

T 0345 075 5955 www.horizonworks.co.uk

HORIZONWORKS



NORTHERN GAS AND POWER ATTENDS MAJOR NATIONAL EXHIBITIONS TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES TO ACHIEVE NET-ZERO GOALS

Northern Gas and Power (NGP) the leading energy procurement and management consultancy, will be attending a range of Exhibitions and Expos over the coming months to ensure businesses are aware of the benefits of energy management when it comes to achieving their Net Zero emissions targets.

The fast-growing energy and technology consultancy based on Gateshead waterfront in a new £2m+ flagship HQ, will be attending four major Expos with one last month and three throughout October and November this year, to engage with customers and prospects and emphasise the importance of setting clear Net-Zero carbon strategies.

NGP is part of Global Procurement Group – the international energy consultancy that spans three continents, with operations in France and Malta (Europe), Texas (US), and Chennai (India). Headcount has grown consistently, from one in 2013, to 40 in 2015, then 75 a year later, reaching 140 in 2017. Today the business comprises circa 750 heads.

First up on 15th and 16th September was the Care Home and Dementia Exhibition in Birmingham NEC. Tailored to the needs of the care home market there was a host of businesses exploring new opportunities to run their operations more efficiently for their residents.

NGP works with a range of care homes to help them identify the most beneficial energy deals as well as ways to conserve their energy consumption; therefore cutting costs and carbon and ensuring their budgets can be invested in their residents.

One such business is Fisher Group based in York. Their Director, Joshua Fisher said: "We've worked with NGP for two years now. Before that there

was no one central point of contact.

"Now using NGP we go through an account manager who consolidates our services through a simple process. We can get indicative prices for what our energy costs are going to be for any new projects through their energy management system."

On 28th October, NGP will attend the Great Northern Conference at Cutler's Wharf in Sheffield, arranged by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and JPI Media. In its third year, The Great Northern Conference will continue the debate on how best to grow the economy and build a greener, fairer, equal future for the North.

Bringing together key politicians, business leaders and media, NGP is sponsoring the Energy Session, and will be discussing how businesses can increase their energy efficiency and achieve their Net Zero goals.

Next is a two-day Expo over 10th and 11th November where the team will be at The Holiday Park & Resort Innovation Show – Europe's largest event of this nature, dedicated to providing advice and industry knowledge to the most ambitious holiday park and resort owners and managers.

Finally, on 24th and 25th November, NGP is attending EMEX (The Net Zero & Energy Management Expo) at Excel London, sponsoring the Sustainability & Net Zero theatre and also exhibiting.

Politician and Energy and Net Zero advocate, Lord Rupert Redesdale, said "It is great to get the involvement of Northern Gas and Power again at EMEX this year. At EMEX 2019 their stand was one of the best attended with its impressive, interactive display of their energy management ClearVUE Systems that helps businesses spot energy inefficiencies and anomalies in real-time.

"Reducing energy consumption and carbon is key to us achieving Net Zero so it is apt that they are sponsoring the Sustainability and Net Zero theatre at EMEX 2021 too, in addition to exhibiting again."

NGP is developing ground-breaking new technology (ClearVUE) to help businesses, large and small, reduce energy usage and costs. Real-time data allows NGP's customers to accurately measure energy usage and proactively manage it, enabling them to cut cost and carbon, in the drive towards the UK Government's 2050 Net Zero economy.

Dan Smith, NGP's Director of Energy Services, said "We have an opportunity to totally transform how businesses use and manage energy, as we move towards a sustainable, Net-Zero economy. People want change – businesses tell us they want to become more eco-friendly. We need to drive that change through technology and we look forward to meeting businesses and explaining how we can help them."

www.NGPtld.co.uk



NORTH EAST BUSINESSES HELPING THE 'COVID GENERATION' FIND A PATHWAY TO THE WORKPLACE

Across the North East, partnerships have been formed between people working in sectors from marketing to manufacturing and their local school or college.

Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director at the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) explains how the Enterprise Adviser network works, and how it's survived the pandemic.

Enterprise Advisers are people who've signed up to help the senior management team at their local school or college better align careers guidance with what businesses need.

At the start of 2020, we had a fantastic network of 250 people who have volunteered to share their knowledge to help bridge the gap between education and industry. This happens by embedding careers in the curriculum and giving young people real-world experience of the workplace.

But when the pandemic hit, businesses were under such pressure that we thought we may lose the entire network. However, we were absolutely delighted and surprised that the majority of our Enterprise Advisers were able to continue and we're really grateful for their contributions.

The activities our Enterprise Advisers have been able to help their schools undertake during COVID have been extraordinary and, for a generation of young people who will see the lasting effect of COVID on their employment opportunities, it's been so important that the North East business community has continued to support them and help them see the opportunities that are out there when they leave education.

At St Robert of Newminster Catholic School in Washington, our Enterprise Adviser, Carole White, who is CEO at TEDCO Business Support, secured 10 businesses to meet year 10 pupils and tell them about careers in their sector. While at Bishop Auckland College, employability skills workshops and virtual work experience was put in place by the college's Enterprise Adviser, Hollie Statham from Bowmer & Kirkland construction.

Businesses in our region genuinely want to give back to the local community and help young people build a brighter future and I want to thank every person who's already helped make a difference through the Enterprise Adviser network, especially throughout the pandemic.

Now we're wanting to grow our Enterprise Adviser network even further. We're looking for people of any age, from businesses in any sector and of any size, who want to help schools give young people a better experience of careers guidance. We recognise one size doesn't fit all and people have different amount of time to commit, so whether you're a one-man-band or a multinational company, we can work something out to suit you.

We want all young people across the North East to have the opportunity to interact with businesses and employers. It gives them something that's tangible in terms of understanding future career options and just one interaction, like a visit to your workplace, or the chance to work on a real-life project with an employer like you, can be the trigger that helps a young person see a future for themselves in your business.

Find out about being an Enterprise Adviser at NorthEastAmbition.co.uk or email the North East LEP Skills team on goodcareers@nelep.co.uk

“
...help schools give young people a better experience of career guidance...
”



SAVING WATER – AND LOWERING BILLS

Next month (November), the UK will host the latest round of UN climate talks, or Cop26.

The talks have been billed as a test of global solidarity between the world's rich and poor nations and are expected to be the most important climate talks since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015.

High on the agenda is likely to be the matter of water usage – and wastage – and the resulting impact on the environment – something Clare Galland, water efficiency and environmental services manager at Everflow, knows all about.

Water is, in theory, a renewable resource. After all, here in Britain at least, rain is the most common weather phenomenon we encounter.

However, as Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency said in 2020: "People might wonder how a country with such a reputation for rain like the UK could reach a tipping point where demand for water outstrips supply in just 25 years. But this may become a reality if we don't take action to save water now. A convergence of factors underpinned by climate change has led us to this frightening prospect. But if we all take concerted action now, we can ensure that there will be enough water to go around for generations to come."

Indeed, the Great British Rain Paradox report found that three in four people in the UK believe it's a wet and rainy country, and most believe we have enough water to meet our future needs. But climate change and population growth mean that the UK could face significant water shortages in less than 25 years.

How has this happened?

In short, more people and less water.

The UK population has grown by around 20 per cent over the past 50 years, changes to the climate have led to wetter winters and drier, hotter summers. However, wetter winters do not necessarily translate into more water. Rather, they disrupt infrastructure with flooding and reduce supplies when we need them most.

As well as the population growth we're having to accommodate, our water use has changed too. In the 1960s the average person used 85 litres per

day. Today, we use 143 litres per person each day – nearly double the amount.

The reasons for this are manifold, but include the increase in household appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines; improvements in personal hygiene – people will now have a daily shower, rather than one bath a week, often sharing the water with their family; and an increasing amount of food being grown in greenhouses to meet the demand for out-of-season produce – this requires watering throughout the year.

Supply and demand

In early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and government restrictions were combined with the hottest ever month of May to create unprecedented demand for water. With more people at home than normal, water usage was more than 40 per higher than average in some parts of the country.

That perfect storm, which led to exceptional demand for water, was impossible to predict, but it highlights how demand can and does change.

And when it does change, it has a knock-on effect; when clean water is being used faster than it can be produced, businesses can experience low water pressure and even outages to their water supply.

So, what can we do?

How we can save water together

The good news is that there are ways that absolutely everyone can have a positive impact. Businesses and employees can all work together, both every day and in times of crisis, to ensure there's enough water for everyone.

Simple tips include making sure you're aware of

the warning signs of leaks, such as damp patches in or outside your building, unusually lush vegetation during dry periods and running overflow systems.

A dripping tap can waste more than 5,300 litres of water a year, so make sure taps are properly turned off and change washers at the first sign of a drip.

And while the warmer weather of Summer is a (rare) pleasure, thousands of litres of water can be wasted every day on grounds maintenance. Hoses and sprinklers can use up to 1,000 litres per hour – more than a family of four will use in a day. And of course, always best to water in the evenings to avoid wastage due to evaporation in the daytime heat.

To save, ensure vehicles, surfaces and equipment are rinsed with a bucket of water rather than a hose when possible and consider recycling the water you're using for washing.

At Everflow, we've built our systems to notice when customers are using an unusual amount of water. If this happens, we alert them, advise them how to check for leaks and can offer further advice for using less water to keep your bills down.

We also offer a range of water saving products and services and can work with our SME customers to find those that optimal for their organisation, saving water in communities and reducing their water bills in the process.

Climate change is an emergency, but by all working together, our small changes can add up to a big result.

For more information about any of Everflow's water saving products and services, visit www.everflowwater.com



Clare Galland

YOUR EYE ON THE REGION



Paul Charlton

PAUL CHARLTON

Senior Orthotist,
Peacocks Medical Group.

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

I was born 500 yards from St James Park and 200 yards from the then Newcastle Brewery. I've always lived in the west end of Newcastle. I grew up in Benwell and then East Denton and following the loss of my father, at the age of 13, I went to boarding school. However, I was always keen to get home to Newcastle and I joke that everyone in my year ended up speaking with a Geordie accent. I also endeavoured to convert the school from rugby to football.

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

We are a very friendly bunch in the North East and there is always someone readily available to offer guidance or support.

Unsure of my career path, I was incredibly lucky to discover orthotics, which is the most wonderful profession. Bringing clinical and engineering knowledge together to create biomechanical solutions to medical problems, satisfies my always curious mind. The fact I work with great people makes it all the better.

I was very fortunate that my mentor, employer and immediate past chair of Peacocks Medical Group, Colin Peacock, was a crusader within the industry. He helped create the profession which was in its infancy when I started as a trainee orthotist.

Where do you like to eat out in the region?

I really like the food at Riverbeat, an Asian tapas restaurant and it fits in with why I love Newcastle. It's the old river police station overlooking the quayside and bridges.

Are the people really friendlier?

I've had the pleasure of welcoming many visitors to our city over the years and love the comments they have on the friendliness and the passion of the people they meet. All of which I take for granted but am very proud of.

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

The view from the rooftop of Greys Monument. It is definitely worth a visit.

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

Working at Peacocks Medical Group has led to me being asked to speak and teach across the country, eventually delivering clinics to the National Hospital for Neurology. My enthusiasm to speak and share information, also led to me taking the chair for the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics in the late noughties. Fortunately, I was able to do all of this while still living in Newcastle, where I am married and have the most fantastic family who I'm incredibly proud of and who help keep me sane!!

Benfield Business Park
Benfield Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE6 4NQ
Tel: 0191 276 9600

www.peacocks.net



FASHION FIRM RAMPS UP COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Five years after forming his Newcastle based influential designer street wear brand, Gambian born Lamin Gibba is helping to bring the community together and addressing physical and mental health issues amongst young people through the sport of skateboarding.

Lamin started Jerry J Clothing in 2016 after attending college in Newcastle. He has created a highly visible brand with the slogan "For Elevated People." The phrase comes from his upbringing in Gambia where he dreamed and aspired to make something of his life. Now with a successful brand and previous support from The Princes Trust he is aiming to elevate other young people in the region through a free day of skateboarding.

Lamin said: "With our Skate Jam we are aiming to help bring the community together and bring new faces into Skateboarding. The recent Olympics have shown what can be done with the right training, dedication, and attitude.



CARELINE'S SUMMERHOUSE BRINGS A RAY OF SUNSHINE INDOORS

A summerhouse erected during the peak of the pandemic at a South Tyneside nursing and residential care home to provide a safe place for visitors to come and meet family members has found a new role in helping with the mindfulness and mental well-being of those in its care.

With the help of South Tyneside Council's support and some funding for the project, the newly erected summerhouse originally provided a safe bubble for families to meet under strict COVID regulations but now has been repurposed into an open-air space that can be used more recreationally for the benefit of the care homes residents.

Opened in 2013, the home is operated by Careline Lifestyles, an independent provider of high-quality nursing and residential care who manage nine homes spanning an area from Teesside in the south to North Northumberland. Deneside Court received an "overall good" report when it was last inspected by the Care Quality Commission in 2020.



MATT'S NEW ROUTE TO MARKET IS QUAY TO OUTLET'S SUCCESS

A new bus service connecting South Tyneside with the Royal Quays Outlet Centre in North Shields is proving beneficial for shoppers, the outlet centre, and the bus operator.

The route replaces the previous number 10/11 service that originally served South Shields, Jarrow, and The Cobalt Business Park with the new addition of a stop at the outlet centre and North Shields town centre.

As Matt Dawson, Centre Manager of Royal Quays Outlet Centre explains, the new service has already increased footfall to the centre which is benefiting existing well-established brand names and the many new independent traders.

"The new service passes through the majority of South Tyneside to North Shields via Royal Quays and so far, there has been increased footfall compared to our pre covid 2019 figures and I've had very positive feedback from the businesses based at the outlet."

MEMORIES OF NORTH SHIELDS POST-WAR LIFE SOUGHT FOR REMEMBERING THE PAST

North Shields residents past and present are being asked to help uncover the history of Howard Street and Northumberland Square – a part of the town with a rich history.

As part of a project to revitalise the town's historic centre, volunteers from North Tyneside-based Remembering the Past want to hear from people who worked on Howard Street – which was once the centre of the town's commercial life, with building societies, accountants, insurance companies and more all based there – in the 1940s, 50s or 60s.

Dr Kath Smith, Lead Volunteer and Trustee at Remembering the Past, said: "The post-war period was a time when North Shields was really busy, with a thriving fishing industry and shipbuilding presence which supported a huge range of local businesses and commercial services located in and around Howard Street.

These memories are being collected as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone project which will revitalise the town's historic centre, with a particular



focus on Howard Street and Northumberland Square, which contain some of North Shields' most elegant buildings and public spaces.

People's stories will be captured through interviews and stored as part of Remembering the Past's digital archive of life in North Tyneside. They will also inform art and cultural events celebrating North Shields' history, including a community-led performance.



IE HUB
INCOME & EXPENDITURE HUB

Empower your customers

With our integrated systems, you can receive accurate affordability information without extensive call centre resource

✉ joinup@iehub.co.uk 🌐 www.iehub.network

RUN FOR HOME

Northern Insight Managing Director Michael Gramslaw recently completed the 40th Great North Run, raising almost £1400 in the process for the Percy Hedley Foundation.

Michael said "I have never been a natural runner but after my daughter inspired me to do the Couch to 5K, during the first lockdown, I have never looked back and have found it has done wonders for my physical and mental wellbeing.

The race fell three days after my 50th birthday and was a great challenge to get my teeth into over the Summer. The atmosphere on the day was electric and I certainly hope to enter again in 2022 when the Race returns to its conventional South Shields finish.

Huge thanks to everyone who supported me and donated to a very worthwhile cause."

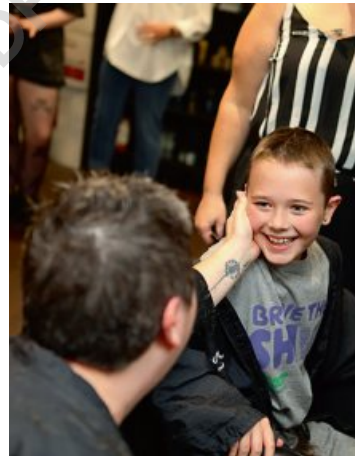


Michael Gramslaw

BRAVED THE SHAVE!

Northern Insight Designer Lu O'Rourke and her daughter Maisie recently braved the shave for Macmillan Cancer Support, raising almost £2500 with donations still coming in.

Lu said: "Thank you to all who donated and supported us. Many thanks to the girls at Allure Hairdressing too for doing the shaving!"





NE YOUTH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF DAY RAISES THOUSANDS OF POUNDS

NE Youth were proud to host their annual golf day at Ramside Hall last week. The sun shone down on the 23 teams who took part and over £7000 was raised which will go some way to filling a hole in the finances caused by Covid and the lockdowns which hit fundraising hard.

Not only did NE Youth have a record number of teams playing at Ramside, but they also secured sponsors to help off-set costs. Nichol Associates were the main sponsor and Robinson- Raine Joinery were the prize 'hole' sponsors.

Dave Nichol, CEO @ Nichol Associates Ltd commented: "The need to give something back to our communities and invest in the development of young people within our region is something that we at Nichol Associates Limited take very seriously. NE Youth vision for our young people by providing opportunities they deserve really resonated with us, this is why we took the decision to provide sponsorship for one of their events and we now look forward in developing a long term relationship with this fantastic charity."

The overall winners were The Protector Group, with Morton's Solicitors as runners up.

Jon Niblo, CEO of NE Youth said: "What a great day- the support NE Youth has received over the years has been outstanding but this year, given what the charity has had to endure during the pandemic, it seems extra special. Huge thanks to all who took part and our sponsors. The money raised really will make a difference"



COMPLIANT FM CONTINUES TO GROW



L-R: Digital Marketing Manager, Danielle Barry,
Managing Director, Mark Henderson, Sales & Marketing Manager, Nicola Halse

Sunderland based, Compliant FM, are continuing their growth plans following an increased demand for their services during the last 18 months.

Compliant, which was launched in 2017, offer affordable, UKAS accredited, ISO certifications to businesses across the UK and have helped put in place hundreds of management systems, they have an ambitious five-year plan that will see well over 500 businesses become certified.

Backed by a wealth of experience within the quality industry and being commercially aware, they understand the need to provide a comprehensive, trusted and valued service model whilst also working with their clients on an individual basis to ensure all projects are completed within budget and on time.

Following what has been a challenging period for many businesses, a competitive edge and the ability to tender for public sector contracts are chances which cannot be missed and ISO certifications are the gateway to these opportunities.

The company certainly practices what they preach too, as well as the company itself, their director, Mark Henderson, is a BSI trained lead auditor across the five main ISO standards including quality, health & safety, environmental, business continuity and information systems, giving clients the extra assurance of their own service and competency.

The company are now one of the UK's leading ISO certification consultancy bodies and an established partner of the British Assessment Bureau, their full service includes design, documentation, implementation support, training and a preliminary audit.

When the pandemic hit, like many businesses, they were uncertain as to whether their business would be detrimentally affected, however, they took the time and opportunity to invest in a new website, increase their sales and marketing activity and proactively promote their business via various north east networking organisations including NEPIC, the North East Automotive Alliance and the North East England Chamber of Commerce.

The decision has definitely paid off, with an increase in turnover and profit over the last 18 months, they have helped an array of businesses across the UK within sectors such as engineering, manufacturing, waste recycling, house building and even a Japanese exhibition house based in London.

Director, Mark Henderson, commented, 'When I launched the business, I could see the need to deliver important industry accreditations to companies in ways which made it easy for business leaders to implement.

ISO certifications are essential for businesses hoping to win contracts big or small and for any organisation whether that be in the public or private sector and are important statements of credibility, integrity and competency.

The world of accreditations can feel like a complex and complicated world to the uninitiated and contrary to many opinions, the ISO process doesn't need to be costly and time draining.

Those running companies are completely focused on delivering whatever their products or services are, as they should be, they simply don't have the luxury to devote their time elsewhere, with our comprehensive and tailored offering, we help to make things simpler and easier for them. Not only do we take them through the process of gaining those certifications but we can help them cope when it comes to ongoing compliance too.

We're delighted with the growth of the company over the last 18 months and are looking forward to helping more businesses and expanding further in the coming months and years."

To find out more about Compliant FM's services or to receive a no-obligation proposal, visit their website at www.compliantfm.com

"I QUIT!" - HOW TO HANDLE EMPLOYEE RESIGNATIONS

Who can forget this year's headline grabbing resignations from Matt Hancock and Piers Morgan, but what do you need to do when you receive a resignation from a member of your team?

Acknowledge the resignation – Whilst you might be shocked or disappointed, you do need to deal with the resignation. If they have not already done so you should ask the employee to confirm their resignation in writing. This will avoid any disagreements at a later date over the exact resignation date and when the notice period started.

Resignations in the heat of the moment – Sometimes the 'I quit' words can be spoken but when an employee calms down they may change their mind. Therefore, give them some time to cool down and reflect on their decision. If the resignation was in the heat of the moment and you refuse to allow the person to return once they have calmed down, you may face an unfair dismissal claim.

Notice period – It goes without saying that the individual has to give you the correct amount of notice, which should be stated in the contract of employment. Depending on the terms of the contract, employers have certain rights:

- You could ask the employee to work their notice period.
- You may place the employee on garden leave.
- You can agree that they leave immediately.



Whatever you decide, you will need to confirm to the employee when their last day is and how the notice period will be handled.

Post-termination restrictions – Don't forget to check the employee's contract to see whether there are post-termination restrictions. You should remind the employee of these covenants. If they breach these covenants, you can take legal action.

Exit interview – An exit interview is a good opportunity to understand why someone is leaving – for a new challenge, personal reasons, career development or if there is a workplace issue. Whatever their reasons, it is useful to chat this through and take learnings from any areas for improvement.

Factor in handover – You will also need to discuss how to handover any projects; what message is to be communicated to colleagues and clients; and set out what the procedures for returning any equipment and security passes and their final pay. You will also be turning your mind to replacing the team member.

Part ways on good terms – to end the working relationship on bad terms can be damaging. You never know if, and when, you will need to cross paths with the employee again in the future.

Remember, the team at Holgate HR are only ever a phone call away if you are facing a resignation and need some assistance!

www.holgatehr.co.uk

NATIONAL EXPANSION ACROSS MIDLANDS AND SOUTH

Roofing and building maintenance specialist, Hodgson Sayers, has seen further national growth throughout the pandemic, as its Nottingham base attracts public sector contracts in the Midlands and the South.

The County Durham-headquartered business, established a base in Nottingham in 2018, which has been the springboard for a raft of work in London, Devon, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and East Anglia.

The company, which employs approximately 100 staff, is on the Efficiency East Midland Framework, resulting in a range of projects and the Eastern Procurement Framework, which has seen it assisting South Holland District Council. Other contracts have been won from Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, Derby Homes and Nottingham City Homes. Meanwhile, the company has also undertaken projects for Nationwide Building Society in the North East, Yorkshire and Devon.

John Sayers, managing director, Hodgson Sayers, said: "Like so many companies, we have spent the last 18 months navigating the pandemic, concentrating on the wellbeing of our staff and ensuring we had very effective lines of

communication with our clients as, like ourselves, they faced unparalleled challenges.

"While it has been an extremely disruptive and unpredictable period in our history, which has also distorted our revenues, it was very satisfying to see that our decision, four years ago, to open a base in the Midlands, was assisting our fightback from Covid 19 and also that our national footprint continued to grow.

"Winning contracts is always exciting but strong growth comes from clients coming back on a regular basis with recurring work. We always look for feedback from clients and it would seem that apart from delivering a high quality service, which has to be a given, they see us as strong at developing relationships, we communicate well and that we identify and deliver solutions when a project presents a specific challenge.

"When one considers that only a short time ago the vast majority of our contracts were in the



John Sayers

North East and that now, for instance, we are delivering challenging roofing projects in Surrey and in North and South London, we have clearly come a long way as a company."

www.hodgson-sayers.co.uk



NEED OUTSOURCED BUSINESS SUPPORT?

**Get your free HR
Health Check!**

Our services include:

- PAYG**
- Employment Contracts**
- Expert Legal Advice**
- Employment Law**
- HR Audits**
- Training & Development**
- Risk Assessments**
- Settlement Agreements**
- Recruitment**
- IR35 Support**
- Payroll**

Visit our website at www.inspired-hr.co.uk for more information about our company's services.

Email us at hello@inspired-hr.co.uk for inquiries.

PEOPLE DO NOT BUY FROM PEOPLE THEY KNOW, LIKE AND TRUST

It's really easy to think the opposite. You might get told the opposite all of the time.

If I mention it to an individual or group I am working with a lot of people believe that we do buy from people we know, like and trust.

The truth is we have moved on and changed our buying habits so quickly many people haven't paused to look at what is really happening in the client transaction.

I thought I would look at this from a personal perspective. When I buy something from a major online retailer. I don't know anyone there. Sometimes I don't particularly like their business model or ways of working.

But I do trust them. I trust their website will be secure. I trust they will do what they say they will (most of the time). I trust I will get the goods or service I have bought and paid for. I trust them to do something in the event of an error or an issue.

In short, for many transactions we are moving beyond the know, we can cope if we don't quite like someone, but it appears (certainly from my perspective) that we have to trust the person or business we want to buy from.

When buying into professional services, those with more of an ongoing relationship thought, we may change that focus slightly. It would be hard not to argue that trust was one of the most critical points when choosing an accountant, banker or solicitor. The nature of that relationship (and I think that is a key word here) is such that we want a little more of the know and like, but much less than many professionals hope for.

Now, I am hoping you are a friendly, engaging, effective and efficient professional in your job (that's the minimum to start the relationship). But how about trust? How do you go about establishing and building trust in everything you do? How, ultimately do you become a trusted adviser to your clients?

There is a really simple starting point and one you can make use of in every interaction with your existing and potential clients.

It is based on the trust equation from Charles H Green. This is his trust equation:

$$\text{Trust} = \frac{C + R + I}{S}$$

Let me explain what the equation is and where you want to invest your time:

You need to increase the three areas across the top of the equation:

C – Credibility: are you and your organisation credible in the marketplace, your personal and professional brand and reputation

R – Reliability: do you do what you say you will,

do you keep your promises. In short do you deliver for your clients

I – Intimacy: this is slightly more challenging, but I often describe this as "the relationship beyond the transaction", it's getting to know your clients and them getting to know you

Spend some time thinking how you increase each single area to help you grow trust.

The big wins you can make right now are by focusing on reducing the S on the bottom of the equation.

S – Self orientation: focusing on great outcomes for your client, focusing on their needs first, focusing on what is important in their world and not yours

This is the area that so many professionals can demonstrate trust early in a client engagement and build this to a point where they become the trusted adviser. How can you do that straight away? Try this highly effective technique:

See things from your client's perspective not your own.

Most people nod and say yes that's what we do. In reality, seeing someone else's perspective is a real challenge. You have a "curse of knowledge" and as soon as you start to listen to your client you start to shape ideas, solutions and approaches (from your perspective not theirs). To get beyond this you need develop your client curiosity and to ask more questions like:

- What's most important to them in this transaction (not what you think or assume)
- How do they want to be contacted?
- When do they want to meet again?
- What format do they want a document in?
- What method of communication works best for them?

These simple questions (and so many more that link with them) demonstrate immediately that you are really client focused.

I had exactly the opposite recently while looking for a new supplier for New Results. So many people messaged me saying, here's my number call me. Now that is easy for them, but not easy for me the client. It's lazy and it tells me you don't value our relationship or the opportunity I was speaking to people about.

Take some time out and have think about this. How can you shift your focus to be more curious? Ask more questions to understand this client and their specific needs in this moment. That is the foundation of building trust, the start of the journey to becoming a trusted adviser. It is also a great way to win new clients and develop existing client relationships.

Trust me, it's a great place to start.

To contact Nevil, email him:

nevil@newresults.co.uk, connect with him on LinkedIn or visit www.newresults.co.uk



Nevil Tynemouth

THE HEART OF SALES AND MARKETING

Sales is a profession and one that Just Williams have forged their seven year existence on having recently launched a secondary business, The Just Williams Sales Academy; achieving endorsed training provider status from the Institute of Sales Professionals.

Just Williams combines sales and marketing to create robust solutions for each client, all the while affecting change around them.

Just Williams is a Tees Valley based company providing sales and marketing solutions for SMEs. They are currently working with colleges, local authorities, engineering companies and many more.

Just Williams assists in brand awareness, sales and business development and facilitates introductions whilst also having a clear vision of social responsibility and doing what is right for the environment and for the community.

It's also wonderful to report that as well as helping businesses, Just Williams also helps raise money for charities and local causes.

"We have always worked to support charities and causes including raising money and donating time



to support Young Enterprise, Billingham Synthonia Ladies Football Club, as well as mentoring young women in the Tees Valley through The Girls Network too," said Emma McDonald who fronts the marketing side of things at Just Williams. "In 2020 we decided to help the British Heart Foundation. My father died suddenly at the age of 73 having suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. He had a big influence on my life so it seemed the right thing to do was to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation. We've raised an incredible £4,000, when our original aim was £300 – to pay for one day of research into a programme to create tissue for damaged hearts.

We've done this in a number of ways – from a coffee morning at our offices, Fusion Hive to our MD and team tackling the 42-mile Lyke Wake Walk which crosses the Yorkshire Moors and ends on the coast near Ravenscar. We are excited to announce we are nominating Red Balloons and The Girls Network as our next charity partners."

Just Williams backed the Self Care September campaign which is all about being kind to others AND being kind to yourself. Each day had a special

message to make you think about what you do and how you go about your life.

"We aim to be as socially responsible as possible and encourage all of our clients to be the same. It's all about doing the right thing for your company, your colleagues and your customers and to help us all aim for a sustainable future," said Managing Director, Jessica Williams.

"We're looking forward to being able to support two more fantastic organisations and the planning is well underway for more challenges and activities too".

So there you go...helping business, helping charity, being aware of their surroundings and with a desire to help others. What a great combination at Just Williams.

If you'd like help with your sales and marketing and advice on how to be proactive regarding ESG, the best idea is to have a chat with Jessica and Emma. Call 01642 955862 or email info@justwilliamsLtd.co.uk and why not check out their website, www.justwilliamsLtd.co.uk





HOMES AND GARDENS ARE SUE'S LEGAL PRIORITIES

A North East property lawyer is inviting local charities and community groups to survey her extensive office gardens to see if they can be used for the benefit of others.

Sue Shaw-Toomey runs her Toomey Legal practice from the historical Surveyors House in Cramlington Village which first appeared in maps of the town in the mid 1800s.

The fact that the property was once a quarry office is still very evident as the building's garden

is built deep into the heart of the remains of the sandstone walled quarry.

"This garden is one of Cramlington's hidden treasures and there is history everywhere you look with the quarry walls and stonework being very prominent," said Sue. "It is also very secluded and private and has scope for use by community groups for activities which promote wellness and good mental health."

Sue is inviting local community groups and charities to contact her to see if she can allocate them sections of the garden for them to carry out gardening activities including creating sustainable and organic vegetable beds, flower planting and basic maintenance.



SQUARE ONE LAW'S CONTINUED GROWTH SEES OPENING OF NEW OFFICE IN DARLINGTON

Entrepreneurial law firm Square One Law, is celebrating its tenth year in business with the opening a new office in Darlington, demonstrating the firm's ambitions to be at the centre of new economic activity within the Tees Valley.

The new office, situated in Pioneer Court, Morton Palms, reflects the firm's growing client base in the Tees Valley and puts it at the heart of the area's continued renaissance.

Gill Hunter, managing partner at Square One Law, said: "Having successfully established a Leeds office last year, we see the new Darlington office being perfectly placed for good communication links between our Newcastle and Leeds operations.

"The growth in our Tees Valley client base and government jobs announcements, put Darlington and the Teesside firmly at the centre of the levelling up agenda, in addition to Teesport having been granted freeport status and the development of an international airport with regular flights to London."

MUCKLE LLP CONTINUES TO ATTRACT TALENT

As businesses recover from a disruptive period of uncertainty and change, leading independent law firm, Muckle LLP continues to drive forward its growth plans by adding three lawyers and a paralegal to its team..

Claire Renney, from Newcastle, specialises in education and safeguarding and joins the employment team.

Siobhain Corr, from Northern Ireland, joins the corporate team, and will advise on various transactions in the North East deals market.

Sarah Farish, from South Tyneside is now part of the Banking and Restructuring team, supporting lenders and borrowers in the banking sector and advising and supporting insolvency practitioners, directors and individuals in a wide range of insolvency matters.

Joanna Garvey-Smith, from Eaglescliffe is currently completing her law degree at Teesside University and joins the corporate services team as a paralegal.

Jason Wainwright, Managing Partner said: "We're proud that we're consistently recognised as one of the best places to work and the fact that we continue to attract new talent to the business is testament to that.



HARGREAVES ELSWORTH

Patent Attorneys

Contact Dominic Elsworth CPA, EPA (Head of Practice) for practical advice in relation to:
Patents • Design right • Trade marks • Copyright • Know-how or related matters

26 Northumberland Square,
North Shields
NE30 1PW

T: +44 (0) 191 269 5477

F: +44 (0) 191 247 7102

E: office@heip.co.uk
www.heip.co.uk

emgsolicitors

Supporting Clients. Protecting Assets. **Changing Lives.**

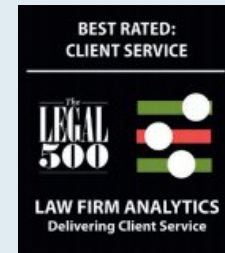
Blending our specialist knowledge, experience and enthusiasm, EMG Solicitors offer clear, professional legal advice.

It's the way we deliver our advice that sets us apart.

Praised for its "highly skilled" and "extremely responsive" attitude and its "approachable, friendly and professional" team.

"Sound advice and puts customers at the front of everything it does" while displaying "knowledge which is second to none."

The Legal 500 - The Clients Guide to the Best Law Firms



"We provide the legal support our clients require in order to achieve anything from their basic needs to their wildest dreams, and anything in-between."

Emma Gaudern, Managing Director

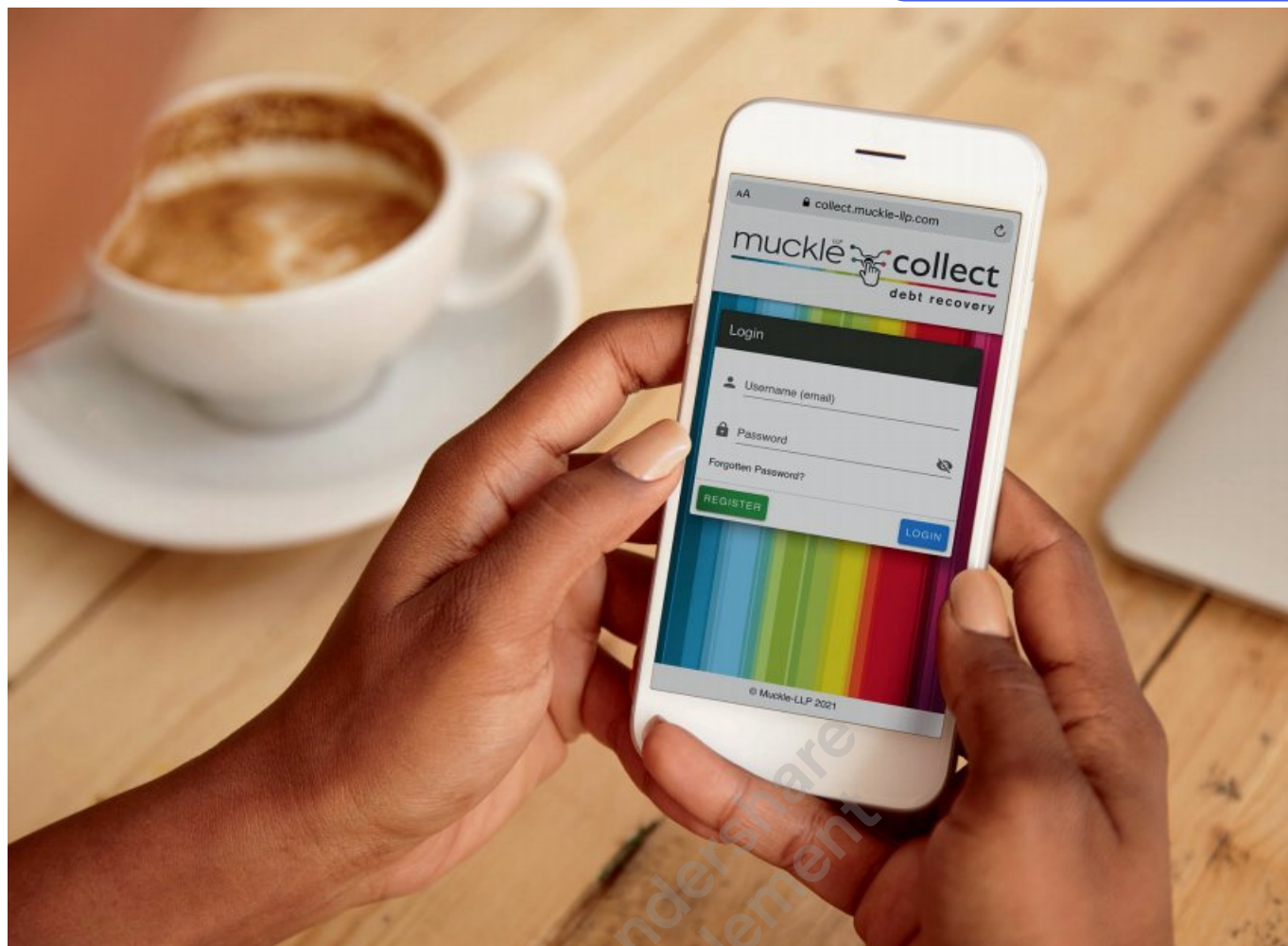
- Face to Face/Telephone/Video appointments
- Free 30 minute initial consultations for all new clients
- COVID secure offices in Durham & Gosforth
- Regular communication with your legal team via telephone, email, video, text & WhatsApp
- Secure electronic document sharing facilities
- Easy payment options

Durham Office
EMG Solicitors,
Abbey House,
Abbeywoods Business Park,
Durham, DH1 5TH

Gosforth Office
EMG Solicitors,
Croft House, High Street,
Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1NQ

T. 0191 500 6989 E. enquiry@emgsolicitors.com
www.emgsolicitors.com    Free client parking





TIME TO COLLECT? GETTING YOUR CASHFLOW BACK ON TRACK

Late payment has long been a problem for business owners, but the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have compounded cashflow concerns. If getting what you're owed is getting you down, it may well be easier than you think to get professional help.

According to a study by Pay UK and the Chartered Institute of Credit Management (CICM) more than half of the country's smaller businesses said they experienced late payments in 2020, amounting to a collective UK debt burden of £17.5bn.

The pandemic has undoubtedly hit business hard and, arguably, the full impact on company liquidity is yet to be seen with many commentators predicting a 'debt tsunami' that may lie in wait in the months ahead.

So, what should you do if monies owed are piling up? Is it wise to come up with your own debt recovery strategy or is there merit in getting some professional help?

At independent law firm for business Muckle LLP we often hear from clients that their own debt recovery efforts can prove to be a significant distraction from the day-to-day running of their business. Many also find it hard to adopt the appropriate tone, at the appropriate time, and gather the intelligence that may help provide

rationale as to why payments are not forthcoming and inform the approach.

When it comes to debt recovery, the team at Muckle LLP have been helping businesses get paid for over 30 years, recovering 92% of B2B debts. And that wealth of experience is crucial when it comes to determining the best strategy to get the results clients need.

Julie Parr, director of Business Improvement explains "Debt recovery is a crucial part of making sure any business survives, and we have very experienced debt recovery staff, but we also understand that technology can help make the whole process easier for clients and the recommendations more intelligent too."

And that's the thinking behind Muckle Collect. The new online tool makes it easier than ever for clients to log the details of a debt with the team, agree a strategy for recovery and track progress – either for a fixed cost or on a 'no recovery, no fee basis'.

As Julie explains: "We know that people expect always-on service delivery and with Muckle Collect clients can now set up cases at a time to suit themselves, with no fuss, keep track of progress online and have the reassurance that comes with our total upfront transparency on fees."

The tool really comes into its own by allowing the team to get far greater insight on probability and predictability. In short, it helps determine the approaches that get the best results for a range of clients and this can help inform the team's advice. This not only helps speed up the debt recovery process it also makes for better outcomes.

As Julie explains: "Ultimately, the data analytics and scientific aspect of what we're doing marks us out as being very different in debt recovery – it strengthens processes further and helps us become even better at debt recovery for clients."

And the team have big plans for Muckle Collect using robotic processing technology to sift through data, suitably anonymised, to further improve the intelligence of debt collection strategies.

But for all the innovative technology, it's human connections, expertise, compassion, and transparency that are at the heart of the service the firm provide. So, if you're struggling with debt recovery, perhaps it's time to talk to the team?

To find out more about Muckle LLP's debt recovery services and Muckle Collect, call 0191 211 7889 or e-mail collect@muckle-llp.com.

time to recover



Make things easier on your business and recover your B2B debts through our professional and effective debt recovery team.

No recovery. No fee. No hassle.

Call 0191 211 7777 email advice@muckle-llp.com to learn more

muckle^{LLP}


THE BUSINESS OWNER'S DIVORCE

At Emmersons Solicitors we have a team of family lawyers dealing with Financial Settlements when our clients divorce or separate.

A simpler case may involve the matrimonial home, some pensions and maybe some savings. This type of case is quite typical of those that we handle. They are, from my perspective, quite straightforward. I can see the pattern of assets, the overview that a judge will probably take and the likely financial outcome. The difference between our clients and us is that we consider hard-headed figures, whereas our clients are trying to deal with huge life changes. That is why they instruct us, to handle everything whilst they try to come to terms with their new life.

We take a great deal of pleasure in being able to guide our clients through a stressful period and out the other side. I often advise clients to imagine their lives three years ahead, when dealing with us is just a distant memory. I see our role as being to obtain the best deal for a client that will help them not just now but in the years ahead. When a client says, I just want to take any deal, I just want an easy life, my job is to guide them to a better outcome.

Consider "Lisa". Her husband had received a lump sum because of an accident that he had. This didn't affect his ability to work and he was doing quite nicely financially. Though of course, his accounts would say otherwise, but that's another story. He spent most of this money and gave Lisa no maintenance for the children. Unusually this matter proceeded to court as Lisa's husband would not negotiate. He was of the view that the Matrimonial Home should be sold and that he should receive half of the money. This was never going to happen as far as any judge was concerned.

On the day of the court hearing, the husband put forward the same offer. If Lisa accepted the offer there and then it would save her having to give evidence, but it would also leave her and the children homeless and penniless.

We suggested that Lisa should receive all of the remaining personal injury settlement and the house signed over to her with her husband having no further interest in the same. It was clear that the husband had squandered a lot of money, he had not paid a penny towards the mortgage or the children since the couple separated and there was little chance of him ever doing so. As far as we were concerned Lisa had nothing left to lose by walking through the door of the court.



Jaqueline Emmerson

We were right! The judge agreed with the arguments we had proffered. Lisa was able to remain in her home with the children, and the lump sum she received helped her to maintain that property whilst the children were young. As you would imagine, Lisa was nervous at court; the financial carrot was being dangled. But the long term position looked different to us; it's about being able to keep your eye on the long term gain.

The Business Owner's Divorce

As I have progressed in my career, I have dealt with more complicated cases. Many of my clients own their own businesses. I like dealing with this type of work. As a business owner, I understand the need for cash in a business, what is really going on behind the profit and loss accounts, what to look for in business and personal bank statements and the different ways in which a business can be valued.

In the case of "Fred" and "Tina," Fred had his own business. Tina did not work, and she sought a large proportion of the value of the house, a large maintenance payment for life and a lump sum equivalent to half of the value of Fred's business. She was determined that the value of Fred's business would be about £400,000.

Having looked at the accounts and turnover of Fred's business, I could see that he would have very little by way of goodwill in his business. It was the

classic case where the business is reliant upon Fred to keep it going, he was the main income generator. So without him at the helm, there would not really be a business to sell. I thought the business would be worth at most £40,000. We arranged for a specialist accountant to value the business, it was actually valued at about £25,000. This was a joint instruction from both Fred and his wife, via solicitors, and the judge accepted it.

It can be very complicated to unpick the workings of a business. Is one partner going to leave the business, if so how are they to be compensated? Can the business afford to compensate them? The business is the golden goose that provides the income, often for the whole family. If you strangle it then that income is lost. Again, it's about the long term view, how can two separate parties be provided for in the long term.

A well-run business, with strong branding, strong service culture and repeat clients can be worth a lot of money. If it doesn't rely solely on one person to keep it going, then it is worth even more. Is your pending divorce the time to sell up and reap the rewards?

As always, if you want to chat about any of the above then you can contact me
je@emmersons-solicitors.co.uk



ELMWOODS LAW AND MEDIATION FOR ALL YOUR EMPLOYMENT ADVICE NEEDS

Elmwoods offer advice and support to both employers and employees regarding all aspects of employment law and HR matters.

We offer a bespoke HR package tailored to individual businesses requiring HR support as well as sound employment law advice.

We offer employees advice on all aspects of their employment.

For businesses

We offer a range of support from ad hoc legal advice to tailored HR services for any businesses requiring HR support in matters including employment contracts, handbooks, policies, procedures, template documents, staff

training, seminars. We advise businesses on a broad range of employment matters including disciplinaries, grievances, redundancy, TUPE, working time, all forms of discrimination, whistleblowing, maternity and paternity rights, and holidays, and we also offer representation in the Employment Tribunal.

For employees

We offer support with workplace complaints, advise on Settlement Agreements, advise on unfair dismissal/discrimination claims, and provide representation in the Employment Tribunal, as well as advising on the terms and conditions of your employment.

For an initial discussion please contact Paul Lott on 07752508303 or email on paul.lott@elmwoodslaw.co.uk

ELMWOODS

LAW & MEDIATION

www.elmwoodslaw.co.uk

MANDATORY VACCINATION – THE CARE SECTOR AND BEYOND

Paul Johnstone is a Partner at specialist employment law firm, Collingwood Legal. Paul considers the introduction of mandatory vaccination in various sectors and the corresponding legal risks.



Paul Johnstone

From the 11th November 2021, legislation will come into force making it mandatory for those working in the care sector to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. This is as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment)(Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 ("the Regulations"). The Regulations apply to all Care Quality Commission regulated care homes in England.

The vaccination requirement applies to all individuals who enter a relevant care home including employees, agency workers, volunteers, healthcare workers etc. There are a limited number of exceptions such as friends and family visiting the premises, those under the age of 18, and those providing emergency assistance or urgent maintenance in the care home. People will be denied entry if they cannot provide evidence they have been fully vaccinated, that they are exempt for clinical reasons or fall in one of the other exceptions. Those who are exempt for clinical reasons, will be required to seek a clinically approved exemption. There is no definition within the Regulations of "clinical reasons" as of yet and the Government is expected to be publishing guidance to give further detail about the exemption.

What about mandatory vaccination in other sectors?

Vaccination has not been made mandatory by the Government in any other sectors (yet), although this does not prevent employers from implementing their own mandatory vaccination policy. Many organisations have begun to mandate vaccination amongst their workforce on their own volition. Where employers have decided to implement this, they are not immune to legal risks and should be mindful of any potential consequences that may arise.

Are there any legal risks with implementing a mandatory policy?

Whilst this proposal in the care sector will become law, there still remains some potential legal risks in relation to individuals who cannot and/or refuse to have the vaccine and where employers do not deal with this issue appropriately.

A summary of the key legal risks is provided below

but should this arise within your organisation, it may be appropriate to seek further legal advice, so as to not breach your legal requirement in the above Regulations (if applicable) but to also manage/avoid any potential employment claims that may also arise for organisations choosing to implement a mandatory vaccination policy outwith the care sector.

● **Discrimination** – The main underlying risk in applying the mandatory vaccination requirement, even within the regulated care home sector, is a claim for indirect discrimination. On the face of it, where an employer requires mandatory vaccination within the remit of the Regulations, this will amount to a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) that may put individuals with a relevant protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with others who do not share that protected characteristic. Such individuals could include: those with disabilities, pregnant women, those with strong religious or philosophical beliefs relating to certain types of medical treatment. With these risks in mind, employers need to ensure that they would have a defence to any claim and can show that applying the mandatory vaccination requirement without exception is justifiable as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (objective justification). In any event it will always be necessary in applying vaccination policies (mandatory or voluntary) to carry out a thorough and comprehensive risk assessment on health and safety grounds to ensure that each employee and other work colleagues are being treated fairly and that the requirement to provide a safe working environment for all colleagues and service users is at the forefront of any decision-making procedures.

● **Disability related discrimination/ reasonable adjustments** – Some additional discrimination risks apply in terms of those who are

disabled but are not clinically exempt. They may also argue that any failure to offer them a job or subjecting them to any less favourable treatment or dismissing them for not complying with any requirement (legal or otherwise) to be fully vaccinated, may amount to discrimination arising from disability (as a decision not to get vaccinated could be "something arising" from their disability). This would mean that any less favourable treatment of such job applicants or employees because they are not vaccinated would be discriminatory, unless objectively justified, as above.

Further a claim could be brought on the basis of a failure to make reasonable adjustments if alternative arrangements are not explored for disabled employees.

Comment

Whilst a lot is still to unfold and further guidance from the Government to be released, it may be that an Employment Tribunal may have difficulty criticising an employer trying to protect the health of vulnerable residents in care homes, and particularly where the policy has been mandated by the Government. However, mandatory or not, employers should be mindful of potential legal risks that could arise and what approach should be taken in relation to the implementation of vaccination policies (and any refusal to be vaccinated) based on a careful analysis of each specific set of factual circumstances applicable at the material time.

Collingwood Legal is a specialist employment law firm and we provide bespoke training to organisations on all areas of employment law, including HR management skills, avoiding discrimination in the workplace and ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

www.collingwoodlegal.com



strong.
personal.
focused.

**“Excellent response times and
business acumen alongside
pragmatic and practical advice.”**

Legal 500 Guide to Law Firms

Our lawyers are experts in employment law. We work with employers and senior executives and take a personal approach to achieve results for our clients.

COLLINGWOOD LEGAL 
Employment Lawyers

T: 0191 282 2880 www.collingwoodlegal.com

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT SEPARATING FROM YOUR PARTNER AND WHETHER YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A SHARE OF THE PROPERTY?

The Land Registry record the legal owner/s of the property on the property's title deeds. Sometimes, there will be another document setting out how the owners hold the land for themselves, for example 60%/40% rather than a standard equal share. The ownership will usually be established by these documents as "equity follow the law".

However, there are situations where there is no declaration of ownership and a beneficial ownership has been created. This is legally known as a resulting or constructive trust. This can be established by a promise made by the legal owner to share the equity in the property, or if the non-legal owner has made contributions towards the purchase price, deposit or mortgage. The evidence could come down to a conversation you and your partner had about the legal ownership. Proving a financial interest in a property you do not own can involve very technical legal arguments. This issue can also apply to family disputes but for the purposes of this article we will only discuss separating couples.

If you are in a dispute with your ex-partner and are worried you will have nowhere to live, you should consider making an urgent application to The Land Registry for Home Rights in the property as this will allow you to occupy the property, but this will not establish your beneficial interest in the property.

In order to establish your beneficial interest in the property, and if no agreement can be reached with your ex-partner, you may need to make an application to the court under section 14 of the Trusts of Land and the Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 (known as "TOLATA"). You can ask the court to make an order declaring your beneficial interest in the property and most commonly that the property is sold to release any equity to you in accordance with the trust.

However, there are some situations where a sale would not be the best option for you. For example, if you have a child they will be your priority; however, when making a TOLATA application, this is not the case. The law will, of course, take into account the wellbeing of your child but it is not a paramount consideration unless there are specific circumstances, such as your child having a disability and needing stability in the home that has been adapted for their needs. In those situations, a sale could be delayed but the court would look at the entire case to decide whether both parties could financially move on from the separation.

What to do next?

Contact us to discuss your individual circumstances, we can arrange a face to face consultation with you to discuss your case.



Rebecca Cresswell

We will send a letter to your ex-partner setting out what you require to move on with your life and your legal position. We will allow a short period of time for them to respond and either accept or reject the proposals.

We will then either try and negotiate to settle the matter or take the matter to court. We will try and settle the matter outside of court to keep your costs to a minimum, however sometimes there is no other option if your ex-partner is refusing to co-operate.

It is important that we are involved in the early stages so that no unreasonable offers are made or accepted, and you achieve the best outcome. We deal with these matters on a daily basis and sometimes find that unmarried couples have not protected their financial interests when purchasing the property with their partner which can potentially be due to their solicitors being negligent. At Sweeney Miller Law, we deal with TOLATA claims and can identify any potential professional negligence claims during those initial transactions.

Please contact us today to arrange an appointment by emailing Rebecca@sweeneymiller.co.uk or calling us on 0345 900 5401.

sweeney
miller **LAW**

Getting the best results for your business



SERVICES FOR BUSINESSES:

Commercial Property,
Business Sales and Purchases,
Company / Commercial Matters,
Commercial Litigation,
Alcohol and Gambling Licensing,
Landlord and Tenant,
Conveyancing For Investors,
Employment,
Auction Purchases.

Here at Sweeney Miller Law we are a team of experienced and highly qualified legal professionals. Our expert knowledge is second to none, with specialist teams working in their own field of expertise to advise and guide clients on a wide range of legal matters.

Our solicitors in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Sunderland support clients across a broad range of legal areas. We provide proactive, independent and practical advice to both individuals and businesses.

sweeney
miller **LAW**

Newcastle & Sunderland | 0345 900 5401
enquiries@sweeneymiller.co.uk

Consultations offered by telephone and Zoom.

FINDING SOLUTIONS TO MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE POLICIES AND CONTRACTS SECURE

By Tom Clarke, solicitor in the specialist employment law team at Hay & Kilner Law Firm in Newcastle.

As anyone who's been there will tell you, there are any number of different priorities that demand your time when you're starting or trying to grow a business.

Developing and fine tuning the products or services on which your firm's success will be based, bringing in the equipment and people that you need to realise your ideas and putting the financial and operational structures in place that will underpin everything will all need your attention if things are going to go to plan.

With only so many hours in the day, and so much budget available to cover all costs, it's natural that some areas are going to take clear precedence over others.

In my experience, one of the areas that often gets less attention that it ought to within growing businesses is human resources, especially for businesses that don't have or can't yet afford to have a dedicated HR function in place.

While other issues may feel more immediately pressing, there are significant risks involved with not giving your employee contracts and workplace policies proper attention and failing to do so may be storing up potentially costly problems that could come back to bite you in the longer term. Indeed, it is, for example, a legal right for employees and workers to be provided with a statement of their main terms on their first day in a new job.

With this in mind, Hay & Kilner's specialist employment law team has developed two new fixed-fee products which enable business owners to gain peace of mind and cover their legal obligations without facing unlimited costs for doing so.

Our new HR Solutions package offers template



Tom Clarke

contracts and handbooks, access to legally compliant workplace documents and the option of consultation with one of the team's employment law specialists, and is designed to provide the confidence that owner/managers need that all the legal bases are covered, so they can get on with the job of running their businesses, all for a one off fixed-fee.

All the documentation is drafted by lawyers and tailorable for clients' individual needs and require just basic employee information to be ready for use.

It is also equally useful whether your business is just starting out or if you need to refresh the documents and procedures that you already have in place.

Running alongside this is HR Secure, which aims to ensure your employment contracts have clear, up to date and legally compliant business protection clauses within them to help safeguard your business and protect your workforce.

Many issues can arise with departing employees and/or their new employers due to a lack of clarity and precision in employment contracts, or indeed a lack of the necessary protection altogether, and litigation with ex-employees or competitors can be extremely costly and time-consuming.

HR Secure offers a fixed-fee audit of the key 'business protection' elements of your employment documentation, including confidentiality provisions and restrictive covenants.

Our in-depth review of your existing clauses will identify any areas that need attention, with fresh, up to date wording being provided where required that is tailored to your business needs.

When it comes to effective management of your workplace and employee contract responsibilities, preventing problems arising in the first place is always better, quicker and less costly than suddenly having to find a cure for them.

By providing essential documentation and legal expertise on a cost-effective basis, HR Solutions and HR Secure offer business owners the protection and peace of mind they need to be able to concentrate on looking after their customers and securing commercial success.

For further information on how Hay & Kilner Law Firm's HR Solutions and HR Secure packages can help to protect and enhance your business operations, please contact Tom Clarke on 0191 232 8345 or via tom.clarke@hay-kilner.co.uk

THE CHRONICLE SUNSHINE FUND AND
ST JAMES' SQUARE LAW FIRM PRESENTS...

NOCHE DEL SOL

CELEBRATING A NIGHT OF MEXICANA.
THE GRAND HOTEL, GOSFORTH

FRIDAY 5TH
NOVEMBER 2021

Registered Charity Number: 1133293

For more information and tickets please
contact charity@sjs-law.co.uk.

StJames'
SQUARE
LAW FIRM


Chronicle
SunshineFund
...changing the lives of children with disabilities



L-R: Sarah Capes, Land & Woodland Management Team Leader, Urban Green Newcastle; Jonathan Waters, Managing Partner, Hay & Kilner; Bethany Herbertson, Solicitor, Hay & Kilner

HAY & KILNER PLANTING LONG-TERM CITY LEGACY TO MARK 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Hay & Kilner Law Firm is celebrating its roots on its 75th anniversary by planting a long-term legacy in its home city.

The Newcastle-headquartered firm has teamed up with environmental charity Urban Green Newcastle to plant 750 trees in parks and green spaces around the city over the next five years.

The first trees will be planted between November and January in initial locations including Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, Brandling Park and the City Stadium, with different native species being chosen for each location to complement the landscape and the varieties that are already in place.

Members of the Hay & Kilner team will be getting their hands dirty by assisting Urban Green with the planting process.

Founded in 2018, Urban Green Newcastle is responsible for managing and improving the 33 parks that sit within Newcastle City Council's boundaries, as well as its 61 allotment sites, and is aiming to plant around 5,000 trees across the

city by 2030.

Its corporate partnership with Hay & Kilner is the first of its type and the charity is hoping that more Newcastle businesses will follow the firm's example in supporting the improvement of the city's green open spaces.

Ali Brown, marketing and communications manager at Urban Green Newcastle, says: "We're really lucky to have so many wonderful and different green spaces dotted right across the city, and their impact on our lives and well-being has never been more clear than it has been over the last 18 months.

"The partnership we've established with Hay & Kilner provides a great template for how we can work with city businesses to everyone's benefit, and we're very glad to be helping them celebrate their 75th anniversary in a way that will benefit the city for decades to come.

"We've got some ambitious targets to hit by

2030, and we'd love to get more Newcastle firms involved in helping us hit them."

Established in 1946, Hay & Kilner is one of North East England's leading independent law firms and provides comprehensive legal advice across every aspect of the law, with a growing presence in the corporate and commercial sector and a particularly strong reputation for its private client work.

Jonathan Waters, managing partner at Hay & Kilner Law Firm, adds: "The practice has been part of Newcastle's incredible transformation over the last 75 years and we wanted to mark our anniversary by creating a positive legacy for the city that will last for the next 75 years and beyond.

"Working with Urban Green Newcastle provides the perfect way to do this and we're excited to be leading the way in helping to enhance the green spaces across the city that we all enjoy.

"Getting our staff involved gives us that extra bit of ownership and will hopefully allow them to one day show their children and grandchildren the fully-grown trees that 'their' saplings have become.

"Newcastle has been Hay & Kilner's home from its very first day and we have plans to keep building on everything we've achieved over the last 75 years to create an even bigger, better business in the future."

www.hay-kilner.co.uk

Meet **unifi** and Empower your business with Microsoft Dynamics

Introducing Unifi, created to be the leading Microsoft Dynamics partner for small and medium businesses in the North. Microsoft Dynamics removes the need to invest in dated technologies such as on-premise servers or costly hosting. This powerful suite of business applications empowers organisations to achieve growth, agility and operational excellence.

Sales & Marketing | Finance | Customer Service

unifi

With Microsoft Dynamics



Gold Cloud Productivity
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
Silver Application Development
Silver Cloud Platform
Silver Collaboration and Content
Silver Enterprise Mobility Management
Silver Project and Portfolio Management
Silver Security
Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions

Part of
synergi

Visit: teamunifi.co.uk

Email: enquiries@teamunifi.co.uk

Phone: 0191 477 0365

CONNECTIVITY BOOST KEEPS TEESSIDE HOSPICE CONNECTED AS CITYFIBRE ROLLOUT GATHERS PACE

CityFibre, the UK's largest independent full fibre platform, and its local build partner MAP Group, have supported staff and patients at Teesside Hospice by donating wireless access points to boost coverage and overcome poor quality signal struggles.

Teesside Hospice, based in Middlesbrough, provides essential care for people and families who are living with a terminal illness. Its expert medical, nursing and allied health professional team offers pain and symptom control, psychological support as well as end of life care for thousands of local people every year.

With poor signal quality at the hospice causing disruption to key processes, including logging medical records and internal communications, as well as limiting the online experience for patients, the donation will give all internet users access to better connectivity ahead of CityFibre's full fibre rollout reaching the Hospice's area.

Teesside Hospice is in the planned build area for CityFibre's full fibre rollout,



meaning the building will soon have the option of switching to full fibre enabled services – the fastest and most reliable available. Construction of CityFibre's £42m network formally began in May and upon completion, it will be in reach of nearly every home and business in the town.

Steph Carter-Smith, City Manager at CityFibre, said: "We're proud to support the essential work of Teesside Hospice and even more excited to one day connect them to our full fibre network, supercharging the way staff work, the care they can offer and the ability for patients to communicate with family and friends."



TWO-STACK: FORWARD-THINKING IT COMPANY TRUSTACK CELEBRATES SECOND ANNIVERSARY

Flexibility has been the key to IT Managed Services provider TruStack making a success of its first two years in business, according to one of its Directors.

The Cramlington-based company, which specialises in delivering IT managed services, celebrates its second anniversary in September 2022 having spent the vast majority of the past two years operating in a Covid-impacted economy.

Formed following the merger of three companies – SITS Group, PCI Services and Pivotal Networks – in 2019, within six months TruStack was battling against the impact of Covid-19.

Despite the challenges it has faced, the company has not only survived but grown - increasing its workforce by 25 percent from 43 to 55, with another six posts set to be filled in the next few months, including three apprentice positions.

Meanwhile, a growth in its active client base to around 450 has meant an annual turnover of more

than £10m is expected this year, exceeding all expectations.

Commercial Director Phil Cambers said: "Flexibility has been one of the key elements to our success, no doubt about it.

"We are very market-orientated. If we see changes coming we adapt as quickly as possible. That is why we underwent a merger two years ago – we had three businesses that were great at what they did but were missing something that the others could provide.

"Equally when Covid-19 hit we adapted the way we needed to work, and made sure our clients were able to adapt as well.

"Ultimately our success is down to our incredible staff - their response to all the changes we have seen in working practices over the past year, like working from home, has been absolutely incredible."



SUNDERLAND COUNCIL RECOGNISED FOR FORWARD-THINKING APPROACH AT CONNECTED BRITAIN AWARDS

Sunderland Council was awarded Digital Council of the Year at a prestigious industry sector awards event recently. Sunderland was chosen due to its journey to embed fully-digitalised departmental operations, digitally empowered team members and extended reach into local communities.

As one of four shortlisted UK councils including Dorset, Surrey and Worcestershire, Sunderland was praised for its forward-thinking ambitions, digital leadership and the ability to embrace and leverage change across all its operations.

Accepting the award, Sunderland Council chief executive Patrick Melia said, "It is fantastic for our council, city and the North East as a whole, to be recognised on a national platform

Our team put the solution before the problem.

At Synergi we know that teamwork begins by building trust. Our ability to put the solution before the problem is what our customers value most. Talk to us about how we can support your business.

We put the i in team.

Call: 0191 477 0365 Email: enquiries@teamsynergi.co.uk

synergi

NOW IS THE TIME TO EMPOWER YOUR BUSINESS WITH TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLOUD

Technology Post Pandemic

Thinking back to what business looked like a year ago, the vast majority of office workers had moved entirely to remote working and huge uncertainty surrounded returning to office. Whilst it would be naïve to say that we are now looking at the impact of the pandemic on working life from the other side, we do now have a stronger degree of hindsight. We know that many businesses are embracing the changes required to adapt to pandemic home working, with hybrid computing becoming the norm for many organisations. This is unsurprising as it was the businesses relying on legacy on-premise technology that we saw struggle the most during Covid-19 lockdowns. Observing the move to cloud technologies has been commonplace when it comes to how communication, collaboration, and security has been addressed over the past year. The clear next step is for businesses to look at their IT environment as a whole, analysing their core systems such as ERP and CRM. As previously standalone systems these have now evolved into solutions designed to work seamlessly together, making a tangible difference to business operations. With many organisations adopting hybrid and remote working, user-friendly and modern business technology that is accessible anywhere is needed now more than ever. Legacy on-premise solutions are quickly becoming outdated, with their inability to facilitate flexible working styles. Solutions such as Microsoft Dynamics offer businesses an opportunity to centralise their finance and business applications in a modern workspace, without the

burden of costly server refreshes or hosting costs, and the advantage of seamlessly integrating with the wider Microsoft Office 365 environment.

Microsoft's Best Kept Secret

Dynamics 365 is Microsoft's modular, end-to-end business solution, uniting everything from simple finance and customer service through to full manufacturing and resource planning. Dynamics offers a powerful suite of cloud-based business applications. This solution is designed to help businesses of all sizes to achieve growth, agility and operational excellence – whatever their industry sector. Designed to work natively in the Microsoft Cloud, Dynamics 365 provides unity across Microsoft 365, Azure, and Microsoft Power Platform offering a centralised hub for unifying data, people, processes, and insights. Dynamics grants business leaders peace of mind knowing that with Microsoft's foothold in the technology landscape their solution will always be modern and secure.

Meet Unifi

Award-winning cloud solutions and managed services provider, Synergi, is consistently evolving to support organisations in modernising and innovating with technologies to empower agility and growth. This is evident in Synergi's previous initiatives including their 'digital den' events space for exploring the latest in technological innovation and their managed services offering, delivering proactive security monitoring, disaster recovery services, and more. The latest innovation from



Peter Joynson,
CEO, Synergi & Unifi.

Synergi comes in the form of their newly branded Dynamics 365 practice, Unifi, which already supports many North East SMEs with the Microsoft Dynamics platform. If your business is struggling with a legacy accounting software or you'd like to hear about the wider Microsoft Dynamics platform, contact Unifi today.

Find out more by calling 0191 4770365, emailing enquiries@teamunifi.co.uk, or check out www.teamunifi.co.uk

Your Dedicated Partner for Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a real game changer – let Unifi show you why. Talk to our experts today.

Sales & Marketing | Finance | Customer Service



Gold Cloud Productivity
Gold Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
Silver Application Development
Silver Cloud Platform
Silver Collaboration and Content
Silver Enterprise Mobility Management
Silver Project and Portfolio Management
Silver Security
Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions

Website: www.teamunifi.co.uk

Email: enquiries@teamunifi.co.uk

unifi

With Microsoft Dynamics

Phone: 0191 477 0365



“

...The undoubted potential and business impact that Microsoft Dynamics can bring to the market is truly exciting...

”

TALKING TECH AND DIGITAL

LEE MILLS

Dynamics Practice Director, Unifi

Did you always envisage a career in the world of Technology?

No, not at all. I trained as a Geologist at university and so had a life planned to look for diamonds in exotic places. I was actually offered a position to do that when I was young and adventurous but I never took the offer.

The reality of that lifestyle (and meeting my now wife), changed my mind. This was in the midst of the millennium bug crisis and so I took a job in technology and change management as I liked the idea of project based work. The ever changing needs of different projects and clients is a strong pull for me.

What attracted you to your current role?

Having worked in mainly ERP projects in the past, I was always involved in the change and consultancy side of organisation wide technology roll outs. Synergi, being a born in the cloud organisation, were situated directly in the area that interested me as they were early adopters of true cloud solutions and had a strong reputation for quality and customer focus.

At that point, the majority of ERP solutions were "on premise" provisioned, as were most IT consultancy businesses. Synergi were different in this aspect and also very welcoming in terms of adopting the Microsoft Dynamics product set that delivers ERP/CRM via cloud based applications. Timing is everything I suppose and the technology arrived at the right time for me to complete the circle for Synergi and allow us to provide a "whole business" cloud solution to their customers.

This forward looking aspect coupled with the existing product sets on offer made this a very easy fit for me.

It was also clear to me that we share the same ethics of delivering the right solution for the client as a primary driver. We also see the value of working hard on the long term relationships between Synergi and clients that leads to a rewarding working relationship.

How important has Technology been during the Coronavirus pandemic?

During those early days of the lockdown we worked hard supporting businesses whom were rapidly adopting the new way of working. It was a challenging spell but we were happy to help out. Typical timescales were crushed but we got many organisations running again very quickly. We even had a large ERP go live and had to deliver all user training, testing and go live support remotely. This was a first for me but we got there and managed to do it safely with the use of technology.

The use of collaboration tools has allowed people to work safely and has undoubtedly had a huge impact on productivity and well-being. I think the use of these applications has delivered, for many, a better work/life balance and a new way of doing things. Without these end to end platform and collaboration tools, many businesses would have not survived and the impact of that would have been felt by many.

On a more personal note, I have school age children and without technology, they would have lost months of education and for that I am glad we have these applications at our disposal.

What tips would you give to someone looking to work in the industry?

I would encourage people to understand what your technology is for i.e. what is the purpose or what it is you are trying to achieve?

Technology and the tools available are vast and configurable and so the key is having a good grasp of businesses and users. Technology will evolve continuously but the core drivers of service, adherence to process and productivity gains are much the same as they were when I started.

So if you can understand why you are doing something first, the toolset you choose to use for that is of secondary importance in my opinion. As an effective consultant in technology, you will be able to adopt tools easily if you have this background and so you should actively seek this.

By design, the Synergi Graduate scheme is designed to deliver exactly this. We expose our graduates to the entire spectrum of products and skills we

offer at Synergi and enable people to build the broad foundation you need for this industry.

Also, enjoy what you do and approach challenges as just that – yes we will have obstacles put in the way and set backs but that's just part of the process. Don't hide from them, seek them out and remove them.

Tell us the most exciting thing you're currently working on?

We have recently announced the launch of our newly branded Microsoft Dynamics practice - Unifi. The Unifi brand was born to give clarity and focus for this full ERP and CRM product suite.

The undoubted potential and business impact that Dynamics can bring to the market is truly exciting and we wanted to give Unifi the chance to grow as a specialist Dynamics practice with that clear message and skill set.

It gives both Synergi and Unifi clearer growth paths and route to market that are clear to our customers and team members.

What's your fondest memory of a career in the industry?

I've worked for a number of employers in my career and have had good times at all of them without exception. I'd have to say my two favourite memories are very similar in that they both involve building a new practice from zero into a full sales, delivery and support team.

Although very recent and so not yet a memory, building the Synergi team into the newly launched Unifi team has been a pleasure and I believe will become my fondest memory in time.

We've taken the approach of retraining people skilled in competitor products and introducing them to Microsoft which is really refreshing as you get to see this from a new perspective and we also have a strong graduate intake. Watching the team mesh and work together to deliver our projects in the professional and positive manner that they do never fails to impress me.

What are your remaining career aspirations?

Unifi, the Dynamics practice at Synergi is growing strongly and I seek to see that continue. We aim to be the leading Microsoft Dynamics delivery partner in the North of England with a growing customer base and team. That growth should happen with the right people as the spirit and culture we have is to be protected. If in ten years' time I can look at a large and happy customer base with a contented team that delivers benefit to both Unifi and the clients - then I'll be happy myself.

What piece of technology would you be lost without?

I guess my running watch with all of its unnecessary KPIs and data would be a loss. It's a bit of an overkill but I can use it to convince myself I'm doing some good – even if my body says otherwise.

Who are your heroes and mentors?

As a child of the 80s, one of my heroes would be Gorbachev. This is for two reasons really, firstly the most obvious one is that he broke the mould of history by giving up power and influence in a relatively peaceful and dignified manner. He saw that the greater need was most important and delivered based upon this worthy driver.

Secondly, he also set up the "Green Cross" which is an equivalent for the better known Red Cross but they cater for environmental issues. Issues such as climate change and sustainability are its key drivers and something I also agree needs to be at the forefront of our daily lives.

When not working, how do you like to relax?

Family life tends to blur what "relax" means as we are in the most part quite active but privately I like to trail run or cycle and also have an allotment which is a great excuse to eat biscuits.

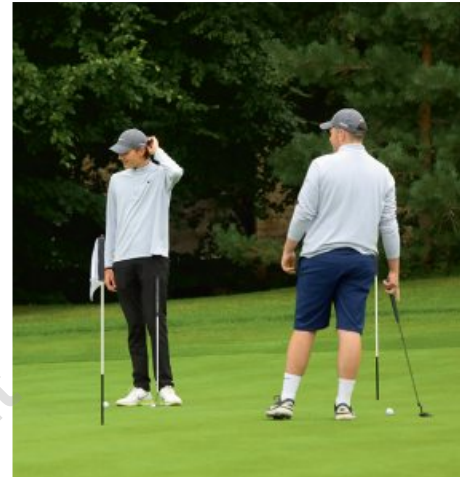
teamunifi.co.uk



SYNERGI GOLF DAY

Cloud solutions and managed services provider, Synergi, excitedly welcomed guests to a golf day to celebrate the launch of their new branding for their fast growing Microsoft Dynamics practice.

Held at Close House, the event saw the introduction of Unifi, created to be the leading Microsoft Dynamics partner for SMEs in the North. They welcomed guests from many of the regional accounting firms along with loyal Dynamics customers who all enjoyed seeing the future of modern accounting presentation before engaging in some friendly competition and hospitality.





Lucid

TRANSPARENT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



Butterwick Golf Day

We were one of the sponsors of the Butterwick golf day on Thursday 9th of September and it was the most successful golf day Butterwick have hosted to date, raising a whopping £17,705.

We also won with the following hot on our heels
2nd Place - Beaumont Accountancy
3rd Place - Almark Ltd

Nearest the Pin - David Flynn from QA Weld Tech Ltd
Longest Drive - Callum Stott from Enterprise



Lucid Are Expanding

Lucid is going through a period of growth due to a new networking cable division expanding and us gaining more IT and VOIP clients. So in September we have the following new employees:

Tom Mason – 2nd line support engineer

Cameron Herron – 1st line support engineer

Leon Newman as an IT engineer apprentice and Sam Batey has a cable installer apprentice

Microsoft Windows 11 Launch

Microsoft has revealed that its new operating system, Windows 11, will be available on 5 October – The free upgrade will be available for eligible Windows 10 computers and all new hardware. If your business machine is of a certain age, it may need updating to be compatible. Please feel free to call the sales line to discuss in more detail.

Teesside branch – 01642 792567 • Newton Aycliffe branch – 01325 582121
Gateshead branch – 0191 8160444 • email sales@lucidgrp.co.uk

Lucid

TRANSPARENT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



Special offer 10% off cyber essentials accreditation bespoke fee in October only

Cyber Essentials is a simple but effective, Government backed scheme that will help you to protect your business against a whole range of the most common cyber-attacks.

Cyber-attacks come in many shapes and sizes, but the vast majority are very basic in nature, carried out by relatively unskilled individuals. They're the digital equivalent of a thief trying your front door to see if it's unlocked. Our advice is designed to prevent these attacks.

This is important because vulnerability to simple attacks can mark you out as target for more in-depth unwanted attention from cyber criminals and others.

Certification gives you peace of mind that your defences will protect against the vast majority of common cyber-attacks.

Does Your Business Need Sharepoint?

Sharepoint online is a web based platform that manages and shares information in an effective way setting permissions for users so sensitive information can remain private. It can help your team work remotely, work together, and work smarter. Used by over 200,000 companies globally, SharePoint is a content management platform that encourages collaboration among teams, regardless of where they are in the world.

SharePoint is most often used for the storing of version-controlled documents, such as Word documents and Excel worksheets. Making is easy way to share information throughout your organisation.

It allows employees to collaborate online, everyone can add and retrieve information in live time.

So what are the Benefits of sharepoint:

- **SharePoint is Secure**
- **SharePoint Helps Organizations Be More Collaborative**
- **SharePoint Can Help Automate Mundane Tasks**

For more information on Lucid and the range of products and services they offer, contact:

Teesside branch – 01642 792567 • Newton Aycliffe branch – 01325 582121

Gateshead branch – 0191 8160444 • email sales@lucidgrp.co.uk



IT SECURE IN A POST LOCKDOWN WORLD

Stephen O'Connell, sales and marketing director at Advantex, says regional businesses need to take a fresh look at their IT security to ensure it's fit for purpose as Covid restrictions lift.

It's fair to say that the last 18 months have been extremely challenging for owners and managers trying to balance the needs of running a business with ensuring staff working remotely online are safe and secure. This in turn, has placed the onus on those with responsibility for IT to have an effective strategy in place to combat the daily threat of cyber-attacks.

Now, as more people drift back to the workplace in a post lockdown world, it's timely for businesses to review their current IT cyber security provision to see if it remains fit for purpose and will respond effectively to evolving threats.

No longer can we hide our data behind a firewall and install anti-virus on the endpoints. Security has become a layered solution with different threats and different ways of monitoring, catching and preventing those attacks. A 'defence in depth' strategy is required. Imagine your data is the centre of an onion - we need multiple layers around that data to protect the core, meaning any attacker needs to break through a multitude of security controls.

Essentially though, there are two key threats to look at first when you review your layers: malware and phishing. Malicious cyber attacks are rising, with 2021 already seeing an increase in activity and high-profile ransom attacks against critical infrastructure and companies. The amount of ransom demanded has also significantly increased, with some demands reaching tens of millions of pounds. And the attacks are becoming ever more sophisticated, with criminals seizing sensitive company data and selling it on the dark web, or holding companies to ransom with extortionate payments for its safe return.

However, there are simple proactive steps that should be taken to reduce the risk of an attack and the damage that can be caused. Chief among these is to review your anti-ransom programmes and protocols. There is now sophisticated anti-malware, cloud-delivered software such as Cisco Umbrella and Cisco Secure Email readily available to provide the highest levels of protection and keep people and businesses safe and secure as part of any response to threats. The key to success to is to have that layered anti-virus, anti-malware, cloud security and end point security in place which makes it ever more difficult for hackers to break through defensive walls and steal your data at the core of your security.

Tackling the phishing threat is the second priority currently for business. Like malware, attacks are on the growing and are among the most prevalent security challenges both people and organisations face in securing their information. Whether it's access to user details, passwords, financial information or other highly sensitive information, hackers are using email, social media, phone calls, and any form of communications they can to successfully steal valuable data.

Companies are attractive targets for crafty criminals, so owners and managers must keep

a check on current phishing strategies and ensure that their security policies and solutions can eliminate evolving threats. It is equally as important to make sure that their employees understand the types of attacks they could face, the risks, and how to address them – vigilant, better informed employees and properly secured systems are key when protecting your company from phishing attacks. Multi factor authentication technologies such as Cisco Duo are highly effective in combating phishing and should be considered as part of a review to alleviate the threats.

These are unprecedented times in the world of cyber security. Most companies and business leaders who have to make decisions around a ransom attack will find it hard to envision a situation in which they would be in a discussion on whether and how much ransom to pay to hackers who are holding the company hostage. With forethought, preparation and up-to-date cyber security technologies in place together with an effective plan, your company can cut the risk and be better prepared to deal with the unthinkable.

www.advantex.uk.com





Mayor Ben Houchen welcomes Aspire to Teesside.
L-R: Justin Godfrey (Sales Manager, Aspire), Ben Upton
(Head of Product & Solutions, Aspire) and Mayor Houchen.

ASPIRE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS SET TO CREATE JOBS WITH TEESSIDE EXPANSION

North East tech giant Aspire Technology Solutions have opened a new office at Fusion Hive, Teesside. The Fusion Hive business and innovation centre, located on Stockton's Northshore has been built specifically as a hub for growing digital and technology companies.

Aspire's expansion into Teesside follows hot on the heels of the company's plans to open a new HQ at the Pipewell Quay development, located on the site of the former Baja Beach Club on Gateshead Quays. The new offices will enable the company to expand within the North East and increase their workforce in the process. The company have plans to create over 150 new local jobs as part of their growth projections.

Aspire, who are one of the fastest-growing business communications and Cloud services providers in the UK, were named as North East Company of the Year at the North East Business Awards, 2020.

The business was launched 14 years ago by Chris Fraser and Nigel Begg and now employs more

than 180 people. Today, the company has set ambitious plans for improving digital innovation across the North East.

Aspire launched their own full fibre North East network in 2018 after investing millions in local infrastructure. Known as Ultrafast Dedicated Connectivity (UDC), they offer North East businesses internet connectivity of up to 100 gigabits per second, some of the fastest speeds and one of the most reliable services available in the UK.

The growing company have just recently announced their appointment by Newcastle City Council to deliver a next-generation full fibre network serving hundreds of public sector sites across the region. The infrastructure built by Aspire will enable many offshoot connections

to be built right across the North East, making it easier for suppliers to offer cost effective fibre broadband to the wider community.

One of the most recent locations to benefit from Aspire's ultrafast connectivity solutions is the iconic Steel House at Teesworks. The building is currently being redeveloped to become the new base for the full transformation of the 4,500-acre Teesworks site, the UK's biggest Freeport, which will help lead the way in clean growth technologies, renewables and advanced manufacturing.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: "Digital connectivity is at the heart of our long-term plans to grow our economy in response to coronavirus. Having widely available, high-speed, affordable and reliable connectivity will help our businesses to go further faster, and we've seen how vital this is during the pandemic. Aspire have already made great progress towards improving digital innovation across the region. I'm delighted to welcome them to Steel House and the region."

Justin Godfrey, sales manager at Aspire said, "At Aspire we are dedicated to delivering technology like no other. We have ambitious plans to improve the connectivity and cloud performance available to North East businesses. Our new office based in the technology hub of Teesside is perfectly geared to help us deliver our plans, we are really excited about the move."

www.aspirets.com

CREATE THE ULTIMATE DIGITAL SCREEN EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

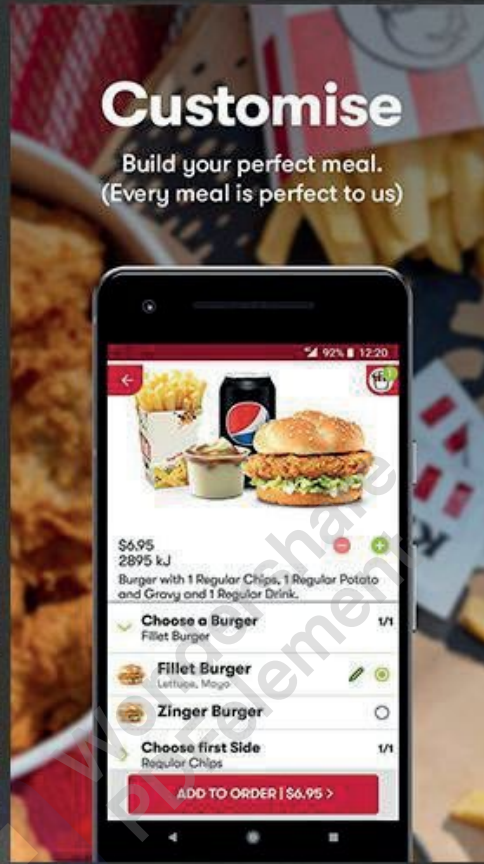
ATTRACT CUSTOMERS
BOOST SALES
GREATER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



SHARK
DIGITAL DISPLAYS

// SCREEN SALES & INSTALLATION
// SOFTWARE INTEGRATION
// CONTENT DESIGN
// SCREEN EVENT HIRE



SHARK
DIGITAL DISPLAYS

RETAIL / LEISURE / HOSPITALITY / BUSINESS / BOARDROOM / EVENTS

Call us – 0191 336 1995**enquiries@sharkdigitaldisplays.com****www.sharkdigitaldisplays.com**



IN CONVERSATION WITH...

KRISTOFFER GALLOWAY

Founder of Newcastle IT Recruit Ltd

What were your career ambitions growing up?

I suppose like many people I aspired to be a footballer. I played to a decent standard at school and for the county but sadly was never going to make the grade.

I did find though that coaching I received from Newcastle College during my Sports Coaching course helped when I enrolled in an apprenticeship in IT at Newcastle City Council. This was very much a new trade and excitingly "the future." I enjoyed a very rounded role at Newcastle Council and a spell at Hewlett Packard before taking a career break and working a Summer in Greece. When the season ended I enrolled at London Metropolitan University to undertake a degree in Computing, Electronics and Mathematics. After further experience with different companies I was fortunate to work a spell in Melbourne, Australia within the banking sector, where my wife had a role with Tommee Tippee. Upon returning back to the UK I began my current role at Northern Gas Networks where I have moved through the ranks to manage a team of eight. I do this currently in conjunction with my new business.

Tell us about Newcastle IT Recruit Ltd?

I recently decided to set up my own Recruitment Agency after working for more than 20 years across the IT sector in various industries including – Banking, Utilities, FMCG, Social Services & big tech company HP.

During this time, I realised that recruiting the right people for IT roles can often be problematic when those hiring do not have a background in this field. Requirements within IT can often be very specific and technical, and therefore having someone who specialises in this area significantly increases the chances of pairing the right client and candidate.

I have covered it all; 1st, 2nd & 3rd Line Support, Refurbishments, Migrations and many other Project based work. In addition to this I have also gained my Level 7 Diploma in Recruitment Management.

My role at Newcastle IT Recruit Ltd is the Managing Director but not limited to wearing many hats during my time so far. I'm keen on keeping a close eye on all aspects of the business which will help drive the brand and message about what we are trying to achieve but more importantly, how we can help others.

What has been your proudest achievement?

Undoubtedly setting up the new company within a pandemic which was both scary and exciting.

What are you currently working on?

We are trying to expand our online presence, expand the new brand and improve what we can achieve for the candidate and employer. We are also attempting to make significant inroads into the student marketplace.

Where do you hope to see the business in 12 months time?

Being spoken in the same breath as the already established big names, improving our sales approach and service levels and also fully establishing the brand.

How has the industry changed in the last few years?

The world of IT is incredibly fast paced and continually evolving and that will continue to be the case. With GDPR and security attacks the policies and procedures to learn are huge. Artificial Intelligence will become ever more prevalent as will remote working which was initially forced upon us by the pandemic.

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

I suppose it has been really more of what I have witnessed. Loads of online businesses have popped up during the coronavirus crisis and this has led to me reflecting on how I could change and adapt and improve what I am doing.

What has been your biggest challenge?

In recent months, lack of face to face meetings and human contact. I hope to take Newcastle IT Recruit full time by the end of the year which I'm sure will help in establishing long term relationships.

Who are your Heroes and Mentors?

Unquestionably my Mum who prepared me for anything. Also Arnold Schwarzenegger. He dreamt of winning Mr. Olympia and moved to America in his quest at a time when he couldn't speak English. The rest as they say is history with his subsequent moves into acting and politics. He is the living embodiment of someone who made the impossible happen.

How do you like to unwind?

Spending time with my family, going to the gym, building Lego and enjoying everything our beautiful North East has to offer.

What are your favourite books?

Total Recall by Arnold Schwarzenegger and the *History of Volkswagen* which was a fascinating read.

For further information visit the website
www.NewcastleITRecruit.co.uk

BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY: RURAL BROADBAND EXPERTS ALNCOM



In great news for the North East, USA based global network and comms expert ADTRAN Inc have partnered with Alnwick based Alncom to bring Gigabit capable broadband to rural England; Northumberland, County Durham & the Scottish Borders.

Stateside global network and international comms expert ADTRAN Inc have partnered with North East rural broadband experts ALNCOM to deliver enhanced Gigabit-ready broadband services to rural regions in the NE and England to bridge the digital divide. Alncom is building a FTTH network that reaches more subscribers than ever before and delivers speeds that will connect its communities to new opportunities and a better quality of life.

Alncom is an altnet service provider to rural Northumberland, County Durham and the Scottish Borders, UK, where many residents and businesses lack access to fibre and high-speed, gigabit capable internet. Knowing that broadband has the power to transform communities and economies, Alncom wanted to transform services beyond the 1.5 Mbps speeds their subscribers were currently accessing. After securing private investment from Railsite Telecom and funding from the UK's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to revolutionise broadband across its service area, to qualify, Alncom had to build a Gigabit-ready, full-fibre network and partnered with ADTRAN to find the right technology to complete the project.

Currently, Alncom is rolling out its FTTH network to some of the hardest to reach regions in the North East and UK, using the ADTRAN TA5000 solution. "We're committed to using innovative technology so that our subscribers can access state-of-the-art services. ADTRAN offers the right

expertise, leadership and solutions to allow us to meet our goals," said Stephen Pinchen, Managing Director at Alncom. "ADTRAN helps us maintain a network and services that are reliable, fast and can be deployed cost-effectively. This enables our subscribers to connect to a network that can keep up with their daily activities and broadband demands today, and we're confident we'll still be able to support those needs as they grow in the future."

Stephen Pinchen continued; "The Adtran solution is modular & extremely flexible, meaning that we can deploy gigabit & 10gig speeds down the same fibre cables, making it incredibly future proof."

"ADTRAN's priority is helping every type of service provider find the right solutions to build their best networks. The beauty of our fibre solutions is that it enables service providers, like Alncom, to rapidly launch next-generation Gigabit internet services and benefit from a highly flexible FTTH architecture that is both reliable and easy to maintain," said Stuart Broome, Vice President of Sales at ADTRAN. "As subscribers' demands on the network continue to increase, Alncom's network will easily upgrade to deliver higher speeds and greater capacity to support new innovative services."

To learn more about ALNCOM please visit www.alncom.co.uk

To learn more about ADTRAN's altnet solutions, please visit www.adtran.com

“

...The Adtran solution is modular & extremely flexible, meaning that Alncom can deploy gigabit & 10gig speeds down the same fibre cables, making it incredibly future proof...

”

“

...Shortlisted for the “Connected Britain: Bridging the Digital Divide” Award for their work between rural and urban areas of Northumberland & Co Durham...

”

GUARDIAN® COULD SAVE MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF DRUGS



A remote measurement technology provider that has identified a novel way for care providers to free up more staff time to look after residents, whilst solving business and compliance challenges, has been showing how GUARDIAN® could prevent many thousands of pounds worth of wasted prescription medication.

Plexus Innovation is ensuring that the UK's care providers have the opportunity of a free demonstration of how making some simple adjustments to the way they do certain tasks will help them improve significantly in several crucial areas of their business.

Showcasing GUARDIAN®, the Plexus Innovation team have been revealing how to remove problems associated with medical fridge and water system compliance management. It has also established how positively impactful its remote technology is in solving a range of challenges faced by care providers, including prevention of prescription medication waste.

Following a report in the Sunday Express that exposed that millions of pounds worth of drugs had to be thrown away because of faulty NHS fridge's not staying at the required constant temperature, GUARDIAN® is now proving to be a winning solution in preventing the risk of this for all health and care providers.

In the same article, Jeremy Hutton of the Taxpayer's Alliance, said: "In the 21st Century, old fashioned fridge failure should not still be a problem for the health service... every vial of medicine lost through these faults is one vial unavailable for patients that really need them." The article also revealed that across 30 large NHS

Trusts, over 3 years there were 237 incidents adding up to the loss of over £2m pounds of vital medicine. This prompted Plexus Innovation to pose the question of how much medication is wasted by other cold storage users such as care providers.

Plexus Innovation's managing director, Ian Murray, said: "We have spoken to a number of care providers who admit that they would benefit from reassurance that prescription medication is constantly maintained at the optimum safe temperature. They also know that their manual management of water system compliance is no longer the best it could be and that leaves them vulnerable.

"With both those things in mind, we needed to show them quickly and easily how GUARDIAN® can do all of that and much more.

"It is therefore essential for those in care to take advantage of our free demonstrations exploring the sector challenges and benefits we can provide."

GUARDIAN® is a remote, automated measurement and alert system that focuses on environmental data including temperature. Ideal in reducing the risk of legionella and ensuring temperature in water or refrigerators and freezers is at an optimum level to protect health. Plexus Innovation's technology comprises of a

combination of hardware, with remote monitoring software. It can best benefit care providers by monitoring in real-time, enhancing business compliance, while relieving pressure on human time allowing the team to focus on the residents and patients.

In addition to removing the need for any manual measurements and providing a solution to many of the sector challenges, GUARDIAN® can also identify and alert to taps left running, water leaks, water heaters under stress and failing assets - all enabling early intervention to be taken before a situation becomes a crisis.

Ian Murray, concluded: "We know how busy care provider teams are, particularly in recent times, and that the benefits gained from implementation of GUARDIAN® overlap with their current challenges.

"We are working with a growing number of care providers and the positive impact we are having is proving to be significant, so the more we can do to deliver our message, the more we can help with their challenges."

You can watch the animation by visiting www.plexus-innovation.com.

Simply Connect to remotely Monitor 24/7, 365. Receive informative Reports and alerts based on your parameters and real-time data. Protect health and wellbeing. Eliminate manual measurement costs and risks allowing your business to improve with a reduced environmental footprint, freed up manpower and tangible cost savings.

You can find out more at
www.plexus-innovation.com,
info@plexus-innovation.com, 0191 9223969.



STANNINGTON DEVELOPMENT HAILED 'A GREAT SUCCESS'

Willow Homes, the property developer behind Nursery Gardens in Stannington, has hailed the scheme a great success after the last remaining property has sold subject to contract.

Launched in 2018, the development features 34 two-bedroom starter homes, three, four and five-bedroom detached and semi-detached homes and has proved extremely popular with buyers who loved the generous proportions, attention to detail and high standard of finish throughout.

Constructed by local building contractor, Surgo Construction, well known for its quality craftsmanship, buyers have remarked on the superior standard of finish, fixtures and fittings in all the homes at Nursery Gardens.

The Carpenter family, Dad Steve, Mum Trudi, son Adam and daughter, Beth as well as Amber, the Cavapoo are buying Plot 33. Talking about their decision to buy at Nursery Gardens, Steve said:

"We have had a fantastic service from Lynn at WalkersXchange. We bought one of the last remaining homes at Nursery Gardens and we're thrilled with it.

"We're living locally at Hartford Hall but wanted to find somewhere on one level for Adam, who is confined to a wheelchair and the bungalow on Plot 33 with its slightly wider doorways, was perfect."



MULTIMILLION-POUND INVESTMENT DELIVERS NEW OFFICES AND MAJOR UPGRADE FOR ST JAMES GATE

A multimillion-pound cash injection at Newcastle's St James Gate development has delivered brand new offices and a major upgrade of existing office space – which were unveiled at a glittering launch event yesterday (Thur 23 Sept).

Real estate investment trust, Palace Capital plc, has carried out significant development works at the 82,000 sq. ft. eight-storey block to ensure the offices compete with the best in the city and are fit for a post-covid world.

The investment has created an impressive double-height reception area, revitalised Grade A floor plates, a major redesign of the outside space to create a stunning courtyard plaza and the conversion of retail units into two, new self-contained offices.

The two new offices at No. 3 St James Gate have contemporary interiors, are both circa 5,000 sq. ft. and benefit from a highly-accessible and visible location with their own front doors.

The top (seventh) floor office at No.2 St James Gate, comprises 7,962 sq. ft. and boasts panoramic views of the city. The refurbished third floor which is 10,839 sq. ft. has also been launched – all the commercial spaces are marketed by Knight Frank.

The planned redevelopment of Central Station is set to boost St James Gate further, thanks to the creation of a new western pedestrian entrance which will shave several minutes off the walking-time to and from the offices, from the transport hub.

The improvements at St James Gate are in sync with other major developments taking shape in the south west corner of the city centre, which is an up-and-coming business, leisure and residential district. The nearby Forth Yard and Quayside West developments are soon set to deliver a significant number of new homes, offices, leisure and public open spaces. The £200m Stephenson Quarter development is also just a stone's throw away.

FLEXIBILITY THE KEY TO St OSWALD'S FAMILY ROOM & GARDEN

Newcastle-based JDDK Architects have proved how a little can go a long way at St Oswald's Hospice in Gosforth, where their new Family Room & Garden has proved invaluable since opening in lockdown last year and being constantly used ever since.

With flexibility being the key to the design, the practice's 15th project at St Oswalds, since the original design by Jane Darbyshire in 1987, for the award-winning hospice, has enabled families

to visit loved ones throughout the pandemic in an environment that blurs the threshold between interior and exterior space and puts families and patients at ease.

JDDK Associate Director and Project Architect, Stuart Franklin, explains, "The genius of Jane Darbyshire's original design was that the hospice could grow incrementally through the years, organically adding to the asymmetric plan and series of courtyards, as funding allowed. This Family Garden Room project is just the latest phase of an ongoing programme, which has allowed the hospice to not only grow, but also to adapt to changing needs and technology within healthcare. The building has been designed to be as flexible as possible to accommodate multiple functions; the main one allowing families to visit patients in a pleasant environment and although



we obviously had no knowledge of the impending pandemic when we designed the building in 2019, it's been in constant use as a Covid-safe environment throughout."

Distinctive LIVING
Urban-base.com

Urban BASE
EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DISTINCTIVE HOMES



HOLLY LODGE, GUBEON WOOD, TRANWELL WOODS, MORPETH



PRICE GUIDE £1.595 MILLION

Holly Lodge occupies one of the best sites within the much favoured and prestigious Gubeon Wood. This very impressive property sits in circa 2.5 acres of magnificent grounds, greatly enhanced by the current owners with lovely patios and walkways as well as well stocked borders, lawns and water features. The property itself has been extensively renovated to provide versatile accommodation which includes five bedrooms, a drawing room with super fireplace, a study area/library, and an outstanding open plan kitchen/dining/living area with bi-fold doors. Holly Lodge has the further benefit of a large, detached triple garage with a reception and games, music and cinema room to the ground floor, and an independent one bedroom first floor apartment; this garage house is effectively the size of a three bedroom detached property. There is a further detached single garage with a large bespoke garden room.

Contact rare! From Sanderson Young on 0191 223 3500 ashleigh.sundin@sandersonyoung.co.uk www.sandersonyoung.co.uk



Landlords...



LOOKING TO RENT OUT YOUR PROPERTY?

WE HAVE PROFESSIONAL TENANTS WAITING IN ALL AREAS AND WE OFFER A FULLY MANAGED SERVICE OR A TENANT FIND SERVICE TO SUIT YOUR REQUIREMENTS.

SPEAK TO ONE OF OUR EXPERT ADVISORS & ARRANGE A FREE RENTAL APPRAISAL
Call us now on 0191 223 3510 or email gail.mclean@sandersonyoung.co.uk
www.sandersonyoung.co.uk





BRUNTON WOODS NORTH GOSFORTH

7 EXCEPTIONAL HOMES AT GOSFORTH'S FINEST NEW ADDRESS

An exciting new exclusive development of spacious family homes in the heart of Gosforth which will sit within a quiet, leafy grove.

Prices from £865,000



HEPSCOTT FIELDS HEPSCOTT, MORPETH

3 SPACIOUS, LUXURY DETACHED PROPERTIES WITH SUPERB VIEWS

Hepscott Fields is an intimate group of three 4 bedroom detached homes with large plots of circa 0.2 acres, set in open countryside.

Prices from £695,000



A STELLAR YEAR FOR SALES ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND COAST!

Despite ongoing uncertainty for many in 2021, the housing market in our region has continued to grow with demand outweighing supply; the popularity of rural Northumberland and our stunning coastline has produced unprecedented interest with a number of properties selling between 10% and 15% above the guide price.

With a new version of normality resuming for many, we will continue to see clients entering a period of reflection, re-evaluating lifestyle options and how to spend precious down time with family and friends away from the stresses of the everyday. Many of you have already made the change to move to the home you always dreamed of, in a location you never thought possible, perhaps have been able to finally purchase your very own retreat, or simply invest in our region as a superb location for the ever more popular 'staycation'.

Here at Sanderson Young, we have been delighted to see that there is continued strength in our housing market with high levels of proceed-able buyers registered, waiting for homes to come to the market. Our experienced sales team have continued to work with both vendors and purchasers to provide professional advice and support ensuring their ideal outcome with as little stress as possible.

With a career in estate agency that spans almost 30 years, I have seen many changes in the housing market, however none have been as exceptional as 2020/21. We remain positive for the future of the market in our region and I would urge all clients, old and new, to contact myself personally to discuss individual moving needs.

Whindow Cottage,
Craster



Offers Over £350,000

Mill Cottage,
Lesbury



Offers Over £295,000

On The Beach,
Beadnell



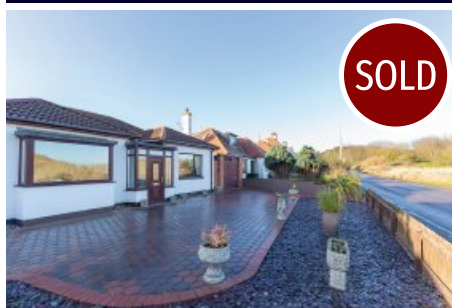
£950,000

Cheviot House, Mizen Court,
Bamburgh



Offers Over £775,000

Links Road,
Bamburgh



Offers Over £395,000

The Haven,
Beadnell



£315,000



Heather Armstrong
Regional Valuer

01665 600170

heather.armstrong@sandersonyoung.co.uk

www.sandersonyoung.co.uk



**The Old School,
Newton By The Sea**



SOLD
STC

Offers Over £825,000

**Dibcott House, Foxton,
Alnmouth**



SOLD

£1.35 Million

**Hill Top,
Embleton**



SOLD

Offers Over £425,000

**Bernicia Way,
Beadnell**



SOLD

Offers Over £399,000

**Shoreline, Harbour Road,
Beadnell**



SOLD

£525,000

**Crag View,
Dunstan**



SOLD

Offers Over £500,000

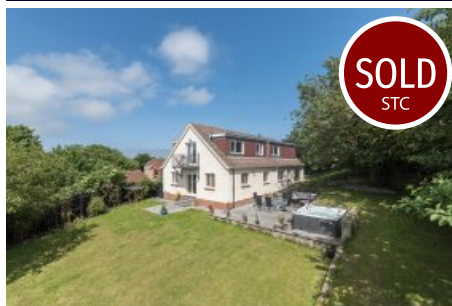
**Gate House, Watershaugh Road,
Warkworth**



SOLD

£750,000

**Dunelm House, The Wynd,
Amble**



SOLD
STC

£499,950

**Kildonan, Steppey Lane,
Lesbury**



SOLD
STC

Offers Over £425,000



Rob Cox, CEO of YMCA Northumberland with Neve Stuart who is one of many young people benefitting from the centre and the support it provides.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY VENUE HIGHLIGHTS RISING PRESSURES FACING CHARITIES

Staff from a local community venue who help young people stay safe, navigate personal challenges and provide a social space to meet, have spoken of the rising pressures they're facing, and how donations have become a much-needed lifeline to keep supporting more than 400 local teenagers.

Youth leaders from YMCA Northumberland in Ashington are seeing a heightened need from young people aged 14 years plus, who coming out of lockdown are, for example, experiencing various mental health issues, need a place to go without prejudice, trying hard to avoid negative influences or risky behaviours such as drug and alcohol misuse, or are possibly overcoming forms of abuse and exploitation.

Having recently received a £10,000 donation from The Bernicia Foundation, YMCA Northumberland is now calling for better support generally from official funding bodies to help open their doors longer, employ more youth workers, provide new counselling-based activities and continue steering young people away from mistreatment or anti-social behaviour.

Rob Cox, CEO of YMCA Northumberland, explained, "This is a vicious cycle and one that cannot go far enough in terms of providing young people with the very best support at the time they need it most. The pressures that are on them generally as teenagers, whether it be at home, from peer groups or online, are immense, and whilst hard for all, the pandemic has only increased that ten-fold.

"These issues are happening now, not in two or three months' time, and as a local grass-roots venue, our youth workers can make a huge difference to young people's lives.

"The Bernicia Foundation donation has been a huge blessing and has enabled us to open our doors for

longer hours, especially on evenings and weekends. We're currently seeing approximately 50 teenagers each week, down from 120 pre-lockdown, however, this, by default, is also creating a dangerous abyss for those young people who no longer come here on a regular basis. Some have the potential to fall through a gap that is now emerging and this is a very real concern."

One Ashington teenager that has regularly visited YMCA Northumberland over the last few years is Neve Stuart (15). She first visited the North View venue following a recommendation by her older sister to help reduce the boredom she felt in her spare time.

Three years on and as well as having ambitions to become a forensic scientist, Neve would also like to become an active YMCA volunteer short-term, assisting youth sessions and events at the Ashington site. She said, "The centre has always provided me with a safe place to go and meet friends, and offered fun social activities. The youth workers became more like friends so I was able to chat to them about any issues I had.

"It's great for mental health as you're able to mix with others the same age that totally understand what you're going through as a teenager. It feels like everything about young people now has become a stigma when in truth, we're like everyone else trying to learn and navigate through a time of our lives that can sometimes be complicated, confusing or messy.

"The work that Rob and the team do at YMCA is amazing. I would definitely recommend it to others my age."

Rob added, "There is so much potential in these young people and we must not disengage with them. They're our community's next generation and creating an inclusive, safe social space for them to thrive, develop and be themselves freely, is a must."

The Bernicia Foundation has allocated more than £465,000 in funds over the last 18 months to charities, community projects and individuals across the North East including £10,000 to YMCA Northumberland.

Kevin Haddrick of The Bernicia Foundation, commented, "Rob and the team have forged real positive relationships with many local teenagers, probably thousands over the years from South East Northumberland. They have, without doubt, an extremely positive influence on their lives in various different ways.

"Our donations are awarded to diverse projects up and down the region that are making a significant impact on local people, so we'd encourage other groups, charities or individuals to apply for funds if needed."

Additionally, any local business, entrepreneur or fundraiser wishing to support YMCA Northumberland should contact Rob Cox, CEO, on 01670 857167 or rob.cox@ymcanorthumberland.org.uk



Tecaz

www.tecaz.com

At Tecaz we love to give the opportunity for you to see and touch a range of bathrooms or kitchens before you decide to purchase. Our showrooms feature over 200 bathrooms, 100 showers and 50 kitchen displays, you're sure to find what you are looking for.

Sale now on, Save up to 60% off RRP on Big Brands.

Come and see brand new displays in our new Rak Ceramics design studios.

FREE computer planning and design are available, for larger projects, we offer installation support. We are confident you'll achieve your dream space. FREE granite or Silestone worktops are available on selected kitchen ranges.

Norham Road, North Shields, NE29 7TN • Tel : 0191 257 6511

Portrack Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2HG • Tel : 01642 670 100

Tecaz Echo House, Pennywell Ind Est, SR4 9EN • Tel : 0191 534 7733

Opening hours:

- Monday - Friday : 9am - 6pm •
- Saturday : 9am - 5pm •
- Sunday 10am - 4pm •



Damiano Rea, Director, Heaton Property

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES MAKES A RETURN

Earlier this year I reported on the plan of Lloyds Bank to become the UK's leading private landlord with an ambition to own 50,000 rental properties within the next ten years.

I saw this as a good thing for tenants since Lloyds would do the job right, assuring a high standard of rental accommodation at a fair market price. But as is often the case in the private rental sector, the law of unintended consequences has bestirred itself.

Having a bank or large institutional investor as landlord may be an attractive proposition for tenants, but what of those tenants desperate to get onto the property ladder? If Lloyds' ambition to own 50,000 rental properties within ten years comes to fruition, that is 50,000 homes straight off the property market because institutional investors are not buying do-'em-ups.

On a recent affordable homes development in the south east, an institutional investor snapped up eighty percent of the available properties off-plan. And there are tales of investors working with developers even before the planning stage. The investor will specify the type and number of properties they require built, then buy the lot. Great news for the developer as cash flow issues fade into the distance, terrible news for anyone trying to buy their first home.

Add to a shrinking affordable housing sector the fact that in the last decade, the cost of buying a home has risen faster than wages and first-time buyers face a perfect storm. Low deposit mortgages are often not much help as would-be home owners cannot afford the monthly repayments so need to save longer for a bigger deposit.

I have read a number of erudite articles outlining how we got here and suggesting a way out but for me, the answer is simplicity itself. Build more affordable homes for sale to home owners rather than City investors. The yearly supply of new homes has declined steadily since 1970 and more needs to be done to make first time home owning a viable option.

The situation is not helped by incomprehensible Council planning decisions. Small developers frequently have planning applications rejected and the Council officers will state their reasons. What they will not do is outline what sort of development they would prefer in a given area. So small developers are shooting in the dark, hoping to hit the target now and then.

We recently applied to build a pair of 'Tyneside flats'. The application was rejected but a re-worked application for a three bedroom house was accepted. This was on street where we cannot keep Tyneside flats on the books, such is the high demand.

Our business is in the private rental sector but I am always delighted when a tenant announces that they are moving into their first owned home. To delight me more often, action is needed. Government needs to propose a strategy which will make affordable housing available to individuals as well as corporate giants. And Councils need to loosen their stays, working with small developers to create affordable homes from existing housing stock. Although Scottish historian Niall Ferguson said "The law of unintended consequences is the only real law in history" I feel we have seen enough of it in the housing sector.

**www.heatonproperty.com
0191 240 0665
office@heatonproperty.com**

Heaton Property is an award winning full-service estate agency from the North East set up in 2005. In September 2021 the company won gold in the 2021/2022 Best Estate Agent Guide.



Heaton Property believe
your home is your castle...



...that's why you'll be
treated like a king!

office@heatonproperty.com

0191 240 0665

www.heatonproperty.com

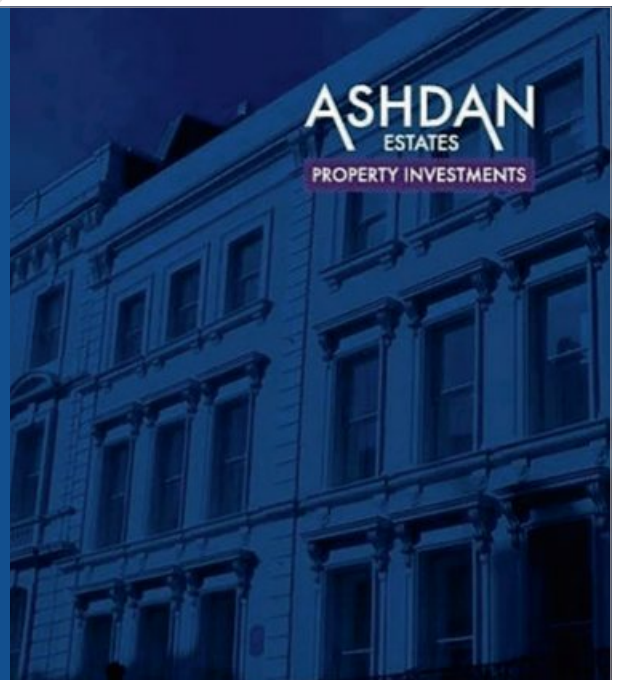
Heaton Property Property... it's everything we do

- sales
- lettings
- tenancy management
- property investments
- block management



Maximise Your Returns On Property Investment

If you want to develop your own property portfolio or have money to invest in property, we can help you do it right first time.



Ashdan Estates is a family-run business with a passion for property investment. As investors ourselves, we have a financial stake in each investment, and manage and co-ordinate the whole process, to minimise risk and maximise investment returns

It means that we and our clients can benefit from low-risk opportunities which maximise the returns on our mutual investments and as a local firm, we are committed to the same schemes and know the regional market well.

Get in touch today for an informal chat about our typical ROI

☎ 01207 693 983

✉ info@ashdan-estates.com

🖱 www.ashdan-estates.com

Ashdan Estates is part of the Ashdan Group

TEESSIDE – THE NEW POSTER CHILD FOR LEVELLING UP?

By Neil Hart, Group Managing Director Bradley Hall Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents.

The North has held the longstanding stigma that its people and communities are friendly, hard working and robust, but enterprise, innovation and a lack of drive for bigger and better from our leaders and local authorities have stunted our growth and our ability to keep up with other areas of development across the UK.



It seems though that some of our local authorities seem to be stepping up to the mark, and pioneering change as serious investment, regeneration and development continues to roll out across the North, with Teesside certainly hitting the headlines for its heightened activity.

The ambitious Tees Valley Investment Plan outlines how £1.2 billion will be spent on business growth, transport, culture, and job creation by 2029. Recent news like this from the Tees Valley Combined Authority has catapulted the area into the spotlight, however, a steady foundation for this process started when The Tees Valley Combined Authority was established back in 2016 with the purpose to drive economic growth and job creation in the area. A partnership of five authorities; Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees, was formed with the aim to work in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, wider business community and other partners to make local decisions to support the expanding economy. In 2017, the people of the Tees Valley elected their first Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen, who continues to chair the Combined Authority. These steps seemingly became a catalyst for the steady growth in activity in the area for commercial sectors including transport, construction, engineering, energy, education, and trade.

Teesside's recent redevelopment activity and the heightened publicity which has followed suggests that the Tees Valley Combined Authority could arguably gain a reputation as the poster child for the topical 'levelling up' drive from the government. The obvious work which is going into raising the profile of business opportunity in the region will undoubtedly reap the rewards of further significant investment and develop, which will underpin a transformed built environment, better infrastructure and connectivity.

Wynyard Business Park, operated by Northumberland Estates, is attracting global giants such as Amazon will establish a logistics centre in Wynyard, creating 3,000 good quality jobs. The proposed facility will be two million sq ft and will act as a huge investment in the area creating jobs, covering everything from fulfilment staff to HR to finance, business, IT support and engineering.

The recent news of the Teesside Freeport creating more than 18,000 jobs and will provide £3.2 billion boost to the local economy over the next five years supports its ambitious campaign. The Freeport will cover 4,500 acres, the equivalent to 2,550 football pitches, and will be the largest in the UK. Teesside was one of only eight chosen from a shortlist of eighteen applicant areas in England bid to become a Freeport. One of the most important considerations, according to the government, was how a Freeport could bring economic opportunities to poorer regions and 'level up' the country.

The Freeport will give a boost to the Teesside area through enhancing trade and investments across the UK, boosting the amount of high skilled jobs in the area, as well as increasing innovation and productivity in port regions. Areas given Freeport status within the region will promote a great deal of redevelopment and regeneration across a range of industries in Teesside. Chancellor Rishi Sunak commented on the future of the region; "I see old industrial sites being used to capture and store carbon, vaccines being manufactured, offshore wind turbines creating clean energy for the rest of the country. I see people optimistic and ambitious for their future. That is the future economy of this country."

In transport news, Teesside has seized the opportunity to expand its links to bolster its connection to other influential areas across the UK, especially with the international connectivity opportunities which better links to the capital will bring. Loganair has added an extra service from Teesside International Airport to London Heathrow, ensuring that three flights follow the route daily. The commercial officer at Loganair, Kay Ryan commented on the expansion: "There is no doubt that this service will provide the timing necessary to support the business growth the area is experiencing, now and in the future".

Rail transport has received increased interest and plans for development in recent years. A proposal has been submitted for the redevelopment of Darlington Station, this will improve the frequency and reliability of services as well as connectivity along the East Coast Main Line and to other regional stations. The £100 million redevelopment will pave the way for a new platform, entrance, station building and upgrades to its transport links. Ben Houchen, Mayor of Tees Valley commented; "We took a major step closer to our vision, with the submission of the planning application for the station which, when complete, will give people from across Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool the more reliable, frequent and faster services that they've been crying out for – and that they deserve."

Continued...

Transport obviously plays a big part in the levelling up agenda and many Local Authorities are improving this key element of infrastructure, but it is important not only to think about public transport, but also to consider how the professional services industries and its vast amount of clients rely on city centre parking options. It is incredibly important for businesses people, especially those working in the professional services industries to get to and from meetings efficiently. Pedestrianizing city centres and especially central business districts leads to lower productivity for those who occupy those spaces. Equally, maintaining convenient parking for shoppers in city centres will also encourage more trade. Sunderland City Council is leading the way on this, with parking options playing a key part in its redevelopment of the city centre - and I hope to see Teesside follow suit to encourage professional services industries to occupy its business hubs.

To support the Net Zero Teesside campaign, Teesside has enhanced its dedication towards the clean energy industry and has been backed by the government for these proposals. Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry has affirmed that the government is committed to ensuring clean growth is a prominent part of Teesside's economic growth, with hope for further progress in areas such as carbon, capture usage and storage, district heating and the hydrogen economy. These strides towards a cleaner Teesside also involve the introduction of 25,000 new jobs and over £1 billion of investment across a 10-year period. Business Minister Richard Harrison also noted the government's commitment to steelmaking regions across the UK and the importance of putting the sector at the heart of the UK's industrial strategy.

Following in the footsteps of major cities, the dedication to developing Teesside's educational facilities has also took a front seat. In January 2021 ESH Construction completed the task of converting a Grade II listed building on behalf of Teesside University. The refurbishment of the 129-year-old building which will support Teesside University students, graduates, and staff to start and grow new businesses across the region. The £1.7 million renovation of the Victorian Building is a central focus for the to the Teesside University's goal to create more opportunities and grow the local economy.

Not only will this refurbishment reinvigorate the economy of Teesside, but it will similarly allow for further growth for the university and the education sector in the region. Teesside University has also recently lodged plans for a three-storey, cutting edge Net Zero research centre on land near the £55m Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park, in Middlesbrough, showcasing the impact which higher educational bodies can have on local economic development.

There's still much to be established in regard to how we level up but with more and more news coming from Teesside, we're incredibly eager to see the regeneration and development of this emerging hub of opportunity.

Bradley Hall's Wynyard office is now open, offering its award winning commercial and residential property services including; commercial agency, professional services, property management, building surveying, residential agency, mortgages, BH Planning and Design and land, development and new homes. To speak to Bradley Hall's Wynyard office please contact 01642 265 300 or wynyard@bradleyhall.co.uk



Neil Hart



THE LAUNCH OF NO. 2 & NO. 3 ST JAMES GATE

A multimillion-pound investment at Newcastle's St James Gate has delivered brand new offices and a major upgrade of existing office space – which were unveiled at a glittering launch event last month.

Real estate investment trust, Palace Capital plc, has carried out significant development works at the 82,000 sq. ft. eight-storey block to ensure the offices compete with the best in the city.

Forty guests enjoyed tours of the new office spaces, mocktails from Northern Shakers and food from Spanish restaurateurs, Kaltur.





Laura Ruxton

STEP UP OR STEP DOWN TO SOCIAL CARE?

Laura Ruxton, Director at specialist architectural healthcare practice, Dunwoodie Architects, gives her views on the current debate around Social Care Reforms.

Following the current discussions about social care reform I thought it would be a good time to reflect on the Intermediate/Step down facilities model that has been promoted and partially implemented in the past few years.

Intermediate care is not a new idea. Promoting independence and shifting care away from hospitals and residential homes has been a policy objective for over 30 years. Intermediate care was developed as part of the NHS Plan in 2000 and was one of the national standards in the 2001 National Service Framework Service for Older People.

It is an important focus of efforts to integrate health and social care through the Better Care Fund. It is central to the ambitions of most Sustainability Transformation Plans across the country to shift more care closer to home.

The United Kingdom, and especially England, has relatively few acute hospital beds in comparison to many of our European neighbours. A rising number of those admitted to hospital are older and have increasingly complex conditions. Many of these people have frailty or functional impairment, and most need rehabilitation after their acute illness or injury. Some could be supported at home after initial assessment at hospital or in their own homes.

Intermediate care services can deliver support outside of a hospital setting, potentially helping to speed up discharge, avoid some admissions, provide crucial rehabilitation to maximise independence and reduce the need for long-term care and support. But such models are not always funded or available.

Hospital inpatients are increasingly old. Many are living with frailty and most have a degree of functional impairment, either in mobility or other activities of daily living. Many such patients leave hospital less mobile and independent than when they were admitted, making rehabilitation after acute illness and injury a core issue not just for hospitals but also for their partners in 'step-down' intermediate care services. These services also have the potential to provide 'step-up' (admission prevention) care, for early supported discharge from the hospital front door or wards.

The development of purpose built Intermediate care or step-down facilities adjacent to acute hospitals has been on the cards for a long time but very few have actually been built. These type of

services require the integration of NHS and Local authority services and funding. By definition the level of care provided in these facilities requires a level of acute services and community based care to allow patients' rehabilitation and recovery.

Should this model be implemented in its true form it would undoubtedly provide the best "one stop" care that will allow the discharge of patients from acute beds to facilities where integrated care, recovery and rehabilitation can be provided not only for physical conditions but also providing mental health services. Emergency readmissions within 28 days of leaving hospital run at around 15 per cent for people over 65 and overall numbers are rising. Improving support for older people either to prevent hospital admission (or readmission) or to facilitate discharge when they are ready to leave hospital is key to patient flow and ultimately to delivering the four-hour A&E waiting times target.

www.dunwoodiearchitects.co.uk



CoreHaus apprentices, from left: Matthew Watson and Amber Raine

MODERN SKILLS FOR MODERN METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION AT COREHAUS

North East modular housebuilder CoreHaus has teamed up with a County Durham-based college to recruit, train and develop the region's next generation of skilled construction professionals.

Working closely with Derwentside College, CoreHaus has developed a bespoke apprenticeship programme that will enable young people to learn new, modern methods of construction, gaining work-ready skills for today's building and construction sector.

With latest figures revealing that the North East saw a 27% drop in the number of apprenticeship starts over the last two years and job vacancies across the UK at a record high, the skill shortage challenge is becoming greater, with construction in particular facing a talent drought.

CoreHaus plans to create a CoreHaus Academy that will train up to 15 young people per year with the aim of offering them a full-time job when training is completed. Once this is up and running, the company plans to at least double its number of apprentices year on year.

Apprentices Matthew Watson and Amber Raine have started a Level 2 Construction and Assembly Operative Course at Derwentside College, spending one day a week there learning core modular housing skills and the remaining four days on site at CoreHaus.

Scott Bibby, managing director of CoreHaus, said: "The level of progress our apprentices Matthew and Amber have made in the space of just a few short months has been tremendous, and we look forward to seeing them grow further with CoreHaus over the coming years.

"Our vision is to transform new build housing



Scott Bibby

delivery and to achieve this we need to bring about positive change.

"A fundamental aspect of this is to find and develop a new generation of construction professionals that we can train, develop and demonstrate how housebuilding can be approached differently whilst providing the right type of environment and support structure they need to succeed."

During their onsite training, apprentices are engaged in the range of operations and procedures, learning about the whole spectrum of new build housing and the processes involved.

Amber Raine, 20, an apprentice at CoreHaus, said: "I'm loving every aspect of my course and working at CoreHaus is amazing. I have learnt so many things already and each day is different.

"It's great going into college to gain the knowledge I need to work in modular construction and then

working at CoreHaus carrying out interesting tasks and being part of a team who are building affordable and sustainable homes for people across the region."

A social enterprise company, CoreHaus is committed to creating job opportunities and providing expert training to local people to help the organisation achieve its goals but also inspire a whole new generation to join a growing and rapidly changing sector that provides a wide range of job roles and specialisms.

Lianne Marston, senior business development consultant at Derwentside College, said: "We work with various different organisations to help them with their workforce needs, developing bespoke training programmes that not only help our students but meet the requirements of businesses too.

"The construction course we've created in partnership with CoreHaus offers a great opportunity to learn a vast range of skills and expertise required to work in modern day construction.

"Our apprentices are making real progress and it's great to see how much they're benefiting from on-the-job experience."

For more detail about job opportunities, please visit www.corehaus.co.uk

THE RETURN OF THE BOX ROOM

Following one of the most challenging times for the world to handle the pandemic has created an unprecedented demand on the property and construction world that no-one could have predicted – not even Jan & Gordon Dale, owners of Urban BASE, The New Homes Agent.

Having been at the forefront of the North East's property industry for over 25 years Jan gives us an insight in to how the pandemic has changed our needs for enjoying the simple things of home-life and now working from home.

The government drive for employers to offer flexibility of working from home encouraged buyers to look outside of city for homes that offers more space, and enjoyment. The focus on the home has become a priority throughout the pandemic and the property market across our region has continued to see strong demand for moving home. The return of the box room is a 'must-have' on most client's needs now. Somewhere to work from home, somewhere for the kids to home-school, somewhere to start a new hobby – somewhere to enjoy this new way of living.

The government's Stamp Duty cuts with timelines of March, June, and September this year created an enormous pressure on the industry at a time when staff shortage was at its highest across the sector – in estate agents, legal firms, and local authorities – the demands on the industry to meet demand to move home has been challenging to say the least. Good for business, but I believe challenging for staff moral across the whole industry.

Combined with the enormous demand on the new homes industry. The increased need to offer remote virtual tours of show homes has become the forefront of our marketing and collateral focus for supporting developers with the Buyer-journey. The ability to support and deliver new homes to our Buyers from our developer clients has been a main focus since May 2020, and has been massively affected by

strong demand and limited labour resources, material shortages whilst trying to meet the SDLT timelines for Buyers to benefit from the government's initiative to help people move. This comes to an end in September this year, and should remove the timelines for site teams to build homes faster than ever before. The whole industry deserves recognition for the effort that has gone in to providing these homes at this time, whilst working under strict Covid-rule conditions. Outstanding work by our team at Urban BASE and by our partners and colleagues across our new homes' sites and I would like to take this opportunity to offer a sincere thank you for all of their friendship and support throughout.

In all this last eighteen months it would appear the property market has met a shortfall in the

UK's housing that should have taken twice as long. The increase in demand as a result has pushed house price growth beyond the reach of many first-time-buyers. The government is supporting the FTB with new mortgage products and schemes such as Help to Buy and Rent to Buy remain a great opportunity to get on to the housing ladder.

The wish list from the more established homeowner; a house near the sea, a room with a view, a bigger garden, or a simple extra 'box room' – as we bring 2021 to the final quarter, the housing market is showing no signs of slowing.... and yes, I am writing this from the box room, at home!

Jan Dale, Urban BASE
Email: info@urban-base.com

Urban BASE
EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DISTINCTIVE HOMES



Jan & Gordon Dale



DEVELOPING OUTSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS AND ACHIEVING EXCELLENT RESULTS FOR OUR CLIENTS

Kim Harrison, Associate, Head of Residential Property talks us through the company's success and regional expansion whilst giving us her insight into the current sales and lettings market across the North of England.

Explain to us how youngsRPS has evolved and expanded over the course of 2021?

Here at youngsRPS, we put our clients at the heart of everything we do. Our dedicated residential teams across the North East and North Yorkshire have been the impetus for our continued expansion with 2021 seeing record growth for us. The successful launch of our seventh office in Darlington town centre, covering both sales and lettings, means we have strategically placed town centre offices that cover the whole of the North of England, as always these are staffed by highly experienced teams with in-depth local property knowledge. With a progressive approach, harnessing the power of digital marketing across the leading property websites and social media channels, and liaising with buyers who have registered with youngsRPS – ensures we can continue to guarantee our customers genuine prospective purchasers.

How do you see the market changing over the coming months?

As predicted, the shortage of properties coming to the sales market coupled with incessant demand for homes in the North of England, means that house prices remain high, although showing signs of stabilisation, UK average selling prices of newly marketed properties increased sales value by 0.3% in September. The nearing end of the stamp duty holiday doesn't seem to have put buyers off and those who may have missed out on properties earlier in the year are still eager to make their move hence we would be encouraging vendors who are considering selling their property

to come forward. With the average of five buyers to one property, you are guaranteed to maximise your properties market value, leading to sales often exceeding well over the asking price.

The rental market, much like sales, continues to rise at their strongest pace in three years, but as international travel re-opens the demand for staycations will begin to slow. Unsurprisingly Northumberland, which saw a stratospheric increase in tourism this year, saw a 74% decline in rental properties coming to the market in June/July 2021 compared to the same period in 2019. Those landlords that took advantage of the boom in domestic holidays should look upon this as another opportunity and look to reintroduce longer term tenancies, thus opening the rental market further by reducing the current lack of stock. We constantly monitor all aspects of the letting market and how these affect all clients, enabling us to anticipate changes affecting landlords, tenants, and investors. Our professional, qualified practitioners devote time to becoming experts in our clients' properties.

If you are looking to enter the property market, youngsRPS, backed by the support of a team of chartered surveyors and planning consultants, our front-line team of valuers and negotiators, are committed to providing a highly professional and personalised service, tailored to ensure we achieve the results you want.

Visit www.youngsrps.com to learn more and contact us.

Our professional team of trusted estate and letting agents are with you every step of the way, setting industry standards through a tailored service that is designed to get you results. **Meet our residential experts...**



Kim Harrison
Associate, Head of Residential
01434 608980
hexham@youngsrps.com



Rosie Spours
Manager/ Valuer, Alnwick
01665 606800
alnwick@youngsrps.com



Lynn Nixon
Manager/Valuer, Northallerton
01609 773004
northallerton@youngsrps.com



Gabrielle Mckenna
Manager/ Valuer, Darlington
01325 488325
darlington@youngsrps.com



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD STC



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC



SOLD STC

EPC – FACT OR FICTION?

Since 2008 in England and Wales, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) have been mandatory for the selling or renting of properties. The law around EPC's was tightened up in 2018 EPC's have become more stringent and if properties do not meet certain standard then it is illegal to let them on a new lease.

This situation is going to become tighter in 2023 when it will be illegal to continue with a letting if the property does not meet a certain standard, despite the fact that the lease itself commenced before the more stringent standard came in to place. This I think is going to become a serious bone of contention and will make a lot of work for the legal profession.

But how is an EPC assessed, and why do I say "fact or fiction"?

As readers know, I don't normally stray into residential property unless it is part of a commercial transaction, but recently I was at a fairly modern house undertaking a "Level 2" style survey. I was provided with a copy of the EPC and I was frankly horrified. I am quite aware that the fees for undertaking EPC's are not great, and to undertake extensive investigation is uneconomic and also potentially intrusive. However, the property in question was described as having cavity wall insulation (assumed), pitched roof insulation (assumed), the flat roof area was assumed to have insulation, the roof rooms were assumed to have insulation, it was assumed there was no insulation to the solid ground floor or the suspended timber first floor was not mentioned – nor was the suspended timber floor in part of the ground floor. The roof rooms will have had no insulation because there were no roof rooms and when I entered the loft void (via a drop-down ladder, so it wouldn't have been difficult) – there was around 50mm of fibre glass insulation – the recommended minimum now is 270mm if glass wool is used. So frankly the EPC was completely wrong and invalid.

In my view, professionals are entitled to make reasonable assumptions in whatever work they are undertaking. However, the adage used by detractors "to assume makes an ass out of you and me" can sometimes be true – and I think in this case it definitely was. Is the solution to accept that EPC assessors should be better trained and



Philip Bowe

better paid so that they take more care with their reports to make them more meaningful?

I have used an example of an EPC assessor because it is close to home, but is this a general problem in the country (and indeed worldwide)? Do we expect certain workers to work for too little money and expect too much from them for that? The obvious other example to cite is lorry drivers – there is a huge shortage of lorry drivers especially in Britain at the moment and this may be caused by a lack of pay. According to the job site Indeed, the average bus driver and the average lorry driver earns around £24,000 per annum. I have to say that I think I undertook more training to get my qualifications as a surveyor (and also as an auctioneer) but my job does not mean total concentration on one subject (the road ahead) for 40 hours a week, when surrounded by other road users, sometimes of questionable mental capacity. Frankly, I wouldn't want to be responsible for a 40 foot long articulated lorry or a 30 foot long bus, either carrying 30 tons or so of goods or 70 or so passengers, for that sort of money. It may not be highly skilled, but would you really want to shovel

unmentionables in the toilets after a night shift in a pub for National Minimum Wage as a pub cleaner?

I think we need to look at how we value people financially – but also emotionally – and maybe we will all have to pay a little more to get these people appropriate pay. I am really a capitalist with a conscience, and so I do believe in the "Free Market", I do think the time has come to look at increasing the bottom level of pay for some of these people. After all, if 1,000,000 people saw their pay increase by just £20 per week, the extra National Insurance would be around £5,000,000 per annum including employees' and employers' contributions without the extra money circulating the economy attracting tax on purchases in a positive trajectory benefitting everyone.

If you disagree, tell me! If you agree, tell me! I also write on my LinkedIn profile every Wednesday morning at about 8.30 – follow me at [linkedin.com/in/philipbowe](https://www.linkedin.com/in/philipbowe).

www.bivbowes.co.uk Tel: 0191 462 6 264

Phase 3

NOW RELEASED

New homes now available at Hardwick Grange

Luxury 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes starting from £210,000.

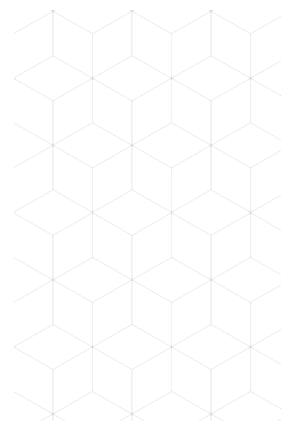
Visit Hardwick Grange, Sedgefield today.



TOLENT
HOMES

More of what matters

TOLENTHOMES.CO.UK





ONES TO WATCH

ZOE LEAHY

Director, Land and New Homes at
Clothier Lacey & Co.

What were your career aspirations growing up?

Actually, I always fancied becoming a builder! I love the uniformity and precision of building walls. I still definitely have a bit of that left in me- I may end up managing my own development before I am done. Nowadays, I tend to geek out on new technology and am fascinated with the application of AR and VR within the industry- and don't get me started on how much I obsess about the details in a CGI!

Tell us about your current role.

I head up the Land and New Homes division of Clothier Lacey & Co. We specialise in marketing, communications and PR for any company involved in buying or selling land and ultimately developing it. I work with land consultants, architects, construction companies, quantity surveyors, developers, estate agents and their supply chains. It's great because not only do I get exposure to the full lifecycle of a development but often our clients work together on schemes, or we can put a company in touch with another for mutual benefit.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Making sure that everyone talks to each other. More often than not, we end up heavily involved in a project- making sure that all the different companies work together, acting like a project manager. It's not just about the marketing materials but the overall look and feel of a development- so that means making sure that every brand touchpoint is consistent, from CGI's and branding, to advertising and estate agency materials- it must be cohesive. I have even been known to pick out tiles and worktops for our clients!



Zoe Leahy

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

Telling it like it is. And I am not sure that I have 'managed it'- but my clients appreciate the honesty and ultimately it builds trust and keeps standards high!

What are you currently working on?

We currently represent clients around the country on anything from re-brands to PR strategies. Live projects for me include a development on the Northumberland coast, another in Hexham, a building re-design in Hemel Hempstead and marketing support for a well-known national estate agency.

Tell us about your team.

The team are all really experienced in either the built environment space or marketing and PR. We have more years of experience than I would like to mention but let's just say there isn't much we haven't seen or done!

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

Do as you would be done by.

What are your proudest achievements?

Ask me again in two months as we are currently negotiating a contract with a national client that will grow our business considerably! But of course, I am really proud of the business we are building- we have taken on some great clients recently and we have fun doing what we love.

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

We have ambitious growth plans and have already taken on new people, with another one or two positions due to open up in the next 6-12 months. I would like us to be regarded as the go-to agency within land and new homes- we have a great reputation and people trust us, so there is no reason why we wouldn't be.

How do you like to unwind outside of work?

I love to cook, and I am at my happiest when I am feeding other people. My life is all about good food and good company!

www.clothierlacey.co.uk

GET READY FOR

CHRISTMAS

WITH JAM PRINTS AND
MARKETING

- SOCIAL MEDIA
- DIGITAL & SEO
- PR
- ADVERTISING
- COPYWRITING
- EVENTS
- PRINT & DESIGN
- INFLUENCER OUTREACH
- BRANDING
- WEBSITE BUILDING
- PHOTOGRAPHY



Get in touch with our
team today.

www.jamprintsmarketing.co.uk

The logo for 'jam prints and marketing' features the word 'jam' in red with a red paw print above the 'j', 'prints' in white with a white paw print above the 'i', and 'and marketing' in smaller white text below 'prints'.



NORTH EAST DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCY EXPANDS FOLLOWING STRONG PERFORMANCE

Bespoke North East digital marketing agency, Wriggle Marketing, has increased its regional footprint following strong growth for the business and with turnover to rise by over 60% by March 2022.

To support a multitude of new client wins, the agency has purchased a neighbouring building extending its offices by 40%. The business now occupies a bespoke 2,000 sq. ft studio based in a prime location in Gosforth, central Newcastle.

Wriggle Marketing utilised the services of existing client, Office Options, for the design of its new offices, with the refurbishment specialists delivering a highly functional and inspiring workspace which has generated further opportunities for recruitment for the agency.

Nick Gianfreda, Director at Wriggle Marketing, commented, "This is an incredibly exciting time for us, marked by new client wins and the growth of our team. At Wriggle we have always set out to be proactive and customer focused, and we believe this approach has helped us to successfully navigate this challenging climate for businesses and deliver results beyond their expectations."

"The recent investment in our office and office renovation will allow our team to flourish and has generated further opportunities for our clients to benefit from the depth of talent at our agency. As one of the fastest growing creative hubs outside London, we're thrilled to be at the forefront of the digital and creative industry here in the heart of Newcastle."

As a direct result of strong performance that has led to new business, Wriggle Marketing has increased its workforce by 50%, bringing it up to a 14-person multi-disciplined team. Additional opportunities for recruitment have recently been announced as part of the company's growth strategy.

Neil Saltmarsh, Account Manager at Office Options, commented, "The team at Wriggle provide a very effective digital marketing service for Office Options so we were very pleased to be asked to design their new creative workspace. It has always been a pleasure to work with Nick and the friendly team at Wriggle; we look forward to seeing them expand and grow in their new offices and to continue our work with the team as they launch our new website next month."

Wriggle Marketing is a customer focused digital marketing agency with a multi-channel approach focusing on two-way conversations and generating a consistent return on investment for its clients. Founded by entrepreneur, Nick Gianfreda in 2014, the agency provides essential digital services including Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Pay Per Click (PPC), web design and development, graphic design, social media management, and Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO).

Wriggle Marketing's client list includes (amongst others) Permat, Hitachi Construction Machinery, Snackfully, Office Options, Thompsons of Prudhoe, Tyne North Training, Lunar Shoes, Grisport, Franks Portlock, Simpson Group and Fine & Country.



HARD WORK PAYS OFF FOR HARVEY AND HUGO

Staff at a County Durham PR agency are celebrating after being named in a list of the top 50 firms across the whole of the North.

Harvey & Hugo, which is based in Darlington and works with clients across the country, has made it into the Prolific North Top 50 PR Agencies – the only County Durham firm to do so.

Managing director Charlotte Nichols said: "It's such an honour to be named in the top 50 by such a well-respected organisation, especially as we're one of only three North East firms on the list."

"Despite the pandemic, we've pulled together and worked hard, so it's very rewarding for the whole team to see that effort rewarded – I'm so proud."



LEADING NORTH EAST SOCIAL MEDIA FIRM LAUNCHES TRAINING ACADEMY

Leading North East social media agency, The Social Co. has launched a specialist training academy to provide much needed support to businesses of all sizes, from sole traders to large organisations.

The expert team has launched The Social Co. Academy following its market research and actively gaining feedback from local businesses and identifying a gap in the market for expert training for small business owners, marketing professionals and social media teams.

The new service launch marks further success for the company following significant growth to a team of 28 and multiple client wins and internationally viral campaigns.



LET US PUT THE HYPE IN YOUR PR CAMPAIGNS

Public Relations | Copywriting | Social Media

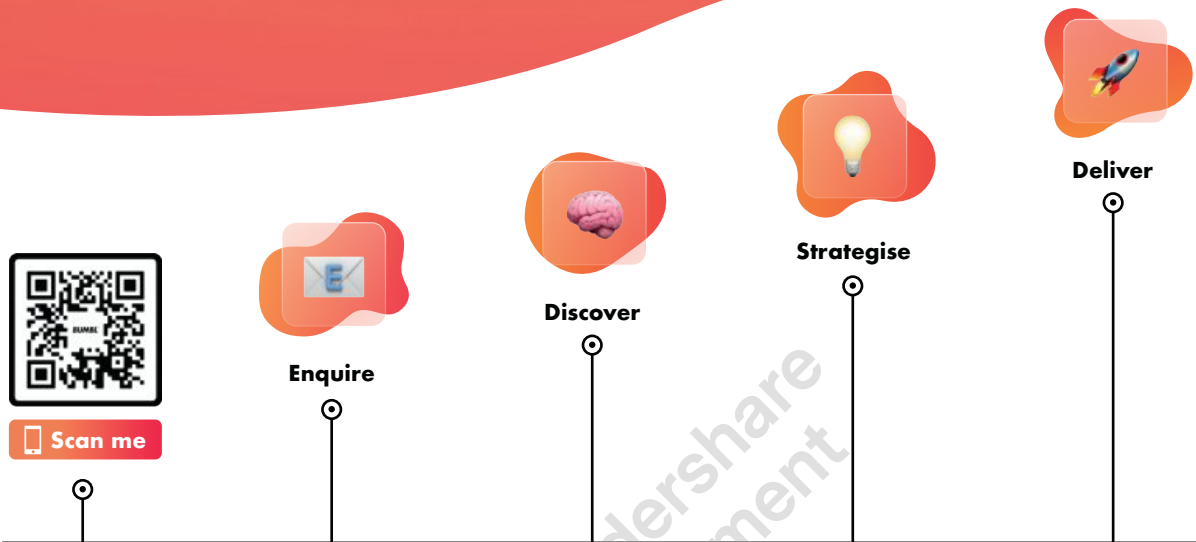
07713280645

HYPETHATPR.COM

BUMBL

THE WORLD IS MOVING FAST.

Make sure your brand stays ahead of the curve. Our approach to marketing is engineered for the way people interact with brands in 2021. Scan the QR code below to find out more.



Let video tell your story...



Turps Film is a North-East based video production agency, focused on creating authentic content for businesses who are looking to:

- **Generate ROI**
- **Build awareness**
- **Drive engagement**
- **Secure funding**

Contact us today and see how Turps Film can support your business.

e: info@turpsfilm.co.uk | w: turpsfilm.co.uk



IAMPROPERTY GROUP APPOINT MEDIAWORKS TO DELIVER WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The largest residential auctioneer in the UK, **iamsold**, part of the **iamproperty** Group, has called in future-facing digital marketing specialists **Mediaworks** to re-build its front-end website and digitise its consumer bidding journey.

The Newcastle-based business provides market leading software and services to the property sector, partnered with over 3,000 UK estate agent branches. **iamsold** is the flagship offering of **iamproperty** and provides an end-to-end auction service for agents. Over the last ten years, it has pioneered the Modern Method of Auction (MMoA) and is now market leader in online auction with over 60% market share.

Michele Gettins, Chief Marketing Officer at **iamproperty** Group, said: "iamproperty and Mediaworks align in our commitment to innovation and providing exceptional digital experiences that lead the way in the housing and property sector. Their solution is unique, intuitive and provides buyers, sellers and agents with an exceptional experience.

"We save Estate Agents time, drive incremental revenue and help them stay compliant. We have always been fanatical about service and committed to using tech to enable our service to scale."

A key part of its innovation strategy, **iamproperty** is looking to maintain its position as pioneers of the MMoA and establish the method of sale as a viable alternative to Private Treaty – bringing much needed speed, security and choice to the home-moving process.

Brett Jacobson, CEO and founder at **Mediaworks**, said: "As an agency who has vast expertise in the housing and property industry, we're delighted to be working with **iamproperty** to step change its auction services and build a customer-friendly site that reflects the group's innovation and services.

"As with all transformation projects, we'll ensure the website is developed with the customer front of mind, setting **iamproperty** up for future success as they futureproof their market-leading services online."

The partnership is the latest in a list of housing associations and property specialists that have selected **Mediaworks** as a partner for digital solutions, including Northern Housing Consortium, Home Group, Esh Construction and Johnnie Johnson.

Mediaworks delivers a range of services, including a full complement of online performance marketing services, brand strategy and digital transformation. The rapidly growing agency currently has 150 full-time staff across its four national offices in Newcastle, Leeds, Edinburgh, and London.



NORTH EAST MARKETING PROGRAMME ATTRACTS GLOBAL LEARNERS

North East-based marketing training academy, **Fabric**, is celebrating a successful first year of operation that saw over 500 participants take part in its webinars and course lessons – with some from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand and the US.

From award-winning marketer, Lisa Eaton, who is also the founder of strategic marketing agency, **Unwritten Group**, **Fabric** provides learners with the opportunity to develop or enhance high level strategic skills. To date it has attracted both experienced and new marketers, including business owners who want to incorporate high-impact marketing into their business plans.

Lisa said: "While our stats speak for themselves, it's the real-world impact that we're seeing that really stands out to me. Knowing that ambitious marketers have been able to land their first role in industry or secure a promotion following completion of the course is testament to the strength, relevance and quality of the programme. We've also worked directly with corporate clients who have been looking to upskill or refresh the skills they have within their wider teams.

"But there's also something incredibly exciting about how the skills that I learnt through doing business right here in the North East, are being passed on to learners around the world. My ambition is to see the North East become globally recognised as a centre for marketing excellence."

ITHICA FILMS CONTINUING ITS STEADY GROWTH

The award-winning firm, which specialises in creating remarkable films and documentaries for brands, has welcomed six new recruits to its filmmaking, operations and management team.

Matt McGough, Managing Director of **Ithica**, said: "I'm so pleased to welcome a mix of experience and new talent to the **Ithica** team with these six outstanding people. Their fantastic skills and passion for filmmaking will help us provide even bigger and better films for our clients.

"We've settled into our new studio really well and are excited about the opportunities the extra space and facilities give us to work with clients across the world. It's opened up a lot of new ways of developing the company further and increasing our creative capabilities."

Since its creation seven years ago, **Ithica** has grown year-on-year and now has a global client base that includes Anglo American, Newcastle Building Society, thyssenkrupp, Port of Middlesbrough, PD Ports and Venator.

Ithica Films also works closely with local schools and colleges to nurture the next generation of filmmaking talent. It sponsors Middlesbrough College's film studio and supports nearby Northern School of Art with student placements and use of its studio space.

Our services include email campaigns, marketing support and strategies, sales and business development.

No contracts, no ties, just services as and when you need them most.



RIVERSIDE MARKETING SOLUTIONS
MARKETING MADE EASY

For further information contact Nicola Halse on 07908 623 405
Email: nicola@riversidemarketingsolutions.co.uk



wrigglemarketing

LEAVING THE RIGHT IMPRESSION

We are an ROI Driven, Proactive & Ambitious Digital Marketing Agency.

Our mission is to provide a digital service that delivers substantial returns for our clients.

- SEO
- CRO
- PPC
- Social Media Management
- Web Design & Development
- Graphic Design



0191 815 0815

tickleus@wrigglemarketing.co.uk

www.wrigglemarketing.co.uk

Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne



LATEST NEWS FROM CARGO CREATIVE

Situated on the picturesque Howard Street in the regenerated fishing town of North Shields, you will find brand and web agency, Cargo Creative.

“

...We love the family feel that comes with a smaller team and our clients also appreciate having that one point of contact who is extremely talented and capable...

”

Having been in operation for over a decade, Cargo Creative not only survived the pandemic but entered 2021 in its strongest financial position to date. We caught up with owner, Paul Hart, to chat about these unprecedented times, how it smashed its annual sales target, and what the future holds for the agency.

In the year that most businesses felt the pinch (to put it lightly) Cargo Creative surpassed its sales targets, how?

Don't get me wrong, we also definitely felt the pinch but with the help of the furlough scheme and more of our clients recognising the need for a new digital presence and/or marketing solutions, we managed to not have staff off for too long and carved out some really interesting projects. For example, Ward Hadaway is one of our longest standing clients and it wanted to create an online Covid support hub offering free legal advice. Given the urgency of the requirement, the project had a tight turnaround time (a couple of weeks to get the first iteration up and running) and needed to be robust enough in its design and build to attract people to it. The client was over the moon with it and we've gone on to do even more work with them notably within digital marketing.



We completely smashed our sales target. Not even taking the pandemic into account, this year marked the first that we hit £500k which is a huge milestone for myself and the team. It was definitely unexpected. Like most creative businesses at the beginning of the pandemic, we were afraid of what could have happened but I think because we offer such a breadth of services and have an experienced and personable team we were able to not only survive but thrive.

Speaking of the team, you've recently recruited more staff, how did that come about?

We've never wanted to specialise in a certain sector. The whole team comes from a range of backgrounds and industries so we wanted to utilise all of their experience rather than go after one. That has helped massively during the pandemic as we weren't faced with multiple clients needing to cut back on activity.

We have also seen a surge in new work across a range of businesses both in and outside of the region as well as working with several health and lifestyle businesses in the US which are new areas for us to sink our teeth into.

To answer the needs of our clients we have grown our team by taking on three new employees to offer a full range of services from brand creation, digital design and development and online marketing and SEO to ensure that they are fully supported on an ongoing basis.

What are you currently working on?

Earlier in the year we delivered a new website for Insight Healthcare which has remained a highlight, mainly down to the fact that it supports those that are feeling low or vulnerable. It is an NHS referral service, and it has been humbling to help in an area where so many of us need support at this time.

Following that relationship, we've also just launched a refresh of Mental Health Concern which is the parent charity of Insight. This was aligned with Insight from a visual standpoint however, the two offer different services to separate audiences.

The multiple lockdowns we have endured as well as just the general uneasy feeling that surrounds a pandemic takes its toll and our mental health has taken a beating. I don't know anyone that hasn't been affected in some way, shape or form so to be able to support people's wellbeing is a great feeling. Other than that, and among others, we have completed a full rebrand for Filtronic - a global leader in Radio Frequency (RF), Microwave and MMwave technology with offices in Sedgefield and the USA. To update a multinational brand that has been around for over 40 years was really interesting.

We also have several projects that are close to completion. I can't say too much about those as yet other than that they remain cross sector, so have a good deal of variety to them - watch this space.

What does the future look like for Cargo Creative?

Our aim for the next three years is to achieve an annual turnover of £1m but to keep our team a close knit one. It's never been an ambition to employ 100 plus people, we love the family feel that comes with a smaller team and our clients also appreciate having that one point of contact who is extremely talented and capable.

Cargo Creative is a digital, design, and online marketing agency working with brands such as; Ward Hadaway, Filtronic, Perspective Financial Group and Northern Powergrid.

For more information, visit: www.cargocreative.co.uk

**We like ideas.
Proper ideas.
Everything we do
starts with one.
They're the only way
to keep people
interested in your brand.
And keep your
brand relevant.**
We like making things -
advertising, films,
radio, print, copywriting,
graphic design, content.
The kind of stuff that
people like to watch,
read, listen to, look at,
get involved with.
**If you like ideas too,
stay tuned.**



Wondershare
PDFelement





MARKETING AND MEDIA MATTERS

NICOLA HALSE

Riverside Marketing Solutions

Did you always envisage a career in the Media industry?

No, not really, my dream job when I was at school was a librarian! I've always been interested in business, economics and how companies market their products so I suppose it's not totally surprising I ended up in the industry.

What has been your career path so far?

I didn't really enjoy school and just wanted to leave and earn money, so, I left school on a Thursday and started work on the following Monday aged 16 as an office junior (and totally loved it!).

I've always worked in sales, marketing and business development roles and as a people person, I've always enjoyed it. I definitely had itchy feet when I was younger and had several jobs, always making sure with every move I improved my salary and career prospects along the way.

After settling down in my mid 20's and being at a local engineering company for 16 years, I decided in 2017 that I needed a change and joined a social enterprise as their Business Development Executive, where I was quickly promoted to Marketing Manager.

After unfortunately finding myself out of work in the middle of a worldwide pandemic and one week into the UK's first lockdown in April 2020, I decided to take the plunge and Riverside Marketing Solutions was born.

What have been the biggest challenges you have faced so far?

Starting my business in the middle of a pandemic was certainly going to be challenging but I was very lucky to have fantastic support from my family, friends and north east business community. It's definitely true what people say about us being a friendly bunch in the North East, I've certainly benefited from people's kindness and generosity over the last 18 months.

Who do you most respect in your industry?

Anybody who works hard and tries their best, I honestly don't think there's any more you can ask.

How have you adapted your business during the coronavirus crisis and supported clients?

Due to the nature of my work, I can do most things remotely and have always been able to have client meetings and catch ups over Teams or Zoom.

It's also been great for me to advise my clients on how to adapt their own business to support clients too.

What are you currently working on?

With the return of face to face events, several of my clients are exhibiting at conferences and expos in the coming weeks and months. I'm currently assisting with the promotion and marketing of these whilst also attending and supporting them at the events too. It's a great part of my job getting to meet so many people and it's brilliant to see events returning to the North East.

What is your biggest weakness?

I am a total people pleaser! I love to help, so I'm guilty of saying yes to work and help requests even if that impacts on my and my family's time. When you first start a business you tend to take on any work that comes your way, however, you do learn to choose a bit more wisely. After a recommendation, I also read the book 'The Art of Saying No' which certainly helped me!

What has been your proudest achievement?

Professionally, it's definitely starting my business, it was terrifying to be out of work one week into lockdown as it was the first time I'd ever not worked but after mulling it over for about two hours (yes, that was all it took!) and fantastic support from my husband who simply said 'go for it, what's the worst that can happen', I'm so pleased I made the decision.

I constantly tell my son, who's 16, to think big, have big ambitions and don't think you can't do something, the only person stopping you is yourself. I'm pleased I took my own advice last year!

What are your remaining career aspirations?

I'm still coming to terms with how successful the business has been during the last 18 months to be honest! I would love to continue my work in helping small businesses to grow while also helping in my local community too.

I've always been passionate about supporting children and love to take part in mock interviews and mentoring programmes so it would be great to continue with that too.

How do you see your industry evolving in the next 10 years?

Due to the pandemic, I think it's certainly accelerated new technology and that will continue over several years, I think it's important not to be frightened by it though and try and embrace it. It's great for businesses to adopt new technology but they also have to remember to do the basics and do them well – that will never change.

Finally how do you like to unwind?

I love spending time with my family, friends and dog (who constantly photobombs my social media!), we can often be found at Roker beach enjoying the fantastic coastline. My big passion however, is running, I've just taken part in my eighth Great North Run and find that it not only helps to keep me physically fit but is also a great way to unwind.

www.riversidemarketingsolutions.co.uk



Nicola Halse



Lizzie Selby, managing director of Peachy Digital

CONTENT MARKETING - WHO, WHY AND HOW?

Marketers have been saying for years that content is king. You must write a blog, you must use social media, email marketing is crucial.

But now, for the first time, Google appears to have announced that yes – content really is the number one ranking factor!

Google's Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Starter Guide declares that "users know good content when they see it, and will likely want to direct other users to it". In other words, content marketing is the most important way to improve online traffic to your business, and strengthen your customer base. This concept may not be as well-known outside the fields of PR and marketing, so what exactly is content marketing, and why does Google value it so highly?

The purpose of content marketing is not to sell your product, but to give your customers a relevant and useful piece of information in the form like an infographic, a free resource, a video, a blog, or a podcast. This content should be easy and enjoyable to interact with, which not only increases the likelihood of it being shared with

others, but also encourages the customer to spend more time engaging with your brand. The aim is to add value to the customer's experience, supporting their perception of (and relationship with) your brand.

Despite not asking for payment, content marketing can still prompt the public to contribute to your business- for example, increasing traffic to your website as a social media post is shared, or prompting email subscriptions to your newsletter at the end of an interesting blog. In fact, content marketing can be incredibly beneficial when considering ROI (return on investment). Paying for the design of a helpful infographic, or funding an informative social media campaign, often manifests later in profit- the people who benefited from your expert content marketing are more likely to choose your business for their future custom.

Overall, it is clear that content marketing is now considered the number one ranking factor for

your business; the initial investment, both in finance and in design hours, can be recouped with significant gains, once potential and current customers are benefiting from their relationship with your brand.

More about Peachy Digital

Peachy Digital is a fun and slightly sassy marketing agency working with a wealth of clients across the UK and in several industries, with a specialism in food & drink. We work across the full marketing mix, both on and offline, and services include social media management, PR, email marketing, content creation and strategy development.

Our fundamental ethos is marketing 'without the fuzz' – no jargon, no nonsense, just clearly defined strategies that deliver.

We believe in working in a way which is relaxed and friendly while remaining completely professional – you won't find us in power suits but you can be sure we'll develop high quality marketing communications that will work towards our clients' business goals.

Want to discuss how using content marketing could help your business? The Peaches are on hand! We'd love to chat about your marketing – drop us a line on 01609 751676 or info@peachydigital.co.uk



Bursting with creativity

peachy
Digital

Social
Media
Management

Public
Relations

Strategy and
Planning

Content
Marketing

Food and
Drink

For more information call **01609 751676**
or email **info@peachydigital.co.uk** or visit **www.peachydigital.co.uk**





IN CONVERSATION WITH...

LAURA KINGSTON

Managing Editor, High Life North Magazine

What were your career ambitions growing up?

When I was really young I wanted to be a vet. I used to cut all of my cuddly toys up with scissors then put them in cages with pin numbers while they got better – weird, I know! I ended up really enjoying English and History at school so started to pursue that instead. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, even at the point of graduation, but I saw an entry-level job for a Marketing Assistant advertised on the University notice board and the rest is history!

Tell us about your current role with High Life North?

I founded High Life North in November 2019 after feeling frustrated that the digital women's magazines I really enjoyed reading were all London-centric. I knew that there must be loads of women in the North East who felt the same, so I set about creating a website and starting to get freelance contributions to create the content I wanted to read. I'm now the Managing Editor with a team of six staff based at our offices in Gosforth.

What is your proudest business achievement?

I'd been working at my kitchen table for five months getting High Life North off the ground. All of our editorial was free initially as we were in such early days of building our profile. When the first lockdown hit in March 2020 we reacted really quickly with banana bread recipes, at-home workouts and a book club – our readers just went through the roof. By the October of that year we'd spent a year building up a community of over 25,000 women in the region who were really engaged and regularly read the magazine. It felt great to have built that up so quickly and now it just continues to go from strength to strength.

How has your industry changed in the last decade?

Digital magazines didn't really exist in this format a decade ago – the industry is so new. A lot of print magazines thought that putting their print version into a pdf online or cutting and pasting the articles onto the website made a magazine digital – but it's so much more than that. People reading online have a significantly shorter attention span, so it's really important to have the digital marketing expertise that knows how to present content, then how to best promote it.

What are you currently working on?

We've got lots in the pipeline but a really important strategy for us is to make sure we're doing everything that we currently do as well as possible before moving on to something else. We've got a directory called the Little Black Book which we're continuing to develop, and we're launching a What's On calendar soon too. We're planning on doing a lot more in Teesside next year, too.

Tell us about the team you work with?

They're fantastic! Every one of the women that I've hired have accelerated the business forward more than I could have imagined. We've got a really strong in-house team who work on creation and delivery of the magazine, then a team of really talented suppliers

for photography and videography to ensure we create the best quality content possible. We then work closely with agencies to ensure that our content gets out to the right people effectively. I'd never worked for a magazine before so we've literally made it all up as we go along, and I'm very happy with the well-oiled machine we've created.

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

Keep a very close eye on costs. Don't rely on a spreadsheet to tell you whether you're making money or not. The cash in bank doesn't lie. If you haven't got any, it's not working.

What has been your biggest challenge?

The fact that I hadn't even worked for a magazine or a publisher before. At first I had to figure out all of the processes as well as be the accountant, web developer, editor, photographer, receptionist – and the rest! It's actually worked out incredibly well though. We aren't constrained by tradition in any way, we just do what's best for our readers, our advertisers and our staff. I really love the way we're doing it.

Who are your heroes inside and outside of business?

Inside business I'd have to say my second boss Mary Dryden. She really shaped who I became professionally and I couldn't thank her more for really instilling those high standards into me. I feel really happy passing those standards on to the team at High Life North now, because I know how valuable they'll always be to me. Outside of business – all of the incredible women we've featured since we launched. We're huge advocates of celebrating real women in our region doing amazing things. It's felt great to be able to give them a platform to be recognised.

How do you unwind outside of work?

I can't say I have much downtime. As soon as I start to unwind my mind fills with ideas for High Life North. I like watching YouTube in French – it really helps me relax when I want my brain to switch off.

Favourite book, album and film?

Can I say Netflix series? I loved *The Bold Type* (guilty pleasure) and I'm currently obsessed with *Hit and Run*.

highlifenorth.com





GETTING IN GEAR: FIVE THINGS I DID WHEN STARTING MY CAMPERVAN BUSINESS



There are some basic principles to follow when starting a business. Here management and PR consultant Sarah Waddington CBE from Astute.Work talks about the five rules she followed when launching North East Campervan Rental, www.northeastcampervanrental.co.uk, earlier this year.

1. Do your research

When my husband and I decided to launch a campervan business, the idea was based solely on a weekend's hire we'd done for my son's birthday. This meant we were definitely not experts in the field. So we researched the market opportunity, investigated the types of vans available, checked out the competition and looked into reputable conversion companies. We considered cost versus overall investment and also resale value. We joined online forums for campervan owners which were (and continue to be) a valuable source of information and knowledge. It meant that when we came to buying, we knew where to go, the right questions to ask, what we would charge and were on top of all the relevant governance at the time of launch.

2. Know your customer

One of the most important things you can do when launching a business is to know your customer. This means you can ensure your product or service is appropriate and that your marketing effort is tailored to them. We knew we wanted to target couples and families which influenced our decision to purchase a newly converted and

relatively low mileage 2018 VW T6. This also helped inform the design of the website, www.northeastcampervanrental.co.uk. Pre-qualifying who you want to attract and making your communications appealing to them ensures the pipeline of enquiries is from the right type of clientele so you're not having to let anyone down.

3. Have a brand presence

Naturally, as a marketer, one of the first things I did was to ask Astute.Work's brilliant designer to create us a logo and build a website with a booking calendar, which we manage alongside a Facebook page. If you want a brand presence and to generate trust with your target market, this is crucial. Had I received a tenner every time someone has told me that the website and user videos are really helpful and make them feel confident about booking with us, I'd be spending this weekend in a fancy hotel with my feet up by a pool. There are two other massive benefits to the website too – the terms and conditions are always clearly accessible and by providing plenty of information, we reduce the need for someone to contact us while they're living the campervan dream.

4. Use your network

The PR and marketing industry talks a lot about influencer relations but there really are no better advocates than your colleagues, family and friends, especially when it's a local business. When you're booking something new, think about the process you go through. You likely do a bit of internet research and check out reviews, but you'll seek other people's opinions too. Thanks to our network sharing details of our page, we've benefited from bookings with people just outside of our circle, which means they know they can trust us, and because there's a link, we can trust them too.

5. Be professional

In the excitement of starting up a business, it can be tempting to jump ahead and go straight to market. This is a mistake that will almost always come back to bite you. From the minute Paris, our van, landed on the driveway, we wanted people to enjoy her but we didn't launch until we'd made sure the T&Cs covered our needs and we had the right gas certification. We also worked closely with our insurance company to ensure the booking process was fit for purpose. It might take a bit longer and cost a bit more but the peace of mind for everyone is priceless. For us, the name of the game is happy customers who repeat book.

If you'd like to know more, please visit www.northeastcampervanrental.co.uk



Astute



Management consultancy, PR and marketing that will turn your business around

Contact Sarah Waddington - sarah@astute.work / 07702162704
www.astute.work

...WHAT MAKES YOUR CUSTOMERS SMILE?..

The start of October contained International Smile Day. Highlights PR's Keith Newman asked some of his RADAR members to tell us what makes their customers smile about the work they do.



"Our smile is because we are super excited to be launching our new BBC Children in Need, Mentoring Programme. We have been awarded three years of funding to deliver this new support programme for young people aged 11-18 years from the Hirst Area of Ashington. We are open for new referrals so get in touch for more details!"

Paul Kirkpatrick
www.offthegrid-adventures.co.uk



"My customers give a huge smile (and heave a sigh of relief) when I have sorted out their financial affairs to maximise what they leave their loved ones when they eventually pass away. A recent survey shows that many people put this off because either they believe it is too difficult, or they just don't know where to start. At Northland Wills we make it easy for you, taking it step-by-step with advice tailored to your own family circumstances. Your home and savings are probably the biggest asset you have so please don't leave them to chance, or risk losing them to new marriages or creditors when you've gone. It's easy to make a Will with us so why not contact us for a free chat."

Neil Fraser, Northland Wills
enquiries@northumberlandwills.co.uk



"When customers old and new try our handcrafted gins they are always blown away by the super-smooth taste and it always brings a smile. We have even had a few folks converted to gin so it is smiles all around. We have been so pleased with our ability to make people smile that we have now opened a shop at Unit 20, The Stack on Pilgrim Street to make Newcastle, the City of Smiles."

Bryn Jones
www.houseofruhr.co.uk



"My customer's smile is when they can no longer connect to their old reaction to a past, scary or traumatic, memory or anxiety about a future event, such as speaking at a conference or presenting in meetings. Here's what one happy client said: "I just thought I'd let you know my session today with our CEO went really well. I was a little apprehensive at first but once I got into it, it felt natural and went well. I got positive feedback on the session and feel great now it's done and it's a bit of a buzz! Thank you, Anne."

Anne Morrison, Therapist and Coach
www.annemorrison.co.uk



"The fact that we listen to them makes our MINT members smile. Within reason, whatever our members request, we try and deliver. It may be a new training topic or a meet-up in Morpeth, if our members want it, and we can do it - we will!"

Nicola Jayne Little, The Mint Business Club
www.mintbusinessclub.co.uk



"Couture millinery is the art of making a handmade hat or headpiece. Wearing hat should be great fun. Everyone says they "love a hat" until you suggest they try one on, then all of a sudden they become "hat shy". So why do my customers all smile when they wear my hats and headpieces? It's because I create (hat) eye candy for them! If you need to be convinced you have only to look at my new website and you will see that not only are the hat models smiling, but many are also giggling too at the pleasure they feel knowing that the hat they are wearing is creating an image of perfect (hat) eye candy!"

Margaret Woodliff Wright
The Northumberland Milliner
www.margaretwoodliffwright.com



"As Chair of North Tyneside Business Forum, I get to meet a lot of businesses and thankfully after the terrible period that we've all been through, I'm seeing more and more of them smile as their business starts getting back to normal. With my business coaching business, I love seeing the smiles I get from clients when I've helped them get clarity on the direction they need to take to achieve success."

*Karen Goldfinch Your Business Pilot and Chair of North Tyneside Business Forum
karen@karengoldfinch.com
www.northtynesidebusinessforum.org.uk*



"My customers smile because they know how much of a difference my book will make! Giving young women the heads up on abusive behaviours will reduce the opportunities for abusers to abuse."

*Rie Pearson, Author
bekind.noexcuses@gmail.com*



"As a photographer, my customers often smile for me! Whether it is a windy smile from a newborn, a proper giggle from a toddler, or a knowing grin between a bride and groom, my business is all about the smiles!! Captured Forever of course."

*Tina Stobbs, Captured Forever
www.capturedforeverbyts.co.uk*

To find out about the benefits of becoming a RADAR member, contact keith@highlightspr.co.uk or call on 07814 39 79 51. www.highlightspr.co.uk

Are you on the media's RADAR?

You can be... for less than the price of a couple of coffees a week!

Become a member of Highlights PR's RADAR programme.

Benefit from more than 15 years in the PR industry.

Get your name out to local and national press, TV, radio, magazines and more.

Special bonus for RADAR clients:

- Interview on Radio Northumberland
- Crisis PR management advice
- Feature in Highlights PR's newsletter
- Exclusive offers on PR, media training and more
- LED advert beamed from the floating office



Contact Keith Newman for more details.

Visit him on his floating office

keith@highlightspr.co.uk

07814 397951

www.highlightspr.co.uk





Dr Sarah Bowman

POLICY AND PEOPLE – BUILDING COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES

Veronica caught up with Dr Sarah Bowman, to discuss why mastering public affairs and deepening internal communication capabilities are becoming increasingly important for communication professionals. Sarah is a Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University and tutor at nesma for the CIPR Specialist Diplomas in Internal Communications and Public Affairs.

Why is public affairs so important?

You cannot ignore the fact that individuals and organisations are affected by the policies devised and implemented by government. It is essential for democracy and all of us that we contribute to this process – we have a responsibility to try and shape the debate to get the best policy outcomes we can. We need to be on top of issues that affect our organisations and communities and get our voices heard at a national, regional, or local level. Effective policy needs different views and perspectives. At its heart, public

affairs is about managing relationships with those who decide how we live, work, and play, and for many organisations, these decisions can make or break them.

But surely you can't always get your way?

No, you can't, but all views must get aired and the wider public interest explored. Through dialogue and discussion, hopefully, consensus and coalitions can emerge. After all, as the character Hamilton says in the musical of the same name, 'you need to be in the room where it happens' if you want

to influence decisions! If your views are not accepted, organisations and communities will still be better prepared to deal with any changes and mitigate negative impacts as best they can.

Is the policy landscape changing?

It certainly is – recent years have seen policy and politics become more uncertain, complex, fragmented, and global. Communications has always involved managing matters requiring an understanding of the issues life cycle, building evidence, and gathering data, crafting arguments, and creating coalitions, which is becoming more intense and critical. There is also, a growing need to embed behavioural economics and theories of change as the governance landscape becomes more sophisticated and interconnected. It is a fascinating time!

How does this relate to internal communications?

You cannot talk to policymakers and external stakeholders unless you feel confident that the organisation is robust operationally – it is not just what you say but what you do that makes arguments stack up. Your people are critical to delivering this. Internally, communication is fundamental to building employee belonging, commitment and understanding. An open and more effective organisational culture can be developed by nurturing employee voices, contributing to organisational success. It also means your employees are right behind you and can help make the case to those who take decisions.

So, internal communication is about engagement?

Yes, it is. When devising an internal communication strategy, people often forget why they are doing it. It is not about constantly sending information out to employees (thank you email!) – it is about genuine dialogue and two-way communications when employee voices are heard and valued. This leads to engagement with employees identifying with the organisations they work for, helping it thrive – and most importantly, don't forget this type of culture makes it a far more rewarding place to work.

Has the pandemic put a spotlight on this?

In some ways, it has. The move to home and now hybrid working has made internal communication a necessity. The recognition that many employees are key workers has enhanced an understanding of the vital role people play and how organisational reputation hinges on this. At the same time, government decision making has been brought into sharper focus during the pandemic, as has the importance of getting different viewpoints on the table – take the debates around furlough and the hospitality sector, for example. And on the flip side, we have seen lousy communication resulting in poor treatment of employees and lack of decision making transparency, which is why more voices, greater openness, and I would argue the spirit of 'convivial' disagreement is vital. After all, we all can't agree on everything! The pandemic has shown that for internal communications and public affairs to be done well, it is about behaving ethically, respecting, and balancing passion and compassion.

What can you do to deepen skills in these areas?

A few years ago, the CIPR introduced a Specialist Diploma in Public Affairs (Level 7) and, for Internal Communications, a Certificate (Level 5) and a Diploma (Level 7), which recognises the importance placed on these areas and the extensive knowledge base that underpins both. All the qualifications are open to those who work in communications and PR, including marketers who often have responsibility for these areas. Interestingly, internal communications is sometimes known as internal branding and public affairs managing non-market audiences, so there is a cross over. These are shorter six-month qualifications that work to deepen skills in these specific areas to build policy and people capabilities – twin pillars that I would argue are critical for all organisations moving forward.

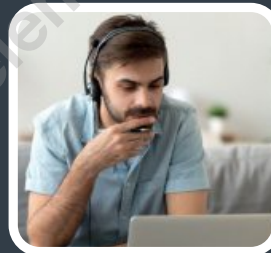
nesma is an accredited study centre providing all these Chartered Institute of Public Relations courses as well as flexible and professional learning opportunities in marketing, digital marketing and communication skills for individuals and organisations.

www.nesma.co.uk

nesma
BUILDING MARKETING KNOW-HOW

Your first choice for skills development

CIM
Accredited Study Centre



CIPR
ACCREDITED
TEACHING
CENTRE

KNOW-HOW AND DO



Our qualifications and workshops cover a range of topics across marketing, communications and digital marketing.

VISIT US AT WWW.NESMA.CO.UK



“AS A GROWING SMALL BUSINESS, DO WE HIRE A MARKETING AGENCY OR BUILD UP AN IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAM?”

Whilst the very fact that ourselves and other agencies have been successfully trading for many years (over 22 in our case) would indicate that many companies are happy to outsource marketing, this doesn't really tell the whole story as the optimum situation for marketing, as with many other business functions, probably lies in a compromise with in-house staff working hand in hand with an external agency.

But there's no right or wrong answer to this – it all depends on an individual business' resources and needs – but there are a few generic issues that business leaders may wish to consider.

Firstly, what kind of expertise do you require? In-house staff, in addition to marketing knowledge and skills, will have intimate knowledge of the company and its offering, what has worked before and what has not, what the competition are offering and will spend their time solely on your business. Conversely, with an agency, you'll get access to a wide variety of expertise in various disciplines and a completely fresh perspective on your marketing challenges which will be able to draw upon many years of experience from a variety of sectors.

Secondly is budget. Overall, working with an agency is probably less expensive than employing specialised in-house staff, but remember, you're not just paying for your Account Manager but also for access to the entire team behind him or her and their inherent additional expenses. External agencies, however, are results driven – they know their service has to add value to their clients'

bottom line or their contracts are unlikely to be renewed and there's no HMRC, holiday, maternity/paternity, pension or redundancy considerations requiring your consideration.

Thirdly is your timeline. It takes time to recruit, hire and train your in-house staff to the level of expertise that an agency can very quickly provide and, if time is crucial due to external pressures such as competition, businesses should consider agencies.

Fourthly, is creativity. Internal staff may have years of experience in your business but in reality, is this not just one year repeated many times over whilst external agencies bring a fresh look with ideas collected from different campaigns in different sectors. Crucially, external staff are also not affected by internal office politics, so often a barrier to not only creativity, but also productivity.

In essence, different people thrive in different environments – clients visiting agencies often comment on the seemingly 'laid back' feel to them yet this is precisely the environment that creative people traditionally require to perform to their full potential. Copywriters, designers, photographers, developers and the host of other specialists that agencies employ may not always conform to external standards in other commercial environments, but they produce superb work in their own.

A final consideration is how you wish to communicate to your marketing staff. At the beginning of an agency relationship, there will be

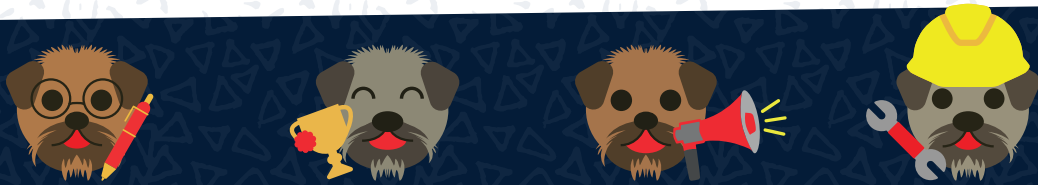
frequent meetings as the agency understands your brief and challenges and then develop a strategy to fulfil this. The frequency invariably reduces as the relationship develops, replaced by e-mails, telephone conversations and, especially in our pandemic world, digital meetings. For some clients, this is fine, but having the resource in-house, allows you constant access and the ability to work side by side with immediate updates.

So, to my mind the optimum solution is a halfway house with a small in-house team or individual dealing directly with an external agency. Such a situation creates the best of both worlds – internal product and service knowledge coupled with external marketing expertise.

So, why not play to everyone's strengths rather than their weaknesses? Use your own team's abilities wherever possible but take advantage of the unique creativity, experience and expertise that external assistance can bring. If the two can then be merged, you have the winning combination of in-house product/service and market knowledge with external expertise.

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? Email your questions anonymously to us today hello@silverbulletmarketing.co.uk or Tweet us (not so anonymously) @SilverBulletPR.

WE BUILD LOVABLE AND MEMORABLE BRANDS USING...



PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRESS RELEASES • AWARDS • STRATEGY • BRAND DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL MEDIA

CONTENT • MANAGEMENT • LIVE • ADVERTISING



CONTENT MARKETING

VIDEOGRAPHY • ANIMATION • BLOGS • GRAPHIC DESIGN

**HARVEY
HUGO &**
PUBLIC RELATIONS | SOCIAL MEDIA

To find out more, throw us a bone:

T: 01325 486666

E: info@harveyandhugo.com

W: www.harveyandhugo.com



RGS

FROM
**INSPIRING
STORIES**

TO
**LOCKDOWN
LABORATORIES**



THERE'S MORE
TO LIFE **AT RGS**



FROM
VIDEO
LESSONS

TO
DRAMATIC
EXPRESSIONS



THERE'S MORE
TO LIFE **AT RGS**

JOIN US FOR OUR
OPEN MORNING
SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER
9.30AM-12.30PM

REGISTER AT

www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

Royal Grammar School Newcastle

Next to Jesmond Metro Station

Fee assistance available





BACK TO SCHOOL BUT NOT FOR ALL

By Simone Niblock, Headteacher,
Durham High School.

One of my favourite non-fiction books is *Bluestockings* by Jane Robinson, a study of a group of indomitable women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were at the vanguard of the rights of women to have a quality education in the UK.

When you consider how women outnumber men in Higher Education and that more women are training to be doctors and vets than men, it shows how female education has undergone a revolution in the UK in just over a hundred years.

Therefore, as the very proud Head of a girls' school, a school that has had its roots in the city of Durham since the 1880s, I feel it incumbent upon me to emphasise to our pupils what strides educational opportunities has made for all in this nation, and women in particular. This is of particular resonance to me when one considers the possible future educational outcomes for girls and young women in Afghanistan as the new Taliban regime comes into government. At the first assembly of this academic year, as I surveyed the new Year 7s in their oversized blazers, shiny shoes and even shiner, happy faces, I had a real profound sense of sadness at the probable fate of girls of a similar age in Kabul, Herat and all the other Afghan provinces, where educational rights may be in danger of disappearing or at least severely curtailed. In early September, Afghan women protested on the streets of Kabul to rail against the loss of freedoms that this regime has imposed, and many were then beaten by Taliban soldiers. One protester was quoting as saying that the Taliban have told women that they have no place in the new order. How can those hard-won freedoms and opportunities that emerged after the deposition of the Taliban in 2001 be under threat of extinction?



Simone Niblock

One of the earliest casualties of the emergence of the Taliban 2.0 is SOLA, which was the only girls' boarding school in Afghanistan. The Headteacher, Shabana Basii-Rasikh, is still only 31 years old and helped co-found this institution when she was a teenager. Once it became apparent that girls' secondary education was in jeopardy in Afghanistan, she and her students fled to Rwanda, where they have sought asylum and have set up a new school. Before she left, Basii-Rasikh is reputed to have destroyed all her students' records so that there could be no repercussions for her students or their family members. How tragic that names had to be expunged from a school register to protect lives.

Equally, in addition to Shabana Basii-Rasikh, the internationally renowned Malala Yousafzai, who became the youngest Nobel Peace Laureate at the age of 17, is campaigning for educational rights in Afghanistan. However, her reach is even broader and her activism highlights how educational

rights in other parts of the world are unequal. As her website, the Malala Fund, outlines, her organisation works with girls and young women in countries as diverse as India, Nigeria, Brazil and the Lebanon. UNICEF has estimated that in India, which has a very large and wealthy population of middle-class graduates, only one in three girls complete secondary education, whereas in Brazil, despite its being the eighth largest economy in the world, 1.5 million girls are not in any education at all.

Ultimately, as we battle climate change and all the other vicissitudes of the world, we must never forget that basic civil rights to education are denied to so many females and that, shockingly, the debates of a former age still rage on.

Every day is an Open Day at Durham High School. Call 0191 384 3226 or email enquiries@dhsfg.org.uk to find out more or arrange a visit.



Teaching the next generation to be brave, creative and determined.

Durham High School is the only girls' school in County Durham, for pupils aged 3-18.

With small classes and specialist teachers, it is our aim to support and guide your child to be the best that she can be.

Start your journey with us by getting in touch or visiting our next Open Day:

- * **Tuesday 16 November 2021**
Sixth Form Open Evening
- * **Saturday 20 November 2021**
Whole School Open Day

To find out more call **0191 384 3226**,
email enquiries@dhsfg.org.uk
or visit www.dhsfg.org.uk



ONE YEAR ON FROM T LEVELS

By Zac Aldridge, Director of Qualifications and Assessment at NCFE, Educational Charity and Leader in Vocational and Technical Education

This time last year, T Levels (high-quality, work focused alternatives to A Levels) were launched to the first cohort of students, marking a revolution in technical education.

These pioneering students are now beginning their second and final year of T Level study. This significant milestone presents a fantastic opportunity to take a breath and reflect on the first year of T Levels – a unique 12 months for the education sector.

Designed alongside employers to reflect industry needs, these two year courses equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to progress into work or higher-level study. T Levels are unique in that they include an extended industry placement to give students that crucial experience in the workplace.

NCFE was selected by Government to spearhead the development of the technical qualifications that underpin T Levels in Education and Childcare, Digital, and Health and Science. The Education and Childcare T Level was launched last September, while the other routes went live in September 2021.

It hardly needs stating that beginning to teach the first T Levels in the 2020-21 session, of all years, posed challenges for education providers. With national and regional lockdowns, setting closures, a shift towards online delivery, and many exams being cancelled, the educational landscape evolved on a daily basis.

However, despite the various hurdles, the commitment of T Level providers, students and employers was unwavering. Their hard work and dedication was fundamental to the success of T Levels last year, which should be widely celebrated.

Celebrating successful beginnings

We've worked with colleges across the nation including the North East's City of Sunderland College, Gateshead College, Middlesbrough College, New College Durham and St Thomas



Zac Aldridge

More Catholic School and we've been amazed at how the teaching staff have adapted and learners have succeeded against the odds.

Priestley College in Warrington is one of the education providers celebrating successful beginnings following the completion of the first year of the Education and Childcare T Level. The foundations for this T Level success had been planted long before the first T Level student stepped foot in the classroom in September 2020. Ahead of starting to deliver the qualification, tutors at the college attended various training events and also delivered their own parent and student events to provide potential learners with information on these new qualifications.

The college also proactively reached out to local employers to discuss T Levels and by doing so, was able to expand its network of prospective placement settings, as work placements are a key part of these qualifications.

Adapting and collaborating

As the pandemic progressed and stricter lockdown measures were introduced, many private early years settings were forced to close, and this included several nurseries that had agreed to offer industry placements to the T Level students at Priestley College. The college's early preparations ensured it was in a strong position to quickly react to this challenge. By reaching out to its well-

established network of providers, the college was able to secure new placements for all of its T Level students - at schools and preschool - whose doors remained open to cater for children cared for by key workers. This ensured the students were able to gain the vital hands-on experience they need to underpin their theoretical understanding.

From students to key workers

It has never been more apparent how essential highly trained Childcare and Education practitioners are to our society, as they enabled parents to keep working through multiple lockdowns. Through their industry placements, Priestley College's T Level students were able to work side-by-side with key workers and gain a unique insight into the impact a career in the sector can have. The feedback from providers was glowing, with many commenting on how vital the students had been in supporting them during such an incredibly challenging time.

Looking ahead

T Levels in Digital, and Health and Science are now also available for learners to study in colleges and we're looking forward to celebrating more success in this academic year.

To find out more about T Levels visit ncfe.org.uk/t-levels

WHY STAND STILL, WHEN YOU WERE

Born to Fly?



FIND YOUR SILVER LININGS

AT NEWCASTLE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

THE ONE AND ONLY PREPARATORY SCHOOL IN NEWCASTLE | CREATIVE LEARNING AT ITS BEST



**Newcastle
Preparatory School**

FOR GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 3-11 YEARS

EST. 1885

We provide a warm, caring environment in which children experience success, both academic and extra-curricular, whilst growing in confidence and self-esteem. We ensure that NPS children receive the best start in life enabling them to thrive in Senior School and beyond.

Book a visit now on **01912811769** | email: **admissions@newcastleprep.co.uk** | **www.newcastleprep.co.uk**

AUTUMN IS IN THE AIR

By Kieran McLaughlin,
Headteacher, Durham School.

The streets of Durham have been swelled recently by a plethora of potential university students. Accompanied by sharp-eyed parents and full of the enthusiasm that only seventeen-year olds can have, they have wandered the cobbled streets imagining themselves queuing outside the popular cafes, wandering past the university bookshop and, I dare say, staggering home up and down the hills.

For their parents, it must be a slightly disorientating process. For those of us who went through the university application process in the eighties or nineties, the process was relatively simple. You flicked through the pages of the UCCA Handbook, looking at the various courses on offer at the different universities; you asked somebody who knew somebody what such a university was like and perhaps, if you were lucky, you used your Young Person's Railcard to visit the town or city to see for yourself. Broadly speaking, most universities offer similar courses and the final choice often boiled down to the feel of the place, or knowing someone else who went there.

Now, the university application process is a different story. UCCA has been transformed into UCAS and its website is a one-stop shop for information and applications, giving far more information than was conceivable a generation ago. What is also hugely different is the number of courses available. A simple search for, say, Geography yields 788 results from 88 different providers. And it is not simply Geography; courses range from Aviation and Airport Management through to Flood and Coastal engineering. The number of universities has increased massively too, from the post-1992 polytechnic transformation through to many newly minted institutions. How on earth is your son or daughter to choose the right one for them?



Kieran McLaughlin

The question really hinges on what you want to get out of university. There are many good reasons, and some less good reasons, to go on to further study; however, it is not unfair to say that, through Tony Blair's laudable target of 50% of eighteen year olds going on the higher education, the process can feel something of a conveyor belt, with youngsters feeling they need to go simply because everybody else does. The fundamental question to be addressed is whether the degree is a means to an end or an end in itself.

There is no doubt that for many students, the degree qualification is another step along the journey towards a good first job and an ensuing successful career. There is nothing wrong with that and most universities are streets ahead of where they were in preparing their graduates for the world of work. An important first step for applicants though is to look at employability statistics for graduates of each university after 12 months or so. Clearly the pandemic has affected recent years, but the trend over time will give an indication of what your future prospects look like when you emerge into the employment sphere.

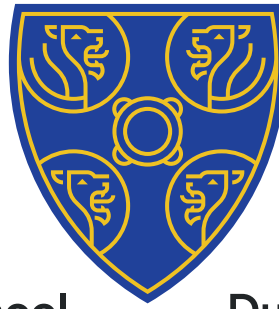
Whilst the names at the top may be somewhat predictable, there is significant variation across different degree disciplines and one or two names may surprise.

Another increasingly popular option is the degree apprenticeship; these courses offer a degree level qualification together with the benefits of a paying job. They are slowly but surely shedding the unfair and incorrect reputation they have and many graduates of these go on to successful jobs in blue chip companies.

If however it is a genuine love for your subject is what draws you to university, then you are blessed indeed; university tutors want nothing more than to teach keen, committed students who will explore their interest in and out of their classes. For you, it can be the most enriching time of your life, so enjoy it!

For further information about Durham School, or to arrange a visit, call 0191 731 9270, email admissions@durhamschool.co.uk or visit www.durhamschool.co.uk

**Durham
Schools**



**Cathedral
Foundation**

Chorister School
3–11 yrs

Durham School
11–18 yrs

Open Morning Saturday, October 9th

To register email:
admissions@dcسف.org.uk

**The future of independent education,
founded on 600+ years of excellence.**





Jemma Holroyd, Head of Pastoral.

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR STUDENT WELLBEING AT QUEEN ETHELBURGA'S

As the buzz of happy students filled the air on their return to campus for the start of a new school year at Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate (QE), the focus on delivering pastoral care of the highest standard continues, more than ever, to be of upmost importance.



With the Covid-19 pandemic being referenced by many as one of the biggest disruptions to education in history, promoting positive wellbeing and mental health has never been more pertinent.

Care is the most important element within the QE community; every member of the Collegiate, staff and student, is responsible for the pastoral care and happiness of the site.

Head of Pastoral Care at Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate, Jemma Holroyd shares why this is crucial for effective learning; 'Positive mental health is essential to personal wellbeing and happiness; it can make the difference between thriving or surviving and it is fundamental in helping students to fulfil their learning potential. To support students and equip them with essential life skills, at QE we aim to deliver a robust, responsive mental health programme to promote awareness and understanding about positive mental health while at the same time offering practical advice and guidance about a range of mental health issues.'

QE offers support and guidance to all students and parents to ensure that everyone in the community is working to support individual students needs and equipping them with the right skills, not only to be successful in education, but to excel in their chosen career and life in general. There is a focus on developing students' skills and resilience, whilst nurturing their wellbeing. A dedicated team of trained staff is on call 24 hours a day to offer support and guidance to all students within a specialist welfare area.

QE's innovative THRIVE@QE programme offers each and every student the opportunity to access a huge range of activities to support their positive mental health and wellbeing, either in scheduled group sessions or on a one to one basis. This includes support sessions, workshops, activities and events focused on fostering positive emotional health such as; building self-esteem, strategies to help with exam stress, adjusting to change, home sickness, coping with a loss or bereavement, staying safe online, tea and talk, and specialist Forces and international support.

As well as specially trained pastoral staff, QE has a team of students who are on hand to help around the school and in the boarding houses. Buddies and Peer Leaders show new students

around, explain the school systems, introduce students to new people and help them settle in. In the Sixth Form there are trained Peer Mentors, who offer a wide range of support to students and can offer mentoring on a one-to-one basis to help with academic progress, cultural understanding, contacting parents in the Forces, or day to day routines.

As well as this varied range of accessible support, within the academic curriculum there are also bespoke lessons about mental health issues which are explored in personal development sessions. Whole school wellbeing awareness weeks give all students access to mental health information and resources from national providers, as well as from outside agencies. In addition, assemblies, lesson starters, tutor activities, workshops and Q&A sessions are delivered in response to students' needs. In this way, pastoral, boarding and academic sides of the school successfully support each other in a co-ordinated approach to learning about the importance of mental health.

At QE, everything possible is done to prepare students for the many experiences they will encounter as they move through their educational journey and future life.

Find out more about how your child will be supported to be the best that they can with the gifts that they have on our next Open Day on 27 November, book your place at qe.org





LET YOUR DAUGHTER BE THE GIRL SHE WANTS TO BE AT NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Imagine a school where creativity is unleashed and potential unlocked...

...where classrooms don't always need walls or ceilings, where the 'in-crowd' stands for inclusivity not exclusivity, where an enviable forward thinking approach creates unforgettable learning opportunities and where confident, opinionated and curious alumnae are trailblazers and world shapers.

At Newcastle High School for Girls (NHSG) we not only educate our pupils, we empower them too. We give them the opportunity and confidence to develop their passions and shape their own pathway... and ultimately the future society in which they want to live.

In an all-girl learning environment pupils are free to be whoever and whatever they want to be. Whether they're joining us aged three where indoor and outdoor learning sparks their curiosity; or enrolling in our sixth form to challenge themselves academically and personally, the sky

really is the limit.

Under the guidance of Michael Tippet, who was appointed as Head in 2018, NHSG has seen a significant uplift in its examination results, winning it the award of The Sunday Times NE Independent Secondary School 2020. Alongside excellent teaching and learning, NHSG takes pastoral care and personal development equally as seriously. The importance of equipping girls with the broader life skills and values that combine to make happy, healthy and fulfilling lives is a binding principle that runs throughout the school. Our co-curricular offer is also diverse and includes anything from current affairs and debating to robot club and coding.

Plus, as a member of the Girls' Day School Trust, our pupils are able to access a whole world of opportunity as we harness the expertise of a broad network of staff to create innovative

and inspirational learning alongside powerful connections with thought leaders.

Imagine if your daughter was able to access all this and more...or simply come and see for yourselves at one of our upcoming autumn open days.

Explore and Experience NHSG at our open events

Nursery and Junior School
Saturday 16th October 2021,
10.00 – 15.00

Senior School and Sixth Form
Saturday 6th November 2021,
10.00 – 13.00

You can also contact the Admissions Team at NHSG directly, E: admissions@ncl.gdst.net T: 0191 201 6511



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

Open Mornings

Throughout October, November and December 2021



Scan for further details and to book your place

Alternatively, contact 01833 696030 or email admissions@barneyschool.org.uk



@BarnardCastleSchool



@barnardcastleschool



@barney_school

Barnard Castle School | Co Durham DL12 8UN | www.barnardcastleschool.org.uk



DACIA DUSTER CLEANS UP

The speed at which the Dacia (pronounced Datcher) brand is growing in the UK is staggering, but don't forget Dacia has the clout of Renault behind it.

The Dacia Duster is one of the company's top sellers and has carved out an army of loyal followers. If you take a ride up to the Borders or Dales, you'll see dozens of them. Bearing in mind that you can also get a 4x4 Duster, it's easy to see why they're popular in areas where roads can get a bit tricky during winter. If you need a proper workhorse, the Dacia Duster is a pretty good place to start looking.

And now there's a brand new one which has just arrived on our shores.

Bearing in mind that the entry level Dacia Duster comes in at £13,995, you end up with roomy five-door SUV which will easily seat five adults for the same price as a small city car. If you compare like for like with prices of other chunky SUVs, you'll discover that buying a Duster will save you

thousands.

Oh, and if you think the only reason to buy a Dacia is because they're well priced, you're missing a trick. They're well equipped and good to drive. Owners of the outgoing model will spot a significant improvement on interior trim quality too.

Go for mid-range Comfort and you'll enjoy air conditioning, smart alloy wheels, DAB radio, Bluetooth, 8-inch colour touchscreen, rear view camera, fog lights, rear parking sensors, smartphone connectivity, roof bars, cruise control and electric windows all round. It is a serious alternative to any other SUV.

In terms of driving, the Dacia Duster is thoroughly enjoyable. The steering and suspension are nicely

controlled. The ride is excellent, managing to soak up lumps and bumps at town speeds whilst being sufficiently controlled on quicker roads. Thanks to the high driving position, you have a great view, making it ideal for town work or country lanes.

In terms of engine choice, you can select from 1.0 and 1.3 litre petrol, 1.5 litre diesel and a Bi-Fuel which allows you to use LPG gas too. Most are available with 6-speed manual or auto boxes. If you live out in the sticks, go for a 4x4, but most folk will be perfectly happy with the front wheel drive model. We like the diesel powered Duster. That's the one we'd recommend. You'll get up to 57.7mpg. 0-60 takes a shade over 10 seconds and, at motorway speeds, progress is extremely civilised. The Duster is also perfect if you need to tow a trailer, horse box or caravan.

Cracking value, decently equipped, good to drive and can also be a serious mud plugger if you go for the all-wheel drive model. What's not to love?

If you are looking for an SUV that won't break the bank, make sure you try the brand new Dacia Duster. You're in for a pleasant surprise.

www.dacia.co.uk





Well, technically yes.

Just like Gates, Sandy's a Rotarian too.

And they're both part of one of the largest humanitarian service clubs in the world that's fighting for the eradication of Polio. Together with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, over \$3 billion has been raised in the fight against Polio.

Join with us. Apart from networking and making new connections locally and globally with 1.2 million members spread across 35,000 clubs in over 200 countries, becoming a Rotarian provides you with the real opportunity to make a difference in your community and around the world.

Join with us and be part of a global force of change.

To know more about joining with us, visit www.rotaryne.com

To see how we're making a difference in the world, visit www.rotary.org



BILL GATES IS A MATE.

Rotary
North East





ANNIVERSARY RETURN FOR STEREOPHONICS

Stereophonics return to the Utilita Arena Newcastle on Thursday 24th March 2022 for a very special show.

Stereophonics recently came back with 'Hanging On Your Hinges'. The song is the first to be unveiled from forthcoming album 'Oochya!',

released on 4th March 2022 via Stylus Records through Ignition Records Ltd

As the band celebrate their 25th year, 'Hanging On Your Hinges' (is a gloriously unshackled palette cleanser for fans ahead of the multifaceted, 'Oochya!'. With distorted question-and-answer vocals and scuzzed up guitars, it's a song that harks back to some of the band's loudest moments, drawing on Kelly Jones' love of garage rock. After 18 months of lockdown, 'Hanging On Your Hinges' is an optimistic yet defiant howl as the band get back to doing what they do best.

SU POLLARD TO PLAY THE WICKED QUEEN

Sunderland Empire is delighted to announce that the nation's much-loved actress and entertainer Su Pollard will be returning to thrill pantomime audiences as the Wicked Queen in *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs* from Friday 10 December 2021 – Sunday 2 January 2022.

Star of stage and screen Su Pollard made her television debut on *Opportunity Knocks*, where she came second to a singing Jack Russell dog. Whilst best known as Peggy in the BAFTA Award-winning sitcom *Hi-De-Hi*, she has played countless roles on stage, television and in film. A true star of pantomimes, Su has appeared in *Pinocchio*, *Aladdin*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Dick Whittington*, *Babes In The Wood*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Peter Pan* and *Cinderella*...

Su will join the previously announced North East Queen of Comedy, Miss Rory (Boulevard, aka Dan Cunningham) who will star as the hilarious Nurse Rorina, and it is time to say 'Alreet' once again to South Shields comic Tom Whalley, as the side splitting Muddles the Jester.



THE TYNE THEATRE & OPERA HOUSE CELEBRATES 154 YEARS OF WARMTH, LIGHT AND ESCAPISM

The Tyne Theatre and Opera House recently celebrated 154 years operating as a Theatre for Everyone. Throughout its lifetime the Theatre has continued to grow and evolve--honouring tradition and championing innovation to leave behind a rich history and cultural legacy for generations to come.

The Grade 1 listed Theatre was designed by industrialist and politician Joseph Cowen in 1867. He envisioned a 'Theatre for Everyone' offering warmth, light and escapism to working people during a time of heavy industry when life was hard. Since those early beginnings, the Tyne Theatre has also thrived as a cinema for several decades across the mid-1900s before returning to its original function in the eighties and has delighted audiences with the best in music, comedy, theatre, variety & more ever since.

The list of those who've tread the boards includes household names such as; Dame Joan Collins, Sir Roger Moore, John Carpenter, Alan Shearer, Michael Palin, productions from Russian State Ballet & Opera House, the stars of RuPaul's Drag Race US & UK, and the podcast No Such Thing As A Fish.

The comedy programme, in particular, has seen immense success with Chris Ramsey, Romesh Ranganathan, Dylan Moran, Katherine Ryan, Ed Byrne, Count Arthur Strong, Ben Elton and James Acaster all having taken the Tyne Theatre stage over recent years.

But, of course, no success is without its challenges; the Covid-19 pandemic



Photo Credit: Grame J Batty

had an almighty blow on our theatres and cultural venues up and down the country. However, the Tyne Theatre continued to connect to audiences during the height of the pandemic, offering live-streamed and socially-distanced events, as well as running fundraising campaigns to secure the future of the historic venue.

The future now looks brighter for the Tyne Theatre with a jam-packed programme of events offering something for everyone. Just some of the incredible upcoming events include; the sell-out sensation Simon Amstell's Spirit Hole tour, smash-hit, and internationally acclaimed Sh*t-Faced Shakespeare production, the drag icon that is Trixie Mattel, stand-up superstar Sarah Millican and the annual Tyne Theatre Productions show RENT.

Ensure you're following the Tyne Theatre and Opera House on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, to be the first to hear about upcoming shows.

Sponsored by
NORTHERN FILM + MEDIA



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Tyne Theatre & Opera House and Enchanted Entertainment present

THIS YEAR'S SPELLBINDING PANTOMIME!**BGT Winner - Collabro's
MATT PAGAN****The Hilarious
CHARLIE RICHMOND****Sleeping
Beauty****AMAZING 3D
PROJECTION!****FANTASTIC
LIVE BAND****METRO RADIO**
THE BIGGEST HITS THE BIGGEST THROTBAGS**3rd Dec 21 - 3rd Jan 22****maldron**
HOTEL
NEWCASTLE**TYNE
THEATRE
& OPERA
HOUSE****tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk****Box Office 0844 249 1000****@TyneTheatrePanto**
@TyneTheatrePanto**Enchanted**
ENTERTAINMENT

CULTURE CLUB



Siobhan O'Neil

SIOBHAN O'NEIL

Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead provide an independent voice for people who use health and social care services in these two areas. Here, Chief Executive Officer Siobhan O'Neil tells us about her taste in music, art and culture.

Who is your favourite author and why?

It all depends on my mood. Some books I can read again and again such as Frank Herbert's *Dune* series (and I can't wait for the film to come out) If I read crime books then I particularly love the books by Whitley Bay author - Anne Cleaves. Anne of course penned the character of Vera who is now regularly seen on our TV screens. I also like Ed McBain, John Irving and not forgetting Douglas Adams for pointing out that a towel is just about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can carry.

What would be your three Desert Island Discs?

Neil Diamond, Crackling Rosie - "Crackling Rosé" is the name of an inexpensive sparkling wine and it is thought that this is where Neil Diamond got his inspiration from. The song was his first USA number one.

Prince, Star Fish and Coffee - I'm a great fan of Prince and this song is about a little girl and what she has for breakfast every day.

Roberta Flack, The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face - I love the lyrics in this song. Very touching.

Who is your favourite film star and why?

I can't pick a single one as I have a wide taste in movies and watch a variety of genres. I guess it depends on my mood at the time.

What are your top three films?

If you looking for the classic sci-fi movie you can't forget *Aliens* starring Sigourney Weaver and that scene with the exploding stomach.

Silver Linings Playbook is a lovely film. It's an American romantic comedy-drama film with Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence and also Robert De Niro.

Ice Age - the new breed of animated films are fantastic to watch for kids of all ages!

Which poem left a lasting impression on you?

The Hill We Climb, Amanda Gorman was written to celebrate the 2021 inauguration of Joe Biden as 46th President of the United States. I like it because it looks at the USA's real problems and doesn't sugar coat them.

What box sets have you enjoyed?

I've just mentioned the President and I could watch *The West Wing*, over and over again!

Grace and Frankie stars Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin in the title roles of Grace Hanson and Frankie Bergstein, two unlikely friends who are brought together after their husbands announce they are in love with each other and plan to get married. I enjoy the humour but also the subject matter is important to me as I believe in equality for everyone regardless of sexuality, race, age or any other form of discrimination.

Derry Girls is so funny and the characters are very much larger than life.

Line of Duty has to be on everyone's choice, it is so well written and every episode leaves you wanting more.

I'm also a big *ER* fan - much more gritty than *Casualty* or *Holby City*! I wonder if there is a *Healthwatch Chicago*?

Who is your favourite artist or performer?

Again, like movie stars, it depends on my mood... the one I've seen the most is Prince.

What is your favourite venue?

St James' Park, Newcastle.

Which musical instrument do you particularly enjoy?

I'm not musical at all.

From the world of Arts and Culture who would be your ideal dinner party guests?

Bob Ross, Toby Ziegler, Margaret Atwood, Hannah Gadsby, Douglas Adams, Millicent Fawcett.

To find out more about Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead.

Telephone 0191 338 5720,
email info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk,
www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

OUT AND ABOUT - SEATON CAREW



Convalescing after an operation, I wanted a night away at the seaside, but not too far away. I returned for the first time in years to Seaton Carew, a small beachside resort which is a southern suburb of Hartlepool.

I stayed in the Marine Hotel, which was built in 1900 – a very good year for building hotels, at a time of Victorian confidence and exuberance - and got a double room (just for me) with sea view for £70. There is a station on the coastal Middlesbrough to Newcastle line at Seaton Carew, but it is a 15 minute walk inland, so I bought a ticket to "Hartlepool Plus Bus" and after lunch in Hartlepool took the 15 minute service 1 by Stagecoach to right outside the hotel. I did try to visit the Cameron's brewery which gave every impression on their website that tours had been reintroduced with details of the three days a week they were open. Annoyingly it was not, even though I phoned twice as requested. I was pleased to be staying at Seaton Carew overnight as both the Hillcarter and the Grand Hotel in Hartlepool have recently closed.

After checking in at the Marine and a walk round the attractions of Seaton Carew, and admiring its splendidly clean and virtually empty sandy beach, I had a look at the range of fish and chips shops, Larry's Lanes for ten pin bowling, Lofty's open air Crazy Golf, the two amusement arcades "Talk of the Town" and "Ernie Nichols", the brightly coloured beach huts which have newly appeared there and at Saltburn, and the small fairground close to the clock tower, I went back into Hartlepool. The bus takes about 20 minutes into Hartlepool, and the bus stop for Seaton Carew rail station is a ridiculously long walk beyond the station. Take a tip – use the bus! That's the benefit of the Plus Bus scheme which offers unlimited local bus travel for £3.80. I went to visit the town's excellent free museum adjacent to the Museum of the Royal Navy and up on bus 7 to explore the Headland before a repeat journey on the 1 bus to Seaton Carew.

There was a choice of fish and chip restaurants, a carvery in the hotel, and a single Indian restaurant for evening meal about 2100. I reckoned that a decent curry might help resolve an unwelcome side effect of my medication and plumped for the Seaton Tandoori, which served up a good meal despite initially placing me in the front window and forgetting about me. The curry was duck, with a good egg rice and peshwari nan, with friendly service and a couple of Cobra beers. When I got up to a lovely sea view in the morning, this combination had done its necessary work. Breakfast was extra but a tasty offering of buffet items.

I originally planned to get the train back home, but took the bus south from Seaton Carew's iconic 1930s bus station with its impressive clocktower through the industrial heart of Teesside (something it would be difficult to admire by car when you need both concentration and a bit more height). Travelling on the 1 into Middlesbrough and the 36 back to Stockton I went to admire the Stockton Globe, a sublime 1937 art deco performance venue due to reopen shortly after a long period of dereliction and restoration. In theory a great place to go by train, but I fear the railway service might cease too early to accommodate evening concert-goers at this new venue, the largest between Newcastle and Leeds.

Alex Nelson, alex@nationalrail.com



For a copy of the UK rail map, extract below, visit www.railmap.org.uk



Let **nationalrail.com**, based at **Bishop Auckland station**, help you use the most energy efficient mode of transport, with new Azuma trains now running on the East Coast Main Line.

Plan and book your travel in the UK and Europe with **nationalrail.com**, and get advice on your corporate rail travel needs from alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk.

National Rail Bishop Auckland Ltd, DL14 7TL



EMIRATES SET TO RETURN TO THE NORTH EAST

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, is due to restart flights between Newcastle International Airport and Dubai from the 15th October.

Responding to the easing of travel restrictions and an upsurge in passenger demand, the airline will resume the much anticipated service from the North East earlier than planned - offering four weekly flights direct to Dubai and beyond via Emirates' growing global network of 120 destinations.

Flights will depart Newcastle International Airport every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 21.10, arriving in Dubai the following day at 07.25. Flights will depart Dubai at 14.30, returning back to Newcastle at 19.10.

Nick Jones, Chief Executive of Newcastle International Airport said, "We are delighted that Emirates has brought forward its return to Newcastle International Airport and the North East with four weekly flights throughout the

winter. A change of flight times to an evening departure will mean passengers can maximise their stay in Dubai whether on holiday or business whilst also ensuring connectivity to worldwide destinations via the Emirates network."

Richard Jewsbury, Divisional Vice President UK at Emirates commented, "We're incredibly pleased to resume Emirates flights to and from Newcastle, helping reconnect communities and businesses in the North East with Emirates' extensive global network. Since the UAE moved to the UK's 'amber list' we've seen huge demand from passengers eagerly making travel plans - whether it's to see family and friends, for education, business, or a long-awaited holiday. We look forward to welcoming passengers back onboard an Emirates flight soon."

Dubai remains one of the world's most popular holiday destinations, and thanks to the relaxation of testing requirements for passengers returning to the UK it is now another excellent option for passengers in the region looking for a winter getaway.

From sun-soaked beaches and heritage activities to world class hospitality and leisure facilities, Dubai offers a variety of experiences for everyone. It was one of the world's first cities to obtain Safe Travels stamp from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) – which endorses Dubai's comprehensive and effective measures to ensure guest health and safety.

Book flights from Newcastle to Dubai and beyond at [Emirates.com](https://www.emirates.com)



RECONNECT

in comfort and safety



FLY BETTER

We are resuming flights from Newcastle on the 15th of October with 4 weekly flights. Make the most of the new evening departure time getting you to Dubai the next morning so you can take advantage of a full day in Dubai, whilst also ensuring connectivity to worldwide destinations on the Emirates network.



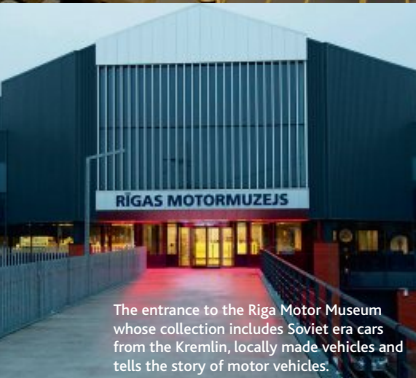
Emirates

TRAVEL INSIGHT

Staircase by the entrance to Riga's Art Nouveau Museum. The Latvian capital has a high concentration of Art Nouveau (Jugendstil) buildings from the turn of the 20th century.

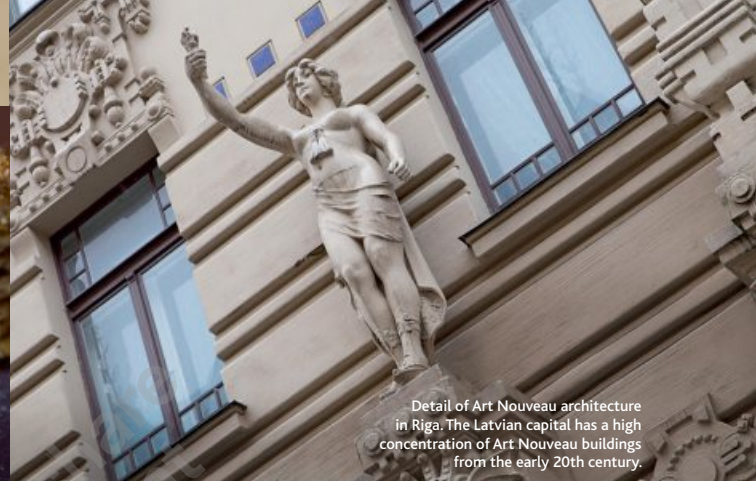


A ZIS-115, an armoured vehicle produced in the Soviet Union and used to transport leaders including Stalin, displayed at Riga Motor Museum.



The entrance to the Riga Motor Museum whose collection includes Soviet era cars from the Kremlin, locally made vehicles and tells the story of motor vehicles.

Honey cake, traditional, layered cake served with fruit, served in Riga, Latvia.

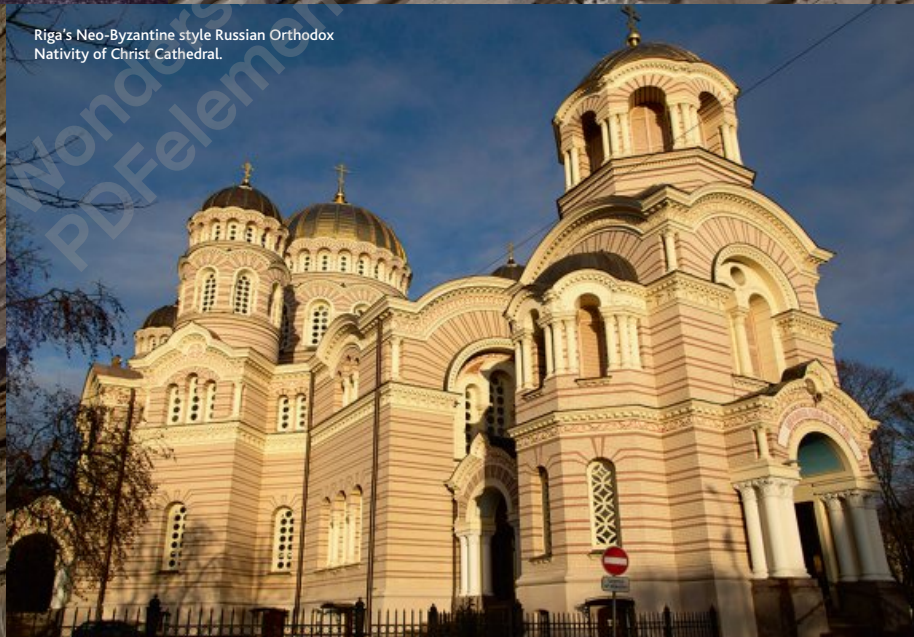


Detail of Art Nouveau architecture in Riga. The Latvian capital has a high concentration of Art Nouveau buildings from the early 20th century.



One of the many wooden buildings of Riga.

Riga's Neo-Byzantine style Russian Orthodox Nativity of Christ Cathedral.



An illuminated arch at the Christmas market by the Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral of Riga.



RIGA, LATVIA

By Stuart Forster

A familiar moustachioed figure gazed forward from the backseat of the limousine-style vehicle on Riga Motor Museum's upper floor. Depicting Soviet leader Josef Stalin in uniform, the mannequin sat behind bulletproof glass in a sleek black car weighing more than four tonnes. During the Cold War the environment seemed far less of a threat than nuclear weapons and Stalin undoubtedly had concerns other than fuel economy between appointments.

The subtly illuminated vehicle was one of several with ties to Kremlin leadership that caught my eye in the impressive museum, whose façade playfully represents a Rolls-Royce radiator grill. They included a 1966 Silver Shadow with a crumpled bonnet: the world's only crash damaged Rolls-Royce on display in a museum was being driven by Leonid Brezhnev at the time of its accident in 1980.

Several vehicles with connections to the Soviet Union's hierarchy were acquired by Latvian Antique Automobile Club members before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Viewing racing cars, beautifully restored models from throughout the history of the motor vehicle as well as locally made trucks and buses ensured that my trip 15 minutes outside of Riga's attractive city centre was worthwhile.

To orientate in Riga, I spent nearly two hours with Arturs Adamsons on the cobbled lanes and squares of the Old Town during one of his daily Riga Free Tours. "We have medieval buildings, eclecticism and a great mix of early 20th century architecture," said Artūrs in excellent English as we gazed up at ornate facades. Central Riga has more than 300 Art Nouveau buildings, including rare wooden examples.

As his tour ended, Artūrs urged me to cross the Daugava River, which flows through the city, to visit the Pārdaugava district for its small, atmospheric bars. Those in the city centre are popular for stag and hen parties. He also recommended a trip to view the lakeside Mežaparks district, where cycling through the pine forest means opportunities to view villas and the arena that hosts Latvia's national song festival every four years.

UNESCO added Riga's historic centre to its list of world heritage sites in 1997, seven years after Latvia's independence was restored. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia introduces the grisly yet engrossing tale of times under Soviet and Nazi rule. The former headquarters of the KGB, the Soviet Union's state security agency, today hosts an eye-opening exhibition about the organisation's oppressive operations.

Surely anyone fascinated by modern history would enjoy roaming in Riga? At Spilve Airport, a 25-minute taxi ride from downtown Riga, I combined viewing a contemporary art exhibition and looking around the old aerodrome. Glancing up, I spotted a bas-relief hammer and sickle symbol above the building's sun bleached wood doors. Old propaganda murals inside the main building depict a rally featuring smiling Latvian women in the colourful gowns of Latvia's national dress next to red flags rippling in the breeze.

Visiting Riga in winter meant packing for bracing wind that delivered flurries of snow. Snowfall made visiting the advent market at the square by Riga's Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral feel all the more seasonal. Stalls selling hand carved wooden gifts and knitwear attracted me as I sought to stave off my usual panicked present buying on Christmas Eve.

Cinnamon-laced mulled wine warmed me ahead of more shopping at Riga's Central Market, which makes claims to being the biggest in Europe. Four arching, interconnected halls were constructed on the site of Zeppelin hangars built by Germans during World War One. Stocking flowers, fruit and vegetables, meats and cheeses it's a colourful, busy place and great for tasting local produce such as rye bread and sausages.

I paused to view Riga's Russian Orthodox cathedral on my way back to my hotel, where I changed into my suit for cultured night out. For €20 (£17) I'd bought a prime ticket for a performance of Nabucco at the Latvian National Opera and Ballet and was forewarned that Latvians dress smartly for performances. As it was a Friday, I treated myself to a glass of bubbly during the interval.

Overdressed for a beer in a pub, I headed to the Skyline Bar for a cocktail, views over the city's lights and to plan the rest of my long weekend in Riga.



Bars and cafes on a cobbled street at night in Riga.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

See the *Riga Free Tours* (rigafreetours.com) website for tour information. Find information about things to do and see by visiting the *Riga* (liveriga.com) and *Latvia* (latvia.travel) tourist information websites.

Getting there: *airBaltic* (airbaltic.com) operates direct flights between Manchester and Riga. In 2022 *Ryanair* (ryanair.com) will operate direct flights between Newcastle and Riga on Mondays and Fridays from late-March into autumn. Flights have a duration of two hours 40 minutes and are priced from £27.

FINALISTS FOR THE 10TH ENGLISH CURRY AWARDS 2021 ARE REVEALED

Finalists are now revealed for the 10th English Curry Awards, established to celebrate Asian talent across the UK's Curry Industry.

The awards will be a celebration of the top Asian curry professionals and businesses with the finalist shortlist being determined by public vote.

The renowned black-tie awards ceremony will take place on 18th October at Holiday Inn, Birmingham Airport – Nec.

The awards highlight the growth of the Asian curry sector and recognise the achievements of those who work their hardest to perfect every meal. Those rewarded, will include chefs, restaurants, managers, takeaways, teams and curry schools.

Zeera Indian Restaurant, South Shields has been shortlisted in the Restaurant of the Year (North East Region) & Best Team of the Year categories. Zeera will find out if they will be crowned winners at the elegant ceremony taking place in October.



"We are honoured to have been shortlisted for the English Curry Awards in two categories this year. We'd love to be able to bring the crown home again and make South Shields proud". – Shah Choudhury



LEILA LILY'S WINS NATIONAL AWARD

One of Newcastle's most stylish venues has seen off the competition to scoop a major national award.

Leila Lily's, at Grey Street, was named North East Pub and Bar of the Year for Tyne and Wear by the National Pub and Bar Awards at a ceremony in London last night (6 Sept).

The awards, which are held annually by Pub and Bar magazine, showcase the UK's finest pubs and bars on a national scale, recognising the best venues within 94 counties across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

And the venue, owned by leading hospitality business Malhotra Group plc, was particularly commended for its opulent décor and "highly Instagrammable interior."

Part of four AA-star The Grey Street Hotel, the £1.5m restaurant and bar is renowned for its theatrical and creative food and drinks menu and was the first building in the city to house three distinct areas under one roof.

Along with its bar and restaurant it's basement club lounge, 212@Leila Lily's, enables customers to extend their evening with a combination of DJ sets and live music.

The site – 2-12 Grey Street is also home to The Grey Street Hotel and City Retreat urban spa and is widely regarded as Malhotra Group's flagship venue.

Operations Director, Atul Malhotra, who named Leila Lily's after his daughter and oversees every aspect of the venue, said the award was "recognition of the vision and the commitment to excellence displayed by his team."

FERN INTRODUCES THEIR AUTUMNAL REGIONAL MENU

As the clocks go back, and Autumn threatens on the horizon, a Jesmond-based boutique hotel is launching their brand new menu, from their recently refurbished venue which captures the imagination of the chefs, whilst using the very best of local seasonal produce on offer.

The chefs at Jesmond Dene House's, in-house restaurant; Fern have spent months devising the menu, which captures everything delicious and heart-warming about the season.

With nods to the locality of Jesmond Dene House, the chefs creative juices have certainly been flowing with this please-all menu. You can expect to see regional suppliers on the inventive menu with seasonal, yet sustainable produce served to their diners.

Terrine of Yorkshire game, Lindisfarne Oysters, Cured Yorkshire Duck Breast and Shetland Mussels can all be found, along with the classics that

Jesmond Dene House is renowned for.

No discerning menu would be complete without a great dessert, and there's doesn't disappoint.

Firm favourites like Hot Chocolate Pudding, with Cardamon Spiced Sauce and Madagascan Ice Cream will still be making an appearance, along with some newcomers like Stem Ginger Crème Brûlée, Candied Orange Cantucinni and Calvados Panna-Cotta, Apple Jelly and Cinnamon.

Commenting on the highly anticipated new menu, Executive Chef Danny Parker said: "Our autumnal menu draws on the finest produce, from Turbot to Halibut, Herb-fed Chicken to 60-day aged Cote de Boeuf and Cauliflowers to Beetroots. It's neighbourhood dining, and it's pretty special!"

Fern's Autumn Menu is available Wednesday's to Saturday form 6pm. Booking is advised. For more information, call Jesmond Dene House on 0191 212 3000



THE
HARBOUR
VIEW



**Trip Advisor's Best
Fish and Chips in the
North of England**

1-3 Beresford Road,
Seaton Sluice, NE26 4DR
the-harbour-view.com



THE INN COLLECTION
GROUP

WINTER BREAKS

ACROSS NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE & WEAR, COUNTY DURHAM, NORTH YORKSHIRE AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

DINNER, BED & BREAKFAST
FROM **£44.50** PER PERSON*

Book online at inncollectiongroup.com or telephone 0191 580 3610

T&Cs apply. Visit website for full details

Get social with us!





HARBOURING A PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

Harbour View Fish and Chip Restaurant in Seaton Sluice has been awarded another prestigious accolade for its delicious food and good customer service.

As well as being one of the top five rated fish and chip shops in the UK as deemed by Trip Advisor, they have now been awarded their "Travellers Choice" status which is only given to around 10 percent of businesses world-wide. We asked manager Waseem Mir about his business and why Harbour View has such a good reputation for quality food.

How did you get into the fish and chip business?

Family. It's a family business which my Uncle Lak Gill and I own, his experience and love and passion for providing excellent food is how I got involved with The Harbour View.

What makes your fish different to other fish and chip shops?

We only use the finest cod and haddock from the deep and cold waters of the North Atlantic where it is caught just off Iceland. We also insist on freshness and size also matters to us. (The secret family batter also helps, but don't tell anyone it's a secret).

So, does your batter really have a secret ingredient?

It's one of those secrets where if I told you I'd have to fry you.

Your large Cod has a nickname, hasn't it?

Yes, our regulars call it the whale as it literally fills the plate and more. Newcomers to the restaurant and takeaway ask for a large cod and our other customers tell them to get a regular sized cod, but they never listen. They are amazed when they get the fish and rarely finish it as they are so big. We do supply boxes so that can enjoy the fish the next day too.

Tell us about your outstanding record for good customer service.

The customer is what keeps us in business, and we value the fact that they choose us rather than our competitors. We believe in being polite and talking to all our customers and over the years we have got to know everyone who comes in to eat with us. Our staff are all very customer focused, and nothing should be too much trouble to enhance the customer experience.

Are all your customers local?

No not at all. We have people who make special holiday visits from all over the UK just to enjoy our food and we've even had one couple take a takeaway meal to their parents in Greece so that

they could enjoy the food they missed most living abroad. Our fame even attracted a TV film crew from Australia who were doing a travel documentary about Northumberland and featured our famous fish and chips on the National Geographic Channel. Other than those examples we have regulars who literally travel 20+ miles every single week to eat with us.

You have a reputation for being very community focused.

Yes, I believe it is very important to look after the people around you. We support MacMillan Cancer and have regular collections where we and our generous customers have raised around £10,000 to help those with this dreadful disease. We also have charity nights with the Maritime Volunteer Service where they enjoy fish and chips and raise money for their work.

I was very concerned during COVID when I saw that my neighbouring businesses in the hospitality trade couldn't open. When they were able to open again I made a decision to stop selling alcohol and asked my customers to use their premises to buy their drinks to help spread the business around.

Do you ever get any famous customers?

We do indeed. We have had Ant McPartlin in our takeaway, Hairy Biker Si King, local pop superstar Sam Fender, Musician Ray Laidlaw and actress and presenter Kim Tserkezie is also a regular.

What's the best thing about being the manager of Harbour View?

There are so many I don't think I could list them all and leave enough space for the rest of the magazine!!!!

I have to say it has to be my amazing staff and the fantastic customers we have coming through our doors. It truly is a pleasure to see everyone so happy and upbeat and excited to come into work and to eat here. It makes the job and hard work all worthwhile.

Harbour View Fish and Chip Restaurant is located in Seaton Sluice.





LANGLEY CASTLE - TURNING DREAMS INTO A REALITY

Romeo and Juliet also catered for!

May 17th 2021 will go down as a key date in the illustrious history of Langley Castle in Northumberland. It was when guests returned to the hotel following the final Covid lockdown. This stunning building, dating back to the 14th century, came back to life.

Like everyone in the hospitality industry, it was a troubling time for General Manager, Margaret Livingstone-Evans.

She needn't have worried.

"Since reopening we've been very close to 100 per cent capacity," says Margaret. "We were concerned that we may struggle without foreign tourists being allowed into the country, but we've been overwhelmed with visitors from all over the UK. We are now starting to see visitors from abroad arriving at the hotel. Overall we're busier than we have been at any time in the last ten years...and we are almost fully booked all the way through until Christmas. It's wonderful."

We shouldn't be surprised. If you flick onto review websites to check out Langley Castle, the headline

words are...fabulous, stunning, wonderful, unique, ten out of ten.

There's something magical about Langley Castle Hotel near Hexham. Situated five minutes off the A69 and an easy 25 minute drive from Newcastle, it's perfectly situated for exploring the magnificent scenery of Northumberland.

And there's always something going on.

"We work closely with Kielder Observatory to give guests the opportunity to visit their Dark Sky Park. Kielder is Europe's second largest area of protected night sky. We've called this special event Starry Knights. We organise everything and when guests return to the castle at around midnight, they're treated to cheese and biscuits and a nightcap.

If guests fancy a day out exploring the region, we can provide picnics and hot drink flasks. We'll help with transportation if required. To be honest, whatever the guest fancies doing, we'll sort it."

Local experts offer guided tours and bring to life the rich history of Northumberland. You'll be fascinated by some of the things and places you'll

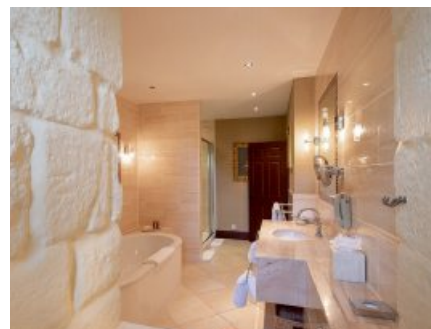
discover. Various events take place at the castle itself. Fancy abseiling down the castle walls? Children are also catered for by being given the chance to study the history of Langley Castle in a humorous, vibrant and edgy way. Langley Castle call it 'Hairy History' and you can download it at langleycastle.co.uk/en/history-for-kids. Much of it links to topics covered by the Key Stage history syllabus.

When it comes to weddings, can you think of a more dreamy place for a fairy tale day? A new woodland wedding area within the castle grounds lit with festoon lighting is proving very popular and, here's something different, Langley Castle Hotel can help create a real life Romeo and Juliet story by helping couples to elope and get married. A wedding for just two people. How romantic.

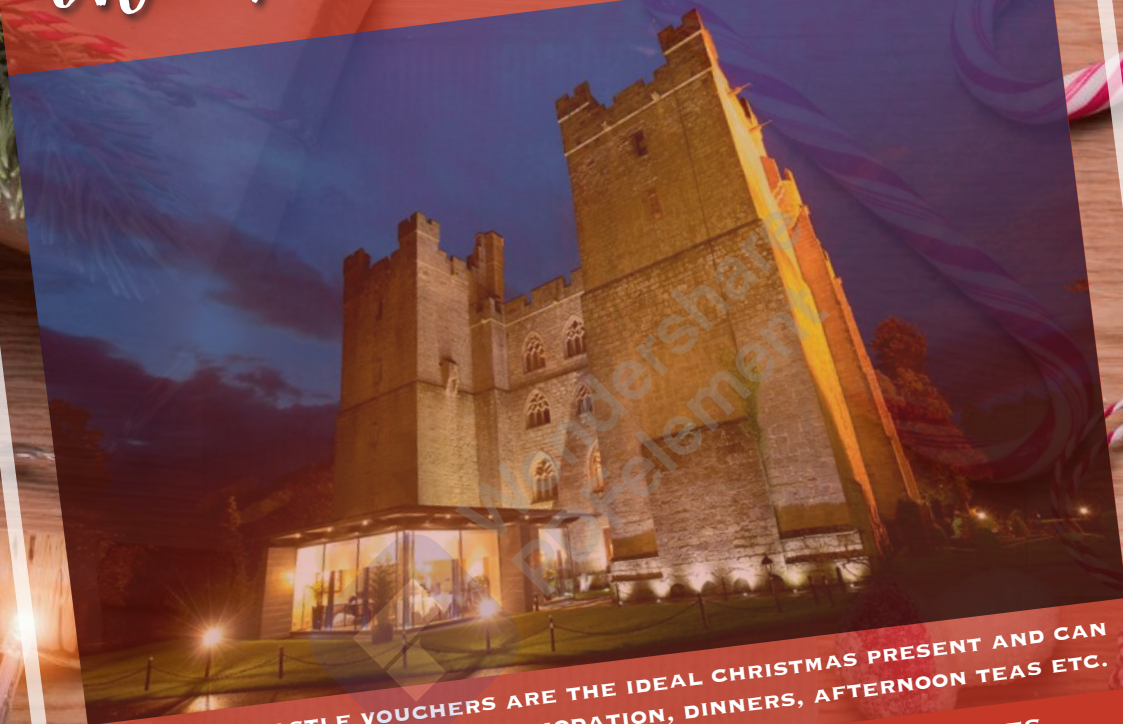
Fancy some fine dining? Langley Castle Hotel has an award winning restaurant which uses as much local produce as the chef can find.

Langley Castle has fought a lot of battles over the years, but Margaret and her team have come through this latest encounter with flying colours. Langley Castle Hotel is open for business...good luck trying to get a room for the night though.

For more information and to find out what's going on, how to book a room or a fabulous meal, give the team a call at Langley Castle Hotel on 01434 684 019 or go onto their website, www.langleycastle.co.uk



The Perfect Venue for the Festive Season...



LANGLEY CASTLE VOUCHERS ARE THE IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT AND CAN BE REDEEMED AGAINST ACCOMMODATION, DINNERS, AFTERNOON TEAS ETC.

...ALSO TRY OUR NEW YEARS EVE RESIDENTIAL PACKAGES...

2 NIGHTS CASTLE VIEW STANDARD ROOM
30TH AND 31ST DECEMBER £740
2 NIGHTS CASTLE VIEW SUITE/SUPERIOR
30TH AND 31ST DECEMBER £820

1 NIGHT CASTLE VIEW STANDARD ROOM
31ST DECEMBER £395
1 NIGHT CASTLE VIEW SUITE/SUPERIOR ROOM
31ST DECEMBER £435

30TH DECEMBER

AFTERNOON TEA ON ARRIVAL

3 COURSE DINNER WITH GLASS OF PROSECCO AND BREAKFAST THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

31ST DECEMBER

CANAPES AND COCKTAILS BEFORE A 5 COURSE DINNER AND BRUNCH ON THE MORNING OF
THE 1ST JANUARY BETWEEN 9.30AM AND 12 NOON.
DINNER WILL BE SERVED IN THE RESTAURANT WITH A PIPER TO PIPE IN THE NEW YEAR.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

LANGLEY CASTLE, LANGLEY ON TYNE, HEXHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE47 5LU
TEL: 01434 688888 + WEBSITE: WWW.LANGLEYCASTLE.CO.UK



A SPACE FOR BUSINESS AND A SPACE FOR EVERYONE: THE STORY BEHIND THE COMMON ROOM

On her four-year anniversary of being at the helm of The Common Room, we caught up with Chief Executive Liz Mayes to hear the story behind the redevelopment of one of Newcastle's most heritage-packed buildings.

The Common Room was once known to most as The Mining Institute and it was built in the 1800s as the headquarters for the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers. How would you describe the experience of renovating such a landmark building?

I know it's a cliché, but it really has been a rollercoaster.

The learning curve has been immense but we've worked with so many great people who were an extension of our core team – like Gardiner & Theobald, our Project Managers, and Brian Debnam, who was Coordinating Consultant until July 2019. I learned so much from working with them and they made it possible to achieve what we have.

The pandemic took us back to square one in terms of finances and we had to work out how we could survive the delay in opening and function within a massively changed economy.

We were originally meant to open in November 2020 and we ended up opening this July, which feels like a relatively short delay considering the world had turned upside down. It's a tribute to the resilience and focus of the team that we got through it and opened the doors. And also to the ongoing support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund without which none of this would have happened.

What's the vision behind the redevelopment of the former Mining Institute, and why do you think Newcastle needed a space like The Common Room?

The vision is to use our unique heritage to inspire the next generation of innovators and engineers. We want to create a hub for innovation in our region. To profile the great things happening here today and inspire the next generation, but also to celebrate the achievements of the past and preserve the North East's rich heritage in engineering.

In its heyday this building was a world centre of excellence for engineering during the industrial revolution and it feels right that we've brought it back to its original purpose.

As a former employee at the CBI and Make UK, which champions engineering and manufacturing, what attracted you to apply for the role of Chief Executive at The Common Room?

In my previous roles, I spent 15 years getting to know the North East engineering and manufacturing sectors and I knew we can struggle to recruit young people into these industries. I felt like The Common Room could make a difference and I was sold on its vision.

How will The Common Room support North East engineering businesses?

Our location can't be beaten when it comes to helping businesses meet the next generation of engineers and innovators. Manufacturing and engineering can be hidden from view on trading estates and that can be part of the reason why young people might not know it exists as a career option. So being in the city centre, and providing a space for the business community to use, feels really fitting.

Which have been the first event bookings for the new space?

In August we hosted our first wedding and it was exactly as we'd hoped. We set high standards for ourselves and it wasn't without its stressful moments but on the day, looking at all the wedding guests enjoying themselves was pretty special.



We held a conference in the summer for NA College, which provides training for many of Nissan's apprentices, and in autumn we're the mothership venue for Northumbrian Water's Innovation Festival, which is running as a hybrid this year.

This month is also our Face of Engineering LIVE event. It's a spin-off from our podcast series where we interview women engineers about their careers.

How can businesses get involved?

We'll be running more industry takeover days as the ones we did this summer went so well. These give engineering businesses the chance to use the building to meet the public, bring some activities – we've had all sorts of things going on, like virtual welding experiences – and show people the kinds of opportunities that exist within their business.

We want people to feel a sense of ownership of the building so if people tell us there's something in particular they want to see happening at The Common Room, we will listen.

It can be a place someone comes on a school visit. It can be somewhere apprentices use as part of their training. It's a space for businesses and it's a building where people can socialise and celebrate. Basically it's a home for the community that surrounds it.

The Common Room of the Great North was established to manage the redevelopment of the former Mining Institute building following an award from The National Lottery Heritage Fund of £4.1m towards the initial project costs of £7.1m. Further funding to reflect the project costs due to the pandemic have seen a grant increase of £950,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and £440,000 from other sources. The revised project costs due to covid-19 now stand at £8.9m of which c£1.2m is left to raise.

The Common Room, Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SE.

www.thecommonroom.org.uk



STARBOARD BOUND!

By Michael Grahamslaw

After a summer of eating out and around Newcastle following Britain's grand reopening of the leisure sector, my wife Lisa and I were keen to expand our culinary horizons to venues further afield.

Our first port of call was Wylam – the sleepy, Northumberland village put first on the map by railway pioneer George Stephenson and more recently by the ever popular brewery which bears its name.

On a sun soaked late September day, with very much a "last of the summer wine" feeling in the air, we took the train which is only a quaint, 15 minute journey from Newcastle Central Station. The village's four pubs each have their own

charms and identities – one of the best of which being the Ship Inn, a proper British gastropub serving fresh food, hearty and wholesome.

Throughout lockdown, the local favourite continued to do brisk business with a much vaunted takeaway service, twice making headlines on BBC's Look North in the process.

We've had the pleasure of visiting once before (pre-covid) with a sumptuous evening tapas menu in full swing yet this time would enjoy an equally exciting lunchtime menu comprising small plates, gourmet sandwiches, main dishes and puddings.

All of this is set against a backdrop which is cosy and characterful with a few nods to the railways of yesteryear. The pub also showcases a selection of the good stuff on the keg and cask, not to mention an extensive winelist which is way beyond typical gastropub fodder.

Clearly this is a venue with real culinary aspirations and it felt great to be back as we drank in the atmosphere after being greeted by the staff and pub cockapoo, Ruby.

Whilst looking over the menu, we snacked on a bowl of rosemary and parmesan popcorn which hinted at some of the inventive little touches lying in store.

Following on, we enjoyed a selection of chipolata sausages glazed in marmalade and wholegrain mustard and haggis scotch eggs with 'Broom'

sauce. Classic posh pub grub with a flourish and stylishly presented on small plates.

Tempted at first by the 'Northumbrian Croque Monsieur', I opted for the steak ciabatta with caramelised red onion & mustard mayo, served with fries.

Lisa meanwhile followed in a similarly stodgy vein with the Ship's black angus, topped off with smoked bacon, more caramelised red onions, mordon blue cheese and truffle mayo.

Also worth a mention was the Ship's speciality picnic board for two, a grand sharing platter of rural cuisine including charcuterie, pate, terrine, scotch egg, a selection of cheeses, sourdough and butter. Just another quirk on an inventive menu displaying real culinary flair and championing the freshest ingredients.

For the finale, Lisa and I enjoyed a sharing portion of Annabel's strawberries and set northumbrian cream with strawberry sorbet and basil garnish. A perfect way to round off an exceptional meal and indeed the Summer.

From this visit, it's easy to see how the Ship Inn has carved out a fine local reputation however this is a venue deserving of wider acclaim. Not even a pandemic can blow this classy venue off course.

For more information, visit
www.theshipinnwylam.co.uk



WHITE NIGHT PARTY NIGHTS

Enjoy a 3 course meal and dance the night away in our Winter White suite.

Prices from **£30.95** per person.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Join us for a special lunch and enjoy a wonderful menu expertly served by our experienced team.

4 courses **£89** per person • **£37** per child up to 12 years old • **£16** for children aged 4 years and under.

NEW YEARS EVE GALA NIGHT

Live singer, prosecco on arrival and sumptuous 4 course dinner, **£80** per person.

£130 per person including mini afternoon tea, overnight accommodation and full buffet breakfast.

For details of all our various packages available call Holiday Inn Newcastle
Gosforth Park, Great North Road, Seaton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE13 6BP
Tel: 0191 2019988 • Fax: 0191 2368091 • www.hinewcastlegosforthpark.co.uk

LOCATION AND SOPHISTICATION

You get both at the Durham Radisson Blu Hotel. You'll have heard the saying that location, location, location is the most important thing when looking for a property of any sort...



Well, when it comes to the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham City, the location could not be any better. The hotel lies on the banks of the River Wear and is just a 5 minute walk from the historic city centre. It's a brisk 15 minute walk from the main East Coast railway line or a two minute taxi ride. Newcastle airport is only half an hour away...much the same as Teesside airport. In other words, if your idea of a city break is to find a hotel which has a peaceful semi-rural location yet is within a stone's throw of city amenities and rail links, then the Durham Radisson Blu Hotel hits the spot.

Oh, and don't be fooled by the gloom and doom surrounding the travel industry; tourism is alive and kicking in Durham. In fact, the Radisson Blu has just enjoyed its best ever August since the hotel opened 12 years ago.

"We're extremely fortunate in that we are ideally situated for business and travel visitors," said General Manager, Stuart Lloyd. "The hotel is a favourite for family and friends who are visiting students at Durham University. Most of the colleges are a short stroll from our front door. The centre of Durham is also increasing in popularity as a place for offices. Durham County Council is moving its headquarters onto the riverbank directly opposite, and very shortly a new office complex will be opening next to our hotel which can accommodate up to 500 people. The ground floor of the complex will feature a range of shops, restaurants and bars which are new to Durham and offer our visitors an even greater choice of places to visit."

Of course, Durham is a UNESCO World Heritage site with the cathedral and castle high on the list of visitor attractions.

The Radisson Blu is Durham's leading hotel and not only offers 207 rooms (which will shortly undergo a full refurbishment) but it has its own large yet intimate restaurant called The Collage, a really smart bar and a stunning leisure centre with swimming pool and fully equipped gym. It's the only hotel in Durham to have a pool.

"We're especially busy when it comes to companies holding meetings at the hotel, adds Stuart. "We've recently updated all of the AV equipment in each of our nine meeting rooms which can hold everything between 400 delegates for major conferences or just 3 or 4 for small, discreet meetings. ClickShare is available in each room, we've installed high definition TV screens and upgraded all of the connectivity. Our catering facilities mean we can offer a full banqueting service for up to 250 people which makes us ideal for Christmas parties and weddings."

It's also interesting to note that Stuart has more than doubled the number of staff at his hotel. He's proud of the fact that he has links with local schools and colleges who can use the hotel as part of the training given to young students who are interested in the hospitality industry. A large number of the Radisson Blu team are from Durham and have been trained at the hotel.

"We frequently have students from New College in Durham or from the local secondary schools, who come here to discover what working in a top class hotel is all about...and a surprising number end up returning here to begin their careers. It's always handy having team members who are from the local region because they can invariably help our guests with directions of give suggestions of places to visit."

And there's one final thing which makes the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham City stand out; it has a wonderful friendly atmosphere as soon as you step into the foyer. The staff are attentive and efficient yet manage to do it with an informal smile and a cheery nature. Perfect.

Durham City's top hotel...brilliant location and whole lot of sophistication.

For further details of special offers, city break deals and how you can book from the selection of rooms, the best idea is to log onto their website...

www.radissonhotels.com and type Durham into the search bar. Or of course you can call in and have a look around... sample that special atmosphere.







A GEM OF A JEWELLER

Where making, altering and repairing jewellery is an art form.

Don't be fooled by the unassuming exterior. There is a creative buzz going on behind the scenes at Old Eldon Jewellers in the centre of Newcastle.

Okay if you need a ring altering...it feels a bit loose or perhaps it's getting a bit tight...that won't be a problem. They'll probably be able to get it sorted for you within a day or even on the spot. If a stone is missing they'll find a new one and make sure it fits perfectly. And yes, sometimes a ring just needs a little bit of attention to bring it back to its former glory. Prices start at a very tempting £10.

However, the team at Old Eldon Jewellers are not only skilled when it comes to working with precious metals and gemstones, they are also designers and creators.

Some of you reading this may have jewellery which has gone out of fashion. You may have inherited some jewellery which has been sitting in a drawer. So...why not take everything along to the guys at Old Eldon Jewellers and let them get to work and transform your rather sad and tired

jewellery into a truly stunning ring, necklace or brooch.

"It's always wonderful to see the look on a customer's face when they return to see what we've created," said Tom Wilson who is part of the family team who've collectively got over 65 years of experience working with jewellery. "Many people have jewellery which they would like updating. We cater for customers who have perhaps collected various pieces of jewellery over the years and would like something new created. We remove the stones, melt the metal and then, once the customer has seen the potential of new designs, we create something brand new from the old metal. We can re-set the stones or add new or different ones. To be honest, once we have reverted the metal to its raw state, the options are endless."

If you have an idea in mind for a beautiful, bespoke, one-off creation, Old Eldon Jewellers will make your dream come true. If you want inspiration for something like an engagement ring or are looking for an extra-special present, they

will be able to help. And yes, they can take your old jewellery, melt it down and start again. Tom, who fronts the design team, will listen to your ideas and produce a 3D image. A wax resin mould will be created which allows you to hold and inspect what your new piece of jewellery will look like in terms of size and appearance. Clever huh?

"Jewellery is a very personal thing and it often takes a couple of visits before the customer is happy," adds Tom. "After that, our jewellers, led by my father who's got over 40 years of experience, will weave their magic and create something beautiful in gold, silver, platinum or even a mix of metals. You also have a huge choice of stones."

Old Eldon Jewellers is a hive of activity. They've never been so busy and have now got a team of 8 designers and jewellers. They also have an enviable reputation for producing memorable pieces of jewellery.

The best idea is to go along to Old Eldon Jewellers in the heart of Newcastle and have a chat with Tom and the team at their family run business.

Check out their website www.old-eldon-jewellers.co.uk to get an idea of what they're up to. Alternatively, give them a call on 0191 261 8734... email oldeldon@gmail.com or just drop into their workshop offices at 6, 1st Floor, Old Eldon Square, Newcastle, NE1 7JG





**OPENING WEEKEND EVENT
29TH TO 31ST OCTOBER 2021***

REGULAR OPENING FROM 1ST NOVEMBER

**JOIN OUR FAMIGLIA FOR EARLY
CHRISTMAS BOOKING ACCESS
AT [PUNTOITALIAN.CO.UK](https://puntoitalian.co.uk)**

*scansiona il
codice* →



*OPENING WEEKEND EVENT BY INVITE ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF
THE PUNTO FAMIGLIA MAILING LIST

210 HEATON ROAD, HEATON, NE6 5HP



A CUT ABOVE

By Michael Grahamslaw

As Northern Insight readers may be aware, I am a man partial to a steak meal so was therefore delighted when the opportunity arose to review Bar & Block steakhouse on Newcastle's Newgate Street.

Opening shortly before Lockdown 1.0, the restaurant has bounced back in difficult circumstances and offers the modern all-day-dining steakhouse experience and a welcoming bar with an extensive range of high quality steaks, handmade burgers and grazing plates at 'high street prices'.

This all sounded marvellous so I blocked out (every pun intended) a Friday afternoon and rounded up my son Jack – a fellow steak aficionado- for a post-graduation treat.

Set within a listed building, Bar and Block Newcastle has been sympathetically renovated whilst embracing modern design details to create a contemporary and stylish space. The interior design features an expansive bar with copper detailing, butcher's table and an open kitchen, complemented by rustic reclaimed wood, high quality fabrics, comfy booth seating and warm lighting. Decorative finishing touches include the brand's signature neon cow, alongside a number of contemporary artwork pieces.

On a Friday afternoon, we observed a venue really hitting its straps with chatter and sounds of glass clinking pervading the air.

Following suit, we got legged into an excellent bottle of Malbec whilst deciding on our preferred steak cuts.

The Bar and Block way encourages you to 'style your steak' alongside a chosen sauce and side orders. This includes traditional fillet, sirloin and rib eye cuts alongside a rotating 'Butchers Block' seasonal special as well as a quartet of speciality cuts including the Surf n Turf, spiral cut fillet and 'Steak Sampler' – a selection of three 4oz mini cuts.

Top quality steak however isn't the only attraction here, as its new autumn / winter menu also comprises a range of sharing planks, salads and fish and vegetarian dishes.

There's also a host of grazing plates, starter style dishes with two to three recommended between two to get the party started. With this in mind, Jack chose the middle eastern king prawns in a

roasted red pepper, harissa and tomato sauce whilst I opted for the Asian crispy beef (a current favourite) tossed in hoisin, cucumber, spring onions, chilli and coriander.

As expected, the main courses however were the real highlight. Jack's spiral cut 12oz fillet had been marinated in garlic and parsley for 24 hours lending a real depth of flavour and was then paired with sautéed greens and peppercorn sauce.

My 12oz sirloin was also exceptional paired with beef-dripping triple cooked chunky chips and beer-battered onion rings.

Bar & Block's steaks are reared from British and Irish Angus breeds renowned for their taste and tenderness with a unique marbling that runs throughout each cut. The result is that holy trinity of steak, sauce and wine melting majestically in the mouth together.

After a Summer of (reasonably) healthy eating our sweet teeth have fallen out so we swerved dessert in favour of coffee. We did though file a mental note to try the 'Melting Chocolate Dome' on our return visit.

Indeed, there certainly will be a next time. Bar and Block offers a top quality, slightly cheaper alternative to the usual steakhouse with a fun, customisable menu designed to match your appetite.

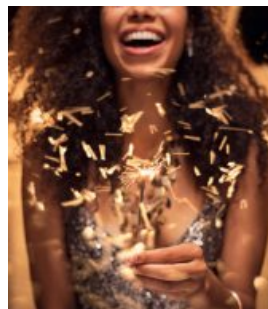
A real must try for steak lovers.

For more information, visit www.barandblock.co.uk

yolo

CHRISTMAS PARTY BOOKINGS

Enquiries now open for private party and large group
bookings, November 22 to December 30 2021



TOWNHOUSE

yolotownhouse.com

0191 230 3002

14 High Bridge Street, Newcastle, NE1 1EN

PONTELAND

yolo.uk.com

0330 100 4724

9, Bell Villas, Ponteland, NE20 9BD

NORTHUMBERLAND PUB COMPANY SHOWS NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN



Whether it's wining and dining, bed and breakfast or even artisan breads and baked goods, the Northumberland Pub Company offers something for every customer.

Home to the Blackbird, The Northumberland Arms and Kennedy and Rhind, the group has quickly gained a reputation as one to watch in the North East food scene.

Originally a castle with roots going all the way back to the 14th century, the Blackbird at Ponteland was the group's first venue – known for its stunning upstairs Minstrel Gallery and seasonal menu – before acquiring The Northumberland Arms in early last year, in the picturesque village of Felton.

Taking over a second business just before the first lockdown engulfed the UK certainly came with its challenges but not enough to deter a third, with Kennedy and Rhind launching later that summer.

The artisan bakery, run by chefs David Kennedy and Murray Rhind, has gone from strength to strength since it's launch, opening a busy shop on Jesmond's Holly Ave West before expanding into a café space.

And while each of the brand's three venues offers something a little different, the core values remain the same – delivering top quality service and delicious dishes every time.

However, this doesn't mean that the three work completely independently, with the launch of a series of special occasion boxes over lockdown proving just how successful the trio can be together.

Themed around holidays such as Christmas, New Year, Burn's Night and Valentine's Day, customers across the North East could order their very own

celebration in a box before picking it up at the venue closest to them.

But diners don't have to wait for a special occasion, or make the trip to Newcastle's outskirts, to enjoy Kennedy and Rhind's homemade baked goods, with their pies, buns and more making a regular appearance on the menus of the two pubs.

While the Northumberland Pub Company has certainly been busy – in fact, they haven't stopped – they are showing no signs of slowing down, with



plans for new ventures in the pipeline.

Having recently secured an alcohol license, Kennedy and Rhind is looking forward to expanding its opening times to offer evening dining and the venue is also home to a large upstairs space – which the chefs hope to utilise for future food events.

Staying at home over the last year may not have been everyone's first choice but the rise in staycations has certainly been good news for The Northumberland Arms, which hopes to add another bedroom for guests to enjoy.

And the three venues are firmly in planning stages for the most wonderful time of the year, with festive menus, Christmas parties and winter tips set to make a return.

Stuart Young, of the Northumberland Pub Company, believes the business has a bright future.

"The last year has definitely been challenging for everyone working in the hospitality industry, so we are very lucky to have been in the position to launch two new venues," he said.

"We're very grateful to our customers for sticking around and supporting us, especially when we had to get a little creative during lockdown with takeaways and special occasion boxes, and we're delighted to have opened our doors once more.

"Having missed last year's festive celebrations with our diners, we cannot wait to launch our Christmas plans and we hope that this year will be one of our best yet."

For more information visit
www.theblackbirdponteland.co.uk,
northumberlandarms-felton.co.uk or
kennedyandrhind.co.uk

SEASONS GREETINGS

It may still be months away but, for two leading Northumberland venues, the countdown to Christmas has officially begun.



With festive parties, three course menus and seasonal playlists to plan, getting ready for the most wonderful time of the year at the Blackbird, Ponteland, and The Northumberland Arms, Felton, starts early.

While it may still be too soon to see tinsel up the staircase or a wreath on the door, it's never too early to lock in Christmas plans, with the two pubs already securing December bookings.

It's not difficult to see why the venues are a popular choice for the winter months, with festive menus combining modern flavours with traditional dishes served throughout December.

Across the two pubs, diners can enjoy delicious options such as chicken liver parfait, spiced chestnut falafel, crispy duck confit, seasonal roast turkey, rice pudding crème brûlée and gingerbread panna cotta.

While festive gatherings may have had to be put on hold last year, Christmas parties are back in full swing for 2021 and both pubs making up for lost time and opening their doors to larger groups.

The tipi at the Blackbird will return by popular demand – serving a whole host of street food on the weekends – and is also available to book for parties for those who want a setting that really makes an impact.

However, although big Christmas parties may be fun, they're not for everyone, and The Northumberland Arms provides the perfect location for a quiet festive getaway.

With six boutique rooms to choose from and surrounded by stunning Northumberland countryside, it's a fantastic option for those hoping to spend quality time with family and loved ones.

So, from elaborate parties to quiet nights with friends, these two Northumberland venues will certainly deliver a festive celebration to remember.

For more information about the venues, visit www.northumberlandarms-felton.co.uk or www.theblackbirdponteland.co.uk

GRAINGER
MARKET DELIVERY
www.graingerdelivery.com

#ShopLocal
#SupportLocalBusinesses



**Why are you
not shopping
local?**



**Shop Local
Save money
Premium Quality
Delivered!**



www.graingerdelivery.com



Free First Delivery*
Use Code: INSIGHT

*(Min. Spend £35)

ABOVE

R O O F T O P

BOOK NOW
WWW.ABOVENEWCASTLE.COM



FESTIVE SEASON AT AVEIKA

DINE IN STYLE IN OUR RESTAURANT
OR DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY IN
OUR BAR- WE HAVE OPTIONS TO
ACCOMMODATE ALL GROUP
SIZES AND BUDGETS.

SET MENU
FROM £17.95PP

BOOK NOW

0191 233 3732 | AVEIKA.CO.UK

10-15 SANDHILL, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE1 3AF

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AT LIVELLO

AT LIVELLO, WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR FESTIVE CELEBRATION UNFORGETTABLE. WHETHER YOU'RE HOSTING A PARTY FOR 300 OR A CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL MASTERCLASS FOR 6, WE'VE GOT YOUR NIGHT COVERED. OFFERING A WIDE SELECTION OF ELEGANT AREAS AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE HIRE INCLUDING SECLUDED BOOTHS, AN EXPANSIVE HEATED TERRACE AND THE LUXURIOUS OPULENZA VIP LOUNGE, LIVELLO IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO PLAN YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY.

BOOK NOW

0191 233 3733 / BARLIVELLO.CO.UK

LOWER DEAN STREET, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE1 3JE





WOULD YOU ADAM & EVE IT?

This month we chat to the talented young female chef (with a Michelin star restaurant background no less) who leads the kitchen brigade at new restaurant and bar Adam & Eve, Alnwick, Northumberland.

Adam & Eve are the latest bar and restaurant to open in the North East, located in the centre of the pretty market town of Alnwick in Northumberland. The talented young female head chef has a background with Michelin star venues with a focus on sourcing the best local produce the region has to offer.

With a refurb costing circa 200k, the owners took their time converting the property during lockdown, sourcing some unique, history steeped decor. The wood flooring was salvaged from an old whiskey barrel house which belonged to Chivas (also inspiring a VERY impressive whisky selection), the lighting reclaimed from former American and Japanese warships and rustic wood panelling reclaimed from old cattle barns (also used by Soho Farmhouse).

Head Chef Adina Lonsdale said; "put simply, we are

dedicated to showcase the freshness and quality of Northumberland and produce from the region, using as many local suppliers as we can from both the field and the sea. We are focussed on new ideas, alongside those dishes that we know our customers love to see on a menu and have them coming back for more. It's been a journey that took longer than we ever thought, but is worth every moment of our time. It's a team effort."

The divine new menu includes truffle & mascarpone risotto with squash, pumpkin seeds & sage, cider braised pig cheek with caramelised apple, roasted root veg & black pudding, to classics that include a handmade beef burger with Admiral Collingwood cheese, crispy beer soaked onions, baby gem lettuce, beef tomato, burger sauce, sesame seed Brioche Bun and hand cut chips.

With an abundance of locally caught seafood, seafood lovers will find sautéed squid with chorizo, tomato, red pepper & toasted sourdough, gluten free pan seared scallops with butternut squash and a delicate parmesan crusted sole with dill crema, sautéed baby potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

But if you love your sunday roast, then it's an absolute must to try their sunday roast beef served "pink" with crispy but fluffy roasties, proper homemade Yorkshire Pudding and reduced pan juice gravy.



Opening times: Tuesday - Thursday 11am-11pm • Friday - Saturday 11am- 1am • Sunday 11am - 10pm • Closed Mondays
3 Clayport Street, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1LA. adamandvealnwick.co.uk • Insta @adamandvealnwick • FB: Adam & Eve Alnwick



sachins

Festive journey from the Punjab to the North East

To begin

Poppadoms and pickles

Amuse-bouche

Festive mini onion and Brussels sprout pakoras topped with a droplet of tamarind sauce

Starters

Hearty Daal and spinach spicy soup with a sprinkle of coriander and served with a mini nan bread

Allergies - Gluten

Turkey Twizzlers

Pieces of turkey marinated in punjabi spices and coated in spiced breadcrumbs

Allergies - Gluten & dairy

Gunpowder Chicken

Pieces of chicken marinated in spices and coated in a gram flour batter and served with our gunpowder sauce

Allergies - Dairy

Channa Goshat Tikka

Spring lamb, chick peas and potatoes lightly spiced and coated in spiced breadcrumbs and served with curried mayonnaise

Allergies - Dairy & Gluten

Masala Prawns

King prawns marinated in masala and cooked in the heart of the tandoor

Allergies - Dairy



Main Course

Boxing Day Turkey Tari Wala
Turkey cooked in an authentic medium spiced family favourite punjabi sauce

Allergies - None

Lamb Chop Rogan Josh

Lamb chop's cooked with tomatoes, cream, punjabi spices and chilli oil

Allergies - Dairy

Chicken Malabar

Pieces of chicken cooked in South Indian spices with fresh curry leaves, mustard seeds, chilli flakes and coconut milk

Allergies - mustard seeds

Angel of the North

King prawns marinated in punjabi spices and cooked in a tomato based sauce with fresh spinach, coriander and ginger

Allergies - Dairy

Malai Kofta

Vegetable koftas cooked with gram flour and served in a tomato and onion based sauce with a touch of cream

Allergies - Dairy

Deserts

Brandy fruit cake, served with ice cream or vanilla and star anise custard

Allergies Dairy

Gulab Jaman, served with lightly spiced ice cream

Allergies - Gluten & Dairy

Mango Sorbet

A refreshing sorbet made with mango purée

Allergies - None

Main courses served with rice and mini nan

Lunch - 3 Courses for £19.95 • Evening - 5 Courses for £24.95

**Bookings now being taken for 2021. A £10 non refundable deposit required.
Available for parties of 6. Must be pre-ordered in advance.**

Tel: 0191 261 9035

Tel: 0191 232 4660

KIND CURRENCY IS A #SMALLBIZ100 2021 STAR



Woo Hoo! Can you hear the toot of the celebratory trumpet? I am absolutely thrilled, delighted and all kinds of happy to have been selected by Small Business Britain to be one of the businesses celebrated in their #smallbiz100 2021 campaign.

When you are creating a passion start-up and your mission is to change the world, receiving acknowledgement of your purpose is, well, emotional. We all seek the validation that we are on the right path to keep us striving forward; so, the support from Small Business Britain with their Small Business Saturday campaign is very much appreciated and I for one am utterly grateful.

The non-commercial grassroots campaign kicked off on August 27th. The campaign celebrates 100 inspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses across the UK leading up to #SmallBizSatUK on 4th December. I am honoured to share this opportunity with so many incredible entrepreneurs and businesses. Kind Currency was celebrated on Monday 27th September. You can still help us celebrate by heading to Small Business Britain and Small Business Saturday UK and Kind Currency social channels.

On the Saturday 4th December 2021, I along with

the other businesses will be working together to encourage consumers to shop local and shop small business to create a lasting impact on people, business, and the economy. You can join in with the fun on our social channels, make sure to put the date in your diary.

I don't class myself as inspiring, so I was rather overwhelmed when I got a call from Michelle Owens MBE to offer me the opportunity to celebrate Kind Currency, the purpose, and the story. I proudly wave the flag for disabled entrepreneurs, mumpreneurs, female entrepreneurs, northern entrepreneurs and of course, the Triers and the Change Makers.

The Kind Currency website went live in September, if you've not seen it yet, please do check it out. The website is not perfect, but it kickstarts the next step in our journey to make the world a kinder place. We already have some incredible businesses for good in the community. You can sign up to join the business community or register

your interest to keep up to date with our mission. We are currently working on the solution to bring the subscription membership to you, kind consumers and community spirited people who want to pay forward kindness and gratitude. We hope the subscription will go live in preparation for the 4th December 2021. When we can really start to create the impact, we want to make. Building our kindness community to close the disadvantaged gap, levelling up by providing opportunities, protecting, sustaining, and celebrating people, communities, businesses, economies, society, and the planet.

A little bit of kindness makes the world sparkle!

Michelle Jones, Founder of Kind Currency,
www.kindcurrency.co.uk
hello@kindcurrency.co.uk
 07751 564 684

PRIVATE HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIP WITH NHS SAFEGUARDS NEWCASTLE BREAST CANCER CLINIC DURING LOCKDOWN



L-R: Judith Tindale theatre manager at Nuffield Health and Adam Critchley head of department for breast surgery at Newcastle Hospitals outside the operating theatre at Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital.

An exclusive partnership between Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital in Jesmond and The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has successfully protected the delivery of vital breast cancer treatment for women in the North East during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Between December 2020 and March 2021, Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital provided a COVID-19 secure hub for breast cancer procedures to be carried out by NHS consultants from the Breast Cancer Clinic at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI).

The time-sensitive collaboration ensured 57 ladies received specific surgeries without delay.

To maintain the provision of essential breast cancer services to patients, both clinical and non-clinical teams at Nuffield Health worked side-by-side with staff from the RVI Breast Cancer Clinic for two months to prepare the hospital to support the NHS.

This included step-by-step training on specific

equipment and a specialist technique using radioactive iodine seeds to localise breast cancers accurately, thereby reducing the likelihood of patients requiring a second procedure. The RVI was the first UK hospital to use iodine seeds and has the largest experience in the UK.

Judith Tindale, theatre manager at Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital, said: "I am extremely proud of the team and how hard everyone has worked together to ensure these essential treatments were delivered to those most in need during such demanding times.

"Tackling the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us all and the effort and dedication of NHS staff has been awe-inspiring. We've been honoured to

support NHS patients and the breast cancer care team in our local trust. This collaboration in breast cancer care demonstrates our commitment to working with public health bodies to ensure the best patient outcomes."

The Breast Cancer Clinic at the RVI looks after patients that have been referred by their GP for further investigation and treatment if necessary. Newcastle Hospitals is one of the busiest and largest NHS foundation trusts in the country, with around 17,000 staff and rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2019.

Adam Critchley, head of department for breast surgery at Newcastle Hospitals and consultant oncoplastic breast surgeon, said: "Due to the interim support we received from the team at Nuffield Health Newcastle Hospital we were able to maintain the breast cancer service and ensure there was no impact on our patients during the pandemic. We are delighted with the success of this collaboration in ensuring our vital services in breast cancer care have been maintained."

www.nuffieldhealth.com



THE NORTHUMBERLAND GOLF CLUB SPONSORS DAY

The Northumberland Golf Club and their Captain Tim Weightman were delighted to host their annual Sponsors Day on Friday 10th September. The event is the club's opportunity to thank their Sponsors for their continued support, particularly during the past year.

In attendance were: Brewin Dolphin, DNR Group, Clarke Mairs LLP, Rathbones, Lubbers Group, Tekmar, Ward Hadaway, Tier One Capital, Bluebird Care, Northern Insight Magazine, Hunter Johnstone, Hall & Partners, Todd & Cue, Clifton Car Sales, Roof-Truss. A great day was had by all.



Championships, Challenge & Charm. New members welcome



The Northumberland Golf Club



Founded in 1898, **The Northumberland Golf Club** is steeped in golfing history, designed in golf's Golden Age by Colt and Braid, the world famous golf architects. The friendly club regularly hosts national and regional championships, including the Open Regional Qualifier.

Its challenging course set in and alongside Newcastle Racecourse, is constantly evolving but is still accessible to a wide range of golfers. It is a pleasure to play all year round.

Please get in touch on 0191 236 2498 or visit



thengc.co.uk



The
Northumberland
GOLF CLUB

GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STENGTH

Strength training has been linked to a longer life, lowers risk of obesity, healthier brains, bones and cardiovascular system. Those who only spend hours and hours on aerobic machines in the gym are missing a trick.

Research shows that strength training - often seen as an add-on to your aerobic session is actually just as important.

Activities that stress the muscle are shown to have a bigger positive impact to our wellbeing than previously thought including showing its importance in weight control in middle age.

An American study of 12,000 mostly middle aged people showed that two or more weight training sessions per week reduced the risk of obesity by 20-30% over 20 years, this also included those who did zero aerobic exercise.

One to two hours of strength a week was even more effective reducing obesity by 30-40%, other benefits included reduced cholesterol, inflammation, blood pressure and a heart disease. Resistance training doesn't necessarily mean lifting weights at the gym, here are a few examples:

- Heavy gardening.
- Carrying shopping.
- Swimming.
- Hill/step walking.
- Cycling.
- Playing Tennis.
- Climbing.

A good way to target all the major muscles are



David Fairlamb

body weight exercises such as push ups, squats, lunges, plank, tricep dips, anything that puts your muscles under some sort of stress. In young people it's important not only for self confidence but to build strong bones and muscles for later in life, it's much easier to maintain muscle in middle age than trying to build them. It does not matter how aerobically fit you are, there is a

level of strength we all need to operate at to live our day to day life as we get older.

www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk

Mobile 0771 3640899

Facebook: David Fairlamb Fitness & SugarCleanLean

Twitter @DF_Fitness & @SugarCleanLean

DAVID'S SUMMING UP

For the best overall results for strength and wellness, a combination of aerobic and strength exercise ticks all the boxes but as you get older strength exercise becomes even more important for wellness and to hold onto your strength in order to live a healthier life for longer.

Our team gives you peace of mind.

Our new and innovative Synergi Managed Service delivers a more agile and effective solution for your business using either a full outsourced model or a co-managed approach, with security monitoring and rapid response at our core.

We put the i in team.

Call: 0191 477 0365 Email: enquiries@teamsynergi.co.uk

synergi

"To eat well in England, you should have breakfast three times a day." Somerset Maugham



23-25 Clayton Road Jesmond Newcastle upon Tyne 0191 212 1123

**Willi's
Café Jesmond**
*Breakfast served all day,
every day!*

Paul Fraser



- The Northern Echo's former Chief Football Writer Paul Fraser aims to raise the profiles of clients

- Rephrase's range of services can be on a pay-as-you-go basis or as part of a longer-term package

- We will do all we can to advise and produce the best possible solution for your needs

- We aim to maintain long-term relationships to achieve goals

For further information check out www.rephrasemedias.com or email info@rephrasemedias.com



REPHRASE

PR AND MEDIA SERVICES



**TYNESIDE
GOLF CLUB**
tynesidegolfclub.co.uk



*'Cherish our history.
embrace change'*

Contact General Manager, Peter Smith
For more information 0191 4132742
Email: peter.smith@tynesidegolfclub.co.uk



Educating for a better world

Speak to our Registrar now to book your individual visit 01904 272600



Dee Macdonald Consulting
dmc



**Public Relations/Marketing/Social
Specialising in the Charity sector**

07791 860954

dee1macdonald@yahoo.co.uk

Sponsored by:



Communications | Marketing | Design

www.lecc.co.uk | hello@lecc.co.uk | 0191 587 8165



**Scarlet
Butterfly
MEDIA**

A local Videography and Photography Agency producing innovative high-impact content that engages, enthralls and motivates your audience.

07852 990362

info@scarletbutterflymedia.co.uk

www.scarletbutterflymedia.co.uk

BARRY SPEKER'S COMMENT

The move towards a cashless society continues to gather pace. Not only does battery charging of vehicles herald the demise of making payment at service stations or entering their mini supermarkets. Self checkouts complete with contactless cards increase the tendency to carry no cash or currency but only plastic cards or a downloaded smartphone.

The German grocer Aldi has now launched a high-tech store which enables shoppers to walk out without even approaching a till. Aldi is Britain's fifth largest supermarket with 920 shops and 38,000 employees.

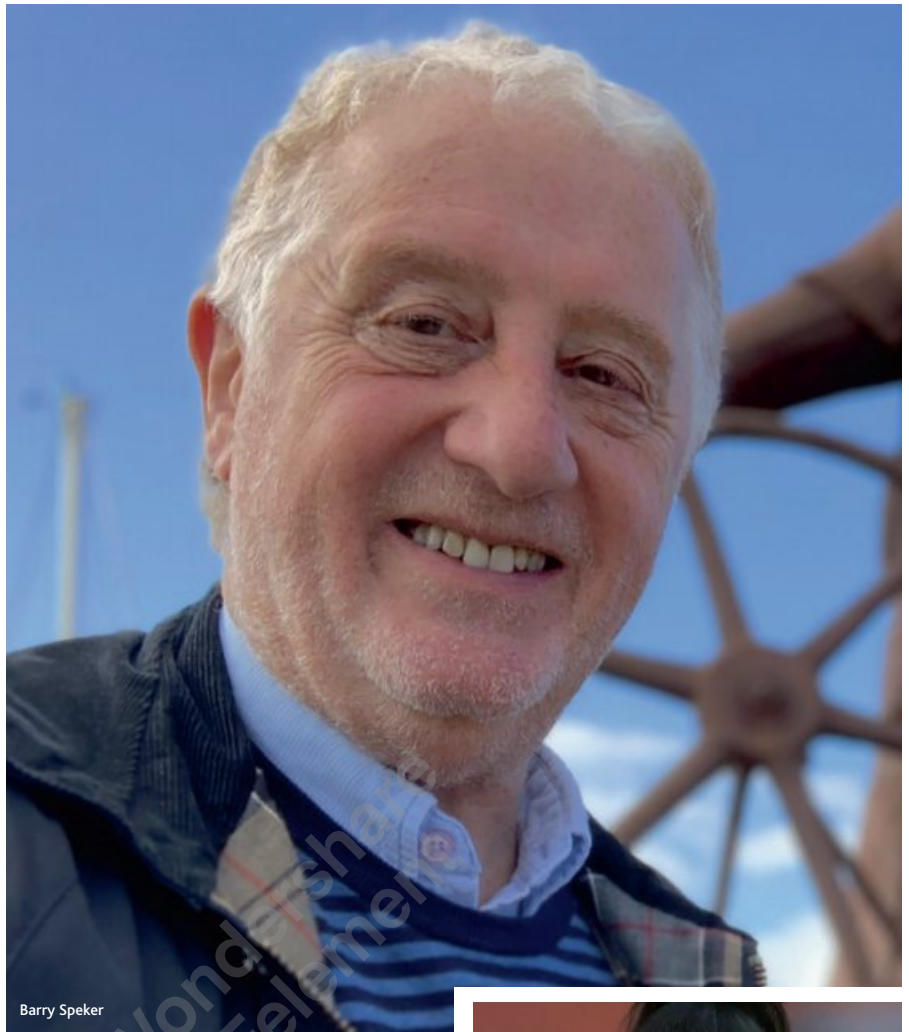
The new technology enables shoppers to download an app to enter the store, collect items of choice and walk out of the shop. A receipt for their purchases automatically loaded onto the phone (augmented by tracking and CCTV) would be emailed to the customer after leaving the store. How long before the number of employees is drastically reduced? Shelf filling will be taken over by AI using Amazon technology.

Emma Raducanu has been rightly toasted as the best of British in winning the US Open tennis championship; not only for the brilliance of her tennis and smashing so many records in the process but also her exuberance, the joy shown on each of her ten wins but also for her charm and composure in her interviews. All of this was impressive for any 18 year old, taking into account that she had only recently completed her A levels (very successfully) and was without the supportive presence of her parents due to Covid restrictions.

Being born in Canada to a Chinese mother and Romanian father tempted someone ungenerous comments about her Britishness. She was overwhelmed by the letters of congratulation from H M The Queen and Marcus Rashford.

That she was able to broadcast to her millions of Chinese fans in fluent Mandarin (albeit with a Shenyang accent) is a credit to her intelligence, ambition and her motivating parents - as well as being enormously exciting for her agent at the staggering marketing potential.

Descriptions of her practice regime and resilience should make her a role model for all young people.



Barry Speker

Talking of accents there was much jumping to the defence of the impressive and knowledgeable broadcaster Alex Scott relating to her pronunciation during the BBC Olympics coverage. Lord (Digby) Jones tweeted "Enough! I can't stand it any more! Alex Scott spoils a good presentational job with her very noticeable inability to pronounce her 'g's. Competitors are NOT taking part in fencin, boxin, rowin, kayakin, weightliftin and swimmin".

Alex responded "I'm from a working class family in East London and I am PROUD".

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, seeing a bandwagon on which to jump tweeted "From a proud sarf Londoner to a proud East Londoner: well said.." Stephen Fry criticised 'misplaced snobbery'.

However the point was not about class, dialect or accent - the media is not today dominated by middle-class 'proper English' voices but is awash with Brummies, Geordies, Scots, Welsh, Scousers and accents from every part of Britain.

Whilst language may be a living thing, developing and adapting, broadening and growing, it must remain a means of effective communication.



Standard English is not about accent but is the means through which writers and speakers of the language can achieve maximum clarity and minimum confusion or irritation. Sloppy speech, with lazy grammar and lack of enunciation will label the speaker. 'Could of' instead of 'could have', 'pacifically' in place of 'specifically' or 'froo' instead of 'through' are likely to result in interviewees being regarded as 'not sharp enough' unless their aim is limited to getting onto Big Brother, Love Island or Gogglebox or becoming a rapper or a footballer.

It does not do young people any favours by pretending that how we speak does not matter. Levelling up needs mastery of the mother tongue. It demands enunciation and pronunciation. Young people should appreciate that what can hold them back in interviews or at work is not accent or class but a failure to conquer basic grammar and diction in the face of invisible sound barriers.



barryspeker@hotmail.com



#changePR

**Call the B2B specialists if
you need some help.**

M:07809 565 397
mhwpr.co.uk

Alderman Fenwick's House, 98-100 Pilgrim Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SQ



DESIGNER FLOORING



THE NORTH EAST'S LARGEST PREMIUM CARPET & FLOORING SHOWROOM

UNIT 8A - AIRPORT IND EST - KINGSTON PARK

SHOWROOM ALSO AT KARPET MILLS HEXHAM

www.yourdesignerflooring.co.uk



PART OF THE
KARPET MILLS GROUP